



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Training for Pakistan Project

USAID Training for Pakistan Project

Semi-Annual Report for May – November, 2013

Project Year 1 Prepared for: USAID/Pakistan

FORECAST II-PY IDIQ No. AID-OAA-I-12-00008

Task Order Number: AID-391-TO-13-00004

Submitted June 20, 2014

Disclaimer:

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by the USAID Training for Pakistan Project. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

World Learning presents this semi-annual report in accordance with Task Order contract section F.4.3, Semi-Annual Report. It includes the following sections:

1. Country Situation
2. Project Start-up
3. Achievements and Activities
4. Funding
5. Challenges
6. Chart: Programs Completed and in Development, November 2013

1. Country Situation

The USAID Training for Pakistan Project began on May 24, 2013, following execution of the Task Order contract between USAID and World Learning under the FORECAST II-PT IDIQ. The four-year Project is designed to support USAID Pakistan Development Objective (DO) team goals with the full range of tools available through the mechanism of USAID participant training, including long- and short-term training, technical assistance, small grants and support for alumni.

The security situation in Pakistan remained volatile during this period. Security factors did not significantly affect World Learning's ability to implement programs, as most in-country work took place in Islamabad where the security situation is relatively stable. However, the overall security situation did affect the Project's ability to visit a few secondary schools where FATA scholarship students are enrolled and studying. In addition, the Project had to close its office or limit staff mobility on a small number of occasions when the security situation called for such action.

2. Project Start-up

Field Visit from US Headquarters and Office Opening

Having obtained Pakistani visas in advance, three World Learning personnel from World Learning in Washington, DC office spent much of June 2013 in Islamabad on overlapping visits to support administrative and programmatic aspects of start-up, with an emphasis on staffing, office identification, establishing communications with USAID, and security considerations. This engagement included a post-award conference and Project kickoff meeting at USAID, with a presentation by the Washington, DC-based Task Order Manager. In July, the Project's Islamabad-based staff moved into a long-term office space. During this period, a Procurement Plan; Branding Strategy and Marking Plan; and Local Compensation Plan and Addendum were submitted to the Mission and received approval. In addition, the following documents and tools were submitted during this period for USAID review: Draft Grant Management Manual; Draft Mission Participant Training Plan; Draft Annual Work Plan including a 90 Day Startup Plan; Cost Control Reporting System; M&E Plan; Draft FORECAST II PT IDIQ Operations Manual; Pakistan HR Manual; Field Office Operations Manual; and Monthly and Quarterly Reports.

Staffing

The COP and Finance Director, both key personnel, were joined immediately on start-up by two other key personnel, the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) and Communications Specialist. An expatriate Participant Training Advisor, who was added to the team during final contract negotiations, arrived in Pakistan shortly thereafter. The fifth and final key personnel position, Training Manager, was vacant at

start-up, as the person identified in the proposal and contract withdrew from the position at the last minute. A replacement was recruited, approved by USAID and onboarded quickly, but resigned in a few weeks in order to pursue a more advanced position in his home town. World Learning then proposed an internal replacement for this position; however, USAID did not approve the nomination and recruitment continued. With Mission support, the Project terminated its DCOP on October 10, 2013 and began recruiting a replacement.

During the Project's second quarter, six non-key personnel were recruited and began working in the Project's field office. Two of these staff resigned in September and steps were taken immediately to replace them, but the positions remained open at the end of the period. For additional field staffing information see section below on challenges.

In the US, a Senior Program Officer, Program Officer and Program Associate began supporting the Project during this period.

Subcontracting

In June, after receiving USAID's consent to subcontract, World Learning signed a subcontract with the U.S. small business RSM to oversee security on the Project. An RSM security consultant spent much of August in Islamabad conducting security assessments and trainings. By the period's end, nearly all security upgrades to the office space were completed. In addition, the Project made significant progress toward obtaining USAID consent to subcontract with a local Pakistani partner, LEAD Pakistan, during this period as well.

World Learning Registration in Pakistan

An application for the registration of World Learning as a legal entity in Pakistan was submitted to the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) of the Ministry of Finance early in this period but remained pending at the end of the period. However, provisional approval was obtained from the Board of Investment (BOI) on October 31, 2013 for World Learning to open and maintain liaison offices for USAID programming in Pakistan. A bank account was opened with Standard and Chartered Bank, and National Tax Number (NTN) was issued to World Learning during the period.

3. Achievements and Activities:

U.S. PhD Scholars

The most urgent program task upon award was the handover of support for 28 U.S. PhD Scholars – students enrolled in Education PhD programs at 15 U.S. universities – from the previous Training for Pakistan implementer, the Institute for International Education (IIE). This was effectively accomplished within days of award and students felt minimal impact of the transition. A few weeks later, the U.S. scholar portfolio grew by seven when the Project assumed responsibility for this number of additional students from a closing project implemented by EDC; these students, also pursuing PhDs in Education, were enrolled at three other U.S. universities. A particular highlight of this period was that Ms. Afshan Huma successfully defended her dissertation, was awarded a doctoral degree from Michigan State University and returned home to Pakistan in November.

FATA Scholars

During this period, the Project assumed responsibility for 80 continuing in-country secondary school scholars from the FATA region, placing them at institutions in multiple (non-FATA) regions of Pakistan. The Project signed contracts with seven institutions to host the students, and the students began their studies. In some cases, where the Project was unable to sign contracts with the institutions, agreements were signed directly with the students' guardians, who the Project will reimburse for costs associated with the program.

Short-term Training Programs

A significant programmatic accomplishment during the second quarter was the administration in-country of the MIT Business Acceleration Program's Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The conference represented the culmination of a two-month training program (not arranged by the Project) for Pakistani entrepreneurs and was attended by nearly 400 participants. At the conference's close, two participants were selected to join the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Business Acceleration Program in the U.S. to participate in a "road show" in the U.S. where they will promote their entrepreneurial concepts to potential investors in America.

The Project also recommended a training provider to conduct an "On-Farm Water Management" training in Australia and received approval for a Training Implementation Plan for the activity from the Mission.

Other Program Development

The Project met with USAID's OSG and EGA DOs to discuss their training plans and expectations. By the end of the period, the Project had received approval for the following Training Requests:

- FATA Scholarship Program
- GAO International Auditor Fellowship Program
- LUMS Executive Certificate in Agribusiness Management Program
- Australia and U.S. On-Farm Water Management Trainings
- MIT Enterprise for Pakistan Conference and Training
- Halal Meat Production and Marketing Training

Additionally, the Project discussed plans to support training activities for the TRADE and FIRMS Projects and for a Gender Diversity Training with the Mission and its implementing partners.

Training for Pakistan Website and Project Press Releases

The Project website design was completed during the second quarter, and was undergoing final revisions at the end of the period. The Project's English and Urdu-language press releases were covered in leading newspapers in November.

Working Groups

Project staff in Pakistan presented a description of the TFP Project to USAID implementing partners at the USAID Communications Working Group meeting to generate interest in the TFP mechanism as a resource to support USAID projects. TFP's programmatic and communications objectives were discussed, as were eligibility requirements for potential participants in TFP training.

4. Funding:

Funds obligated as of December 2013: \$14,242,625.00

Funds disbursed as of December 2013: \$1,432,822.22

5. Challenges:

Staffing

While the Project was able to fill most field positions, filling several important positions was problematic. As mentioned above, the Project's original DCOP was terminated and a satisfactory replacement was not identified in spite of intense recruitment. Fortunately, when the DCOP was terminated, his responsibilities were successfully distributed to the COP, Finance Director and others, and the lack of a DCOP did not represent a significant problem.

Shortly after award of the TO, the Training Manager indicated in World Learning's proposal reversed his commitment to join the Project. A replacement was recruited quickly and approved by USAID, and was formally hired on July 8, 2013, but resigned on September 03, 2013 to pursue other career opportunities. The Project was unable to find a suitable Pakistani replacement with Participant Training experience, so with Mission approval promoted the Project's expat Training Advisor to the Training Manager position. The Project's Senior Program Officer in the field was promoted to a new position of Assistant Training Manager at the same time.

In order to meet the range of operational needs of the Project, World Learning requested and received USAID concurrence to add five new positions and upgrade the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer position to Monitoring and Evaluation Manager. Intense recruitment for the Monitoring and Evaluation manager was underway at the end of the period.

Visas for Expat Staff and Consultants

While the start-up team had managed to obtain visas in advance, all travel to country after June 2013 was severely hindered due to the reluctance of the Embassy of Pakistan to issue further visas. Ultimately, all necessary visas were granted, but by end of period it remained unclear to World Learning why some visas were granted quickly and others slowly. It is hoped that when World Learning's registration status is fully resolved, visa requests will be honored more quickly and consistently. Similarly, the Project's expatriate advisor faced challenges in securing a long-term, multi-entry visa after arriving in Pakistan, but this was ultimately resolved as well.

Subcontracting with LEAD Pakistan

In response to requirements in the Request for Proposals for this task order, World Learning proposed to subcontract with the Pakistani organization LEAD Pakistan to address goals of local capacity building through the Project. The Mission raised many questions about the selection of LEAD Pakistan and about the Statement of Work for this subcontractor, and finalization of the subcontracting arrangement was further delayed while negotiations and clarifications proceeded between LEAD Pakistan and World Learning regarding the Statement of Work. The subcontract was not in place by the end of the period, although significant progress had been made. World Learning anticipated finalizing a contract with LEAD

Pakistan by early in the subsequent period. As six staff for the Project field office were to be assigned by LEAD Pakistan, these delays had an impact on the pace of programming.

Communications with DO Teams

While communication with DO team representatives is essential to developing training plans and training requests, the Project found it difficult to meet with the right people for this purpose during the period. DO team representatives have many competing priorities; scheduling meetings and receiving responses to emails was challenging. Delays in collaboration led to delays in overall training planning, with the cumulative result that less programming was in place by end of period than had been anticipated.

Lead Time on Training Requests

USAID guidance and best practice suggests a rule of thumb of three months between USAID's approval of a formal Training Request and the training start date. Lead time was shorter for several U.S. and Third Country programs requested during this period, causing some anxiety and leading to imperfect processes in some cases. World Learning prides itself on being flexible and responsive to Mission timelines and shifting priorities and understands that lead time will sometimes be short. However, in the interest of delivering strong programs and providing effective overall support, the Project will seek ways to streamline the communication process with DO teams so that the need for accelerated program development is reduced to a minimum.

Programs Completed and in Development as of November 30, 2013

Training title	DO	Location	Stage
FATA Scholars Program	EDU	Pakistan	Active
U.S. PhD Portfolio (35 students)	EDU	US	Active
GAO International Auditor Fellowship Program	OSG	US	TIP signed
Executive Certificate in Agribusiness Management Program	EGA	Pakistan	TR signed
On-Farm Water Management and Command Area Development Training	EGA	Australia	Completed
On-Farm Water Management and Command Area Development Training	EGA	US	TIP submitted
MIT Enterprise for Pakistan Conference	EGA	Pakistan	Completed
MIT Entrepreneurship Development Program	EGA	US	Completed
Halal Meat Production and Marketing Training	EGA	Malaysia	Completed
Gender Diversity Training	OSG	Turkey	TIP signed
Consumer Protection and Financial Literacy Conference	EGA	ICT	TR signed
Digital Print Technology Training	EGA	UST	TIP submitted
The Art of Traditional Shoemaking Training	EGA	UST	TIP submitted
Menswear Design and Development Training	EGA	France	TIP submitted
Fashion Buying and Merchandising Training	EGA	London	TIP submitted
Comprehensive CAD/CAM for Jewelry Training	EGA	UST	TIP submitted
TRADE Project	EGA	TBD	under discussion
FIRMS Project	EGA	TBD	under discussion