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DCHA/PPM LEARNING AND TRAINING SUPPORT QUARTERLY REPORT

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DCHA/PPM Learning and Training Support Quarterly Report



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DCHA/PPM Learning and Training Support Task Order (TO)

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Overview

MSI is the prime contractor on the DCHA/PPM Learning and Training Support Task Order (TO). Under this TO, MSI supports USAID's DCHA Bureau in their learning and training activities as well as analysis through training curriculum design and delivery, assessing learning through evaluation, and knowledge management through dissemination of electronic information and e-learning. In the area of knowledge management and e-learning, MSI is supported by its subcontractor, CAMRIS. The First quarter of the second year of this three-year contract marked a significant period under this task order. The fourth iteration of the DCHA Essentials Course was successfully completed and recommendations for the future design and development of DCHA Essentials Courses will be submitted. The DCHA Professional Development and Learning portal (DCHA PD&L) underwent major advances in the areas of content development, design, structure and accessibility. In addition, the preliminary planning phase for the regional workshop is currently underway. In order to facilitate the efficient implementation of these projects, weekly planning meetings were held with the COTR and the quarterly accruals report was submitted to the COTR for review and final approval. The second year of the task order is slated to include four domestic iterations of the DCHA Essentials training course, including a DCHA introductory course; one overseas DLI Workshop; two Washington DC and one field offering of the Advanced Conflict Assessment course, four Washington DC offerings and two field offerings of the Conflict 102 course courses and a DCHA Professional Development & Learning Portal.

This quarterly report covers the First Quarter, FY2012 (October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011).

Highlights

- Successfully conducted the DCHA Essentials' Fall 2011 Course in Washington, DC from October 24 – December 13, 2011 which included the modified "DCHA 101", a three day course providing DLIs and non-DLI DCHA staff with an orientation and introduction to the DCHA Bureau and each of the individual DCHA Offices;
- Compiled extensive participant evaluations and submitted recommendations based on feedback gathered from those evaluations on course design and curriculum to be implemented in future iterations of the course;
- Successfully conducted the November Conflict 102 course on November 1 and 2.
- Compiled and analyzed participant feedback and submitted recommendations for future course design and implementation;
- Continued the planning phase for the DCHA Regional Workshop to take place in Africa;
- Switched the operating platform of the DCHA Training and Learning Portal to a Droople based platform in order to make the site easier to navigate for users;
- Transferred and streamlined previously developed portal materials to conform to the new navigational structure and platform.

Activities

The first quarter of the second year of this three year contract was marked by several noteworthy activities. Weekly planning meetings were held with the COTR to provide regular updates and make decisions on moving forward. Additionally, the major activities undertaken this quarter included the following:

DCHA Essentials Course: During this quarter, the DCHA Essentials fall 2011 Course was held in Washington, DC from Oct 24 – December 13, 2011. The course was offered to 9 DLI (Backstop 76 Crises, Stabilization and Governance) participants and 11 DCHA staff from various DCHA offices as well as institutional contractors. This was the first iteration of the DCHA Essentials course that was targeted at both DLIs and full-time non-DLI DCHA staff. The fall course included the modified DCHA 101, a three day course providing participants with an orientation and introduction to the DCHA Bureau and each individual DCHA Office. This three day orientation was then followed by technical training offered by each of the DCHA offices. Participant evaluations were compiled for both the DCHA 101 course and the technical training sessions and recommendations on future design and curriculum, which include opening the DCHA 101 Course as well as the technical training courses to all DCHA staff, will be submitted.

DCHA Regional Workshop: During this quarter, the preliminary planning phase was continued. As part of this phase an overall staff needs assessment is currently being developed in coordination with personnel from the Africa Bureau. This staff needs assessment is meant to effectively gauge the topics and issues that are most pertinent to DLIs currently working in the field in Africa so that the appropriate curriculum and activities are developed and implemented during the Workshop. Workshop logistics will continue to be discussed with the COTR and internally with USAID colleagues.

Conflict 102: During this quarter, the Conflict 102 course was held in Washington, DC on November 1 and 2. The course is a practical and highly participatory training that introduces USAID and interagency staff to USAID's conflict assessment tools; explains the importance of conflict-sensitive programming across all development sectors; and addresses the issues of program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings. The training was attended by 25 people: 21 staff representing four Washington Bureaus (EGAT, DCHA, AFR, M), one USAID staff member representing the USAID/Honduras Mission, and three participants representing other USG agencies (Departments of State and Defense). Nine of the USAID staff members were DLIs (Backstop 76 Crisis, Stabilization and Governance), and three were DLIs in other backstops. Participants' ratings and comments about the workshop on the post-course evaluation indicated that the workshop was well received, and that the workshop objectives were met. Additionally, recommendations on course design and delivery were submitted and will be incorporated into future iterations of the course.

DCHA Platform: During this quarter, the DCHA Training and Learning Portal's platform and navigational structure were significantly modified. The Portal's operating platform was switched from a Moodle-based platform to a Droople based platform powered and hosted by a content management system (CMS) called Ning. This new platform will offer a new streamlined approach to information management as well as allowing the user to access course and training material with greater ease. Along with the shift in navigational platforms, the Portal's content is also currently being transferred from the previous site to the new site. Additionally, documentation on how to add and edit content as well as users to the new site is being developed.

DCHA PD&L Portal Homepage Current Appearance

The screenshot shows the DCHA Learning Portal homepage. At the top left is the USAID logo with the text "FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE". To the right is the header "DCHA LEARNING PORTAL". Below the header is a navigation bar with tabs: HOME, ABOUT, ORIENTATION, TRAINING & LEARNING, RESOURCE LIBRARY, CAREER DEVELOPMENT, and KNOWLEDGE NETWORK. The main content area is divided into three columns:

- DCHA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING:** A text block describing the PD&L Framework as a structure for framing professional development activities and learning opportunities, centered on performance-based building on the BS-76 Crisis, Stabilization and Governance core set of competencies.
- DCHA PD & L OBJECTIVE:** A text block stating the goal is to provide professional including career development activities and learning opportunities to improve staff capability. It includes a bulleted list of objectives:
 - Creating a **learning** environment that promotes technical excellence and leadership;
 - Designing and delivering training that is learner focused and performance-based aimed at **use** of skills and knowledge using highly interactive and participatory instructional and experiential methodologies (e.g. case studies and role plays etc.) that in the end allows the learner to apply new skills in their work setting;
 - Promoting development opportunities and evaluation methodologies to promote **mastery** of expertise through on-the-job training, temporary duty (TDYs), rotations, details etc; and
 - Enhancing processes and systems that support performance and development through **information sharing and interaction**, promotes discussion, mentoring and self-directed learning.
- ROB MURRAY:** A user profile section with links for Sign Out, Inbox, Friends, and Settings.

At the bottom of the content area, there is a section titled **PD&L CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES** which states: "PD&L categories of activities offered include a comprehensive range of professional including career development activities and learning opportunities:"

DCHA PD&L New Content Page

The screenshot shows the "New Content Page" on the DCHA Learning Portal. The layout is similar to the homepage, but the "ORIENTATION" tab is selected, and a dropdown menu is open. The dropdown menu lists the following items:

- GETTING STARTED
- YEAR 1 CONSIDERATIONS
- NEW STAFF HANDBOOK
- ONBOARDING SUMMARY** (highlighted in red)
- GUIDE TO ORIENTING STAFF
- ESSENTIAL SERIES SUMMARY

The main content area below the dropdown shows the text for the "Orientation" category, which is partially obscured by the menu. The visible text includes: "The courses, activities and resources in DCHA that include tools to help you feel more equipped includes onboarding resources that new staff and their supervisors can use together."

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: "© 2012 Created by Admin. Powered by NING. Badges | Report an Issue | Terms of Service"

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned over the course of this quarter were that there is substantial interest for the DCHA Essentials course by non-DLI staff within the DCHA Bureau. Given this and the fact that future DLI classes are being reduced by the Agency, future DCHA Essentials courses will be expanded to accommodate interested DCHA staff. Meetings and additional coordination will be planned with DCHA office trainers to ensure smooth planning for future iterations of the course. Additionally, in order to continually provide both effective logistical support and technical recommendations for the Conflict 102, continued interface and cooperation with personnel from the office of CMM is necessary.

The DCHA Professional Development and Learning has undergone a significant change and is currently operating on a new platform. As such, it has reached a stage where it will be actively used by DCHA staff. Therefore, adequate promotion and accessibility of the site as well as the ability of the user to efficiently navigate the content are paramount its success. It is imperative that DCHA staff are made aware of the Portal as well as how the Portal can benefit their work and professional development. Additionally, DCHA Trainers should continue to take an active part in improving the functionality and adding to the content of the Portal. This interest is critical because the enhancement of the portal depends on collaboration of subject matter experts, trainers and portal administrators.

Plans for Next Quarter

- Coordinate with DCHA training officers to develop consistent and cohesive training materials across all offices;
- Continually tailor the DCHA 101 Course and technical training courses to reflect the needs of non-DLI DCHA staff and institutional contractors;
- Continued collaboration with personnel from the Africa Bureau to develop a needs assessment for DLI field staff in order to effectively develop goals, priorities and material for the DCHA Regional Workshop;
- Construct a preliminary budget for DCHA Regional Workshop;
- Begin development of material for DCHA Regional Workshop;
- Modify and prepare curriculum and course material for next iteration of the Crises, Stabilization and Governance Workshop;
- Coordinate with Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation to facilitate the next Conflict 102 course and Advanced Conflict Assessment course;
- Plan and conduct training session(s) for Trainers and Managers so that they develop confidence in the use of the Portal's Content Management System in order to take active part in making the portal interactive;
- Continue to transfer content from previous site to new Portal site as well as add new content.