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# DCHA/PPM LEARNING AND TRAINING SUPPORT QUARTERLY REPORT

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600 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024, USA  
Tel: +1.202.484.7170 | Fax: +1.202.488.0754  
[www.msiworldwide.com](http://www.msiworldwide.com)

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

## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## OVERVIEW

This quarterly report covers the first quarter of fiscal year 2014 (October 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013). The contract is in its fourth year of performance and recently received a two year time and cost extension to run through September 30, 2015.

MSI is the prime contractor on the DCHA/PPM Learning and Training Support Task Order (TO). Under this TO, MSI supports numerous training activities for many DCHA offices including PPM, CMM, OCR, CMC, and FFP. In addition, MSI provides curriculum design, coaching, facilitation skills, e-module development, survey support, and analytical services.

The following summary provides a short overview of each of the activities undertaken this quarter.

- Provided logistical support to one **Food for Peace (FFP) one-day** course for PPM on October 3, 2013;
- Hosted one **Crises, Stabilization & Governance (CSG)** Course for PPM and continued revisions for future iterations;
- Hosted the pilot **Systems Thinking & Analysis in Complex Environments** course for the Complex Crises Fund (CCF) of PPM;
- Hosted a **C102** course for CMM in Bangkok, Thailand;
- Hosted a **Gender & Conflict** course for CMM in Bangkok, Thailand;
- Planned for an **ACA** course for CMM in Bangkok, Thailand;
- Provided logistical support to a **Gender & Conflict TOT** course for CMM in Washington, D.C.;
- Hosted Day 1 of **C102** for CMM in Washington, D.C. - Day 2 was cancelled due to inclement weather;
- Hosted a **Gender & Conflict** course for CMM in Washington, D.C.;
- Completion of final revisions of the **DCHA At A Glance E-Learning Module** and continued work of the **DCHA In The Field E-Learning Module**;
- Completed and tested a final draft of the **DCHA Professional Development Survey** for PPM;
- Delivered draft sections of the **Guide to Conflict Sensitive Programming** to CMM;
- Updated the **DCHA Briefing Book**; and
- Prepared for seven courses to take place next quarter: **DCHA 101 Essentials; Gender & Conflict; ACA; FFP one-day** course; **CMC one-day** course; **CSG**; and the rescheduled **C102** from December 2013.



Working group in Bangkok

The table below provides an updated list of trainings that were delivered during the first quarter of fiscal year 2014, as well as a breakdown of participants trained.

DCHA/PPM Courses	Location & Dates	Participant Description
Crises, Stabilization and Governance Course	Washington, D.C. September 30 – October 4, 2013	<b>10 Participants:</b> 6 from DCHA; within DCHA (2 from DRG, 2 from OCR, 1 from FFP and 1 from CMC); and 4 from the following USAID missions: Jamaica, Sudan, Pakistan and Mongolia.
Systems Thinking & Analysis in Complex Environments Course (for the Complex Crises Fund, CCF)	Washington, D.C. September 30 – October 4, 2013	<b>12 Participants:</b> 8 from DCHA (4 from PPM, 1 from CMM, 1 from OCR, 1 from DRG and 1 from OTI); One from the USAID Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL); and 3 from USAID missions (1 from Yemen and 2 from Mali).
DCHA/CMM Courses	Location	Participant Description
Conflict 102 (C102)	Bangkok, Thailand October 9-10, 2013	<b>12 participants:</b> 5 from USAID missions (4 from the USAID/RDMA and 1 from Bangladesh); 2 from the US Embassy in Bangkok; 5 from various regional partners two (2 from Development Alternatives, Inc (DAI), 1 from the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), 1 from The World Bank, and 1 from UNICEF.
Gender & Conflict	Bangkok, Thailand October 11, 2013	<b>10 participants:</b> 6 from USAID missions (1 from Pakistan, 1 from Bangladesh, 1 from Burma, and 3 from RDMA); 1 from the U.S. Department of State; 2 from DAI; and 1 from TICA.
Advanced Conflict Assessment (ACA)	Bangkok, Thailand October 15-18, 2013	<i>This course was cancelled due to the government shutdown.</i>
Gender & Conflict Training of Trainers (G&C TOT)	Washington, DC November 26, 2013	<b>5 participants:</b> 3 from DCHA (3 from CMM); 1 from ME/TS; 1 from E3/GENDEV.
Conflict 102 (C102)	Washington, DC December 9-10, 2013	<i>Day 2 was cancelled due to inclement weather; this course will be rescheduled to January 2014.</i>
Gender & Conflict	Washington, DC December 11, 2013	<b>15 participants:</b> 12 from DCHA (9 from DRG, 2 from CMM, 1 from CMC); 1 from OST; 1 from the Kosovo Mission; 1 from the USAID Office of the Administrator.

## TOTALS

6 Courses Delivered:

- 4 D.C. Metro areabased trainings/workshops
- 2 international trainings

2 Courses Planned but Cancelled:

- 1 D.C. Metro-based training/workshop
- 1 international training

There was a total of **64 participants** trained during the first quarter of FY14.

- 19 from USAID missions
- 29 from the DCHA Bureau
  - 12 from DRG
  - 3 from OCR
  - 6 from CMM
  - 4 from PPM
  - 1 from OTI
  - 1 from FFP
  - 2 from CMC
  -
- 5 from other Bureaus
  - 1 from the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment, Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
  - 1 from the Bureau for the Middle East, Office of Technical Services
  - 1 from the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning
  - 1 from the USAID Bureau for Science, Technology & Innovation, Office of Science & Technology
  - 1 from the USAID Office of the Administrator
- 3 from other USG Agencies
  - 3 from the U.S. Department of State
- 8 from other Partners
  - 4 from Development Alternatives, Inc (DAI),
  - 2 from the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA),
  - 1 from The World Bank, and
  - 1 from UNICEF.

In order to facilitate the efficient implementation of these projects, weekly and bi-weekly planning meetings were held with the COR and the quarterly accruals report was submitted to the COR for review and final approval.

## Course Descriptions

The section below provides full descriptions of each of the major activities undertaken this quarter:

**Crises, Stabilization & Governance (CSG) Course:** This course aims to improve participant understanding and ability to apply concepts relating to transition to development and the intersection with effective and legitimate governance; differences in planning, programming, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in fragile states versus resilient states; and working with multiple stakeholders (host-country, interagency, and other international actors). Originally designed for DLI audience, this course is now open to broader participation across all USAID Bureaus; prerequisites for participation include serving at least one year at a USAID mission, completion of the Project Design and Management (PDM) course, and completing Conflict 102 or working for at least two years in a fragile environment. One CSG course was held this quarter from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at the USAID Washington Learning Center training facility in Arlington, VA. This offering had 10 participants – 6 from DCHA and the rest from USAID overseas missions. Several content revisions were made in advance of this offering, including updated guidance from DCHA offices and more robust examples of interagency programs in fragile and conflict affected states. Further updates were made to the course case study and several new USAID reports and non-USG reports on conflict were added to the course resources.

The observations from this iteration included the following:

- Based on the course evaluations, all participants felt that the first objective relating to understanding the transition to development was fully met. Ninety percent of participants thought that the second and third objectives relating to the difference in planning, programming, and monitoring in fragile environments and working with multiple stakeholders were fully met. The balance (10 percent) felt that these last two objectives were partially met. The diversity of examples contributed to the high ratings and the trainers will continue to work on improving session interactivity.
- In the course evaluations, participants identified monitoring and evaluation, the case study work, and theories of change to be the most useful aspects of the course.
- This offering benefited from having participants with practical knowledge relative to the course content; for instance, more than half of the participants had experience working in conflict-affected or humanitarian-response environments.

Further updating of course content and processes continued during this quarter. Changes reflect attempts to make sessions more interactive, streamline existing content and incorporate new findings from this rapidly dynamic field. These changes include removing the DCHA Office Overview session (now an on-line pre-requisite) and corresponding adjustments to the agenda, as well as incorporating the use of multi-media for exercises and content delivery.

**Systems Thinking & Analysis in Complex Environments:** This course is a non-credit course offering for USAID staff interested in crisis response and humanitarian assistance. It provides an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of systems thinking and complexity science while applying it to their respective technical or regional areas of responsibility. The course aims to improve participant understanding of the basic concepts of systems thinking and their applications to international development in general and crisis response and humanitarian assistance in particular. At the end of the course, participants should be able to use soft systems methodologies to model complex development problems and design effective

intervention strategies and evaluation maps; use a range of systems methodologies and tools to improve programming and proposal preparation for DCHA; and serve as systems thinking facilitators in their respective organizational units. The course uses lectures, workshops, in-class exercises and guided discussions. Varied iterations of this course are being taught within the E3 Bureau under another contractor and mechanism. This pilot five-day course took place from September 30<sup>th</sup> through October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at USAID's Washington Learning Center training facility in Arlington, VA. This offering had 12 participants – 8 from DCHA and the rest from USAID overseas missions.

Participant observations from this iteration include:

- Overall course objectives were met and in some cases exceeded expectations. The only unmet objective was to enable participants to serve as a systems thinking facilitator in their respective organizational units. Although 63% of participants felt confident to co-teach or assist future systems thinking workshops, they did not feel comfortable taking the lead..
- Participants felt this course was a solid foundation to systems thinking theory and were excited and grateful about being part of this pilot course. Participants felt, however, that more instruction was needed in order to fully use the range of systems methodologies and tools to improve their respective work within DCHA.
- Utilization of the systems thinking software, Vensim, coupled with the Mali and Yemen case studies, was an engaging experience that enabled participants to use soft systems methodologies to model a complex problem.
- Both the participants and facilitators felt that the course duration was very short and that additional training would be required to ensure they could apply systems thinking effectively. There is great interest among CCF staff and other DCHA bureau members to attend additional training in systems thinking.

**Conflict 102 (C102):** This 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. Two C102 sessions were held this quarter: one in Washington, DC (from December 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>, 2013) and one at the Regional Development Mission Asia (RDMA) in Bangkok, Thailand (from October 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The October offering in Bangkok was near fullcapacity with a total of twenty-one participants; however, due to overlap with the U.S. Government shutdown, participation decreased to twelve. The December offering had 19 participants; hopefully most of them will be able to attend the replacement workshop in late January.

Observations from the October 2013 Bangkok, Thailand offering include:

- Participants' ratings and comments indicate the course was well received, workshop objectives



Participant presenting a group project

were met, and attendees had a very positive overall learning experience.

- There was overwhelming praise of the conflict equation. Participants found it practical and easily applicable to the course case study.
- Several participants mentioned the *We Are CMM* video as the least compelling part of the workshop. This is likely due to the length of the video and the need to update the video with current staff and activities. Also, the M&E session is recurrently noted as a weak link. Although participants appear interested in learning about M&E (particularly in relation to conflict sensitive programming), they do not seem satisfied with the current information relayed in Module 8.

Due to inclement weather, Day 1 of the December 2013 iteration of C102 was cancelled, so the entire course will be rescheduled to January 2014.

**Gender & Conflict (G&C):** This course puts ideas into practice by drawing on concepts from academic research and demonstrating where gender fits into the Conflict Assessment Framework and conflict program design. The course examines common themes in gender norms - defining men's and women's opportunities, privileges, rights, and responsibilities; - examines engendered components in relation to the Conflict Assessment Framework; and identifies ways in which gender roles change in conflict and post-conflict environments and what this means for development interventions. Two G&C courses were held this quarter; one at the RDMA in Bangkok, Thailand (October 11, 2013) and the other in Washington, DC (December 11, 2013). In addition, one G&C Training of Trainers (TOT) session was held in Washington, DC on November 26th, 2013. The October offering in Bangkok was fully subscribed with a total of 16 participants; however, participation decreased to 10 due to overlap with the U.S. Government shutdown. The December offering had 15 participants, including 5 DLIs. The Gender & Conflict TOT had 5 participants, expanding the number of trained trainers for this relatively new course.

Observations from the October 2013 G&C course in Bangkok, Thailand include :

- Participants' ratings and comments indicate the workshop was very well received and objectives were met. Participants had a very positive overall learning experience.
- Some participants were quite new to thinking about gender and conflict, while others were quite experienced. Because of this spectrum of knowledge, not all learning was at the same level, even though Conflict 102 and Gender 101 are prerequisites.
- Due to the small group size of this iteration, there was more time for participants to delve deeper into the course material, share personal experiences, and build stronger bonds. Since this was only the second offering following the initial pilot, a few minor updates to materials and examples are needed. However, the positive constructive feedback provided in participant evaluations notes overall endorsement of the course.

Observations from the December 2013 G&C course in Washington, DC include:

- Participants praised the lively dialogue between facilitators and participants, thanks to the diverse experience among all learners.
- The workshop appears to be self-selecting participants who are already interested in gender and conflict issues.



Participants contribute to group dynamic

- Participants enjoyed the real world examples, rating the workshop objectives very highly.
- As this course progresses, new trainers practice facilitating this training, with the addition of two brand new trainers facilitating this offering. Participants rated them highly as well.

Observations from the November 2013 G&C TOT course in Washington, D.C. include:

- The group was quite small, so it was easy and welcome for the participants to stop the session and ask questions when necessary.
- Participants practiced “walking through” the curriculum with the trainers, asking questions and sharing personal examples, while also pointing out possible improvements to the material.

**Advanced Conflict Assessment (ACA):** This course serves to ensure a commonly understood (and consistently applied) framework for USAID conflict assessments; familiarizes USAID staff with the process of assessment and considerations for planning; improves participants’ skills in using the USAID Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) to guide data collection and analysis; and provides tools for synthesizing information into findings and for linking findings to concrete recommendations for USAID programmatic response. Planning for an offering from October 15-18, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand occurred this quarter; however, this offering was cancelled due to the U.S. government shutdown.

**DCHA e-Learning Modules:** Last quarter, work commenced on a DCHA 101 e-module, intended to become a prerequisite of the DCHA 101 Essentials course and the CSG course and to replace the introductory sessions in both of these live courses. This quarter, work continued on two online DCHA e-Learning modules: the DCHA 101 e-module (renamed *DCHA At A Glance*), and the DCHA 102 e-module (renamed *DCHA In the Field*). *DCHA At A Glance* aims to train DCHA staff on the Bureau’s structure, policy environment, partner agencies, and four primary objectives (Prevention, Response, Recovery and Transition) as well as the mission, mandate, operational capabilities, budget and staffing numbers of the nine DCHA Bureau Offices. Working with the COR, MSI provided technical support to define the purpose, learning objectives, and audience of *DCHA In the Field*. Using Adobe Captivate software, MSI digitized a final draft of *DCHA At A Glance* with narration tested on the online e-module platform. This draft was presented to DCHA office points of contact and submitted to the COR for circulation throughout the DCHA offices. MSI expects to receive feedback from the DCHA offices by the beginning of next quarter, and to start testing the module with focus groups by mid-January 2014. The initial module is expected to be ready to use with the next iteration of the DCHA 101 classroom course, scheduled for January 28-30, 2014.

**DCHA Professional Development Survey:** To better assess the professional development needs of DCHA staff, the COR and the MSI team worked to create a ‘DCHA Professional Development Survey’ to collect data and hear directly from DCHA staff regarding their interest in various technical and management topics. Last quarter, DCHA Senior Management reviewed and tested a prototype in Google Survey, which will be ready for distribution as soon as final approval is received. This quarter, final changes were made to the survey questions and the survey was submitted to the COR for distribution to Senior Management. The survey is expected to be sent out to potential respondents early next quarter. After the mid-January deadline to respondents, data will be aggregated and analyzed. Outcomes of the survey will be used to influence future DCHA-led professional development opportunities.

**Guide to Conflict Sensitive Programming:** The aim of this guide is to provide a short overview of existing literature in the area of conflict and development assistance programming and to provide USAID program and technical staff with approaches, good practices and tools for advancing development assistance in a conflict sensitive manner. Using an outline agreed upon with CMM, MSI began drafting detailed narrative for the CS Guide. Specifically, MSI updated and refined the terminology section, drafted narrative for the CDCS and Project Design and Implementation sections of the guide. MSI also updated the M&E section of the outline prior to submitting to CMM for comment and review. Questions linger as to how much time CMM will be able to devote to parts of the guide as well as whether MSI will reach out to present and former USAID staff for examples from the field to incorporate into the guide. MSI anticipates meeting with CMM in the coming weeks to review submissions to date and discuss a way forward.

**DCHA Briefing Book:** This quarter, MSI received further updates to the ‘Briefing Book’ for new DCHA employees. This document contains information about DCHA’s vision and mission, DCHA leadership, as well as profiles of each of the nine DCHA offices. The Briefing Book is being distributed through the DCHA PD&L.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned over the course of this quarter include:

- 1) **Conflict Stabilization & Governance Course:**
  - a. **Using a variety of methodological approaches strengthens the learning experience.** MSI has learned that using a variety of methodological approaches makes the course content more accessible and relevant. Additionally, participants appreciated the diversity of real-world examples and group discussions throughout the course, and expressed they would apply many aspects of the training to their work. MSI is exploring diverse methodological approaches, for example, incorporating video clips and possible role play. MSI will continue to incorporate participant experiences into the actual curriculum after each course.
  - b. **The course would be improved by revising the course objectives to better reflect key themes that appear throughout the training.** MSI has learned that matching the objectives with key themes strengthens the learning experience.
  - c. **Having participants with depth of experience working in crisis and conflict settings enriched the course as they contribute their learnings to the discussion and illustrate theory in action.** Having participants from other back stops (other than BS 76) adds different perspectives that enrich the learning experience. They also get a tremendous amount from the course because they don't think about these things every day like the BS 76s tend to.

2) **Systems Thinking & Analysis in Complex Environments pilot course:**

- a. **This course would benefit from adding more days to it; or alternatively creating several workshops focusing on different key topics (such as M&E), given the depth of the course material.** Although participants rated this course as a good introduction to systems thinking concepts, the material was very broad and would benefit from breaking down into key topics that are more relevant to USAID-specific work.
- b. **Engaging the trainer during prep time to review overall USAID functions and terminology will enable the trainer to incorporate more USAID-specific examples.** This course is geared towards experienced USAID staff from multiple bureaus who expect the trainer to understand the environment in which they are working.
- c. **Pre-reading materials should be sent to the participants prior to the start of the course in order to familiarize them with basic systems thinking concepts.** MSI has learned over the course of multiple trainings that pre-reading materials not only need to be sent in advance of trainings, but also multiple reminders leading up to the start of the course should be sent as well.

3) **Conflict 102:**

- a. **Involving a broad range of interagency participants and participants from other bureaus in this course greatly amplifies the learning experience.** Participant evaluations consistently mention the discussion with peers as one of the “best part[s] of the workshop.”
- b. **The conflict equation is a simple and applicable conflict assessment tool that is well received by the majority of participants.** Participants appreciate learning a tool that helps them classify and practically use the information they take in.
- c. **The M&E module should be revised because it currently does not meet the needs of the participants.** A more specific and practical module, concerning how to conduct M&E in conflict areas, would meet Conflict 102’s workshop objective to “apply conflict diagnostic tools to design an appropriate conflict program.”

4) **Gender & Conflict:**

- a. **Given the success of the Gender & Conflict workshop, there is no need for large-scale changes to the course.**
- b. **Participants are keenly interested in how to integrate gender considerations into their programs more than why it is necessary.** For instance, integrating more practical examples of gender mainstreaming from CMM staff experience would provide more models that participants could adapt to their own programs.

5) **Pre-Reading Assignments:**

- a. **Trainee participation and learning is at its highest when participants fully read their pre-reading assignments.** Generally speaking, only about one third of all training participants complete their pre-reading assignments. C102 and CSG facilitators are not satisfied with this figure and clearly see the impact on participation when reading is incomplete. Thus, for future offerings of these courses, MSI will continue to send regular welcome emails with pre-reading for each course. MSI will also send follow-up

reminders each week leading up to the training. In addition, some materials will be sent as an attachment as well as in a hyperlink since MSI wants to be sensitive to the technological difficulties participants can experience while traveling.

## Plans for Next Quarter

- Deliver a **Gender & Conflict (G&C)** course on January 27, 2014 in Washington, D.C.;
- Deliver a C102 course January 22-23, 2014 in Washington, DC;
- Deliver a **DCHA 101 Essentials (DCHA 101)** course from January 28-30, 2014 in Washington, D.C.;
- Deliver an **Advanced Conflict Assessment (ACA)** course from January 28-31, 2014 in Washington, D.C.;
- Provide support for the **FFP** one-day course as part of **DCHA Essentials**, to take place on February 5, 2014;
- Provide support for the **CMC** one-day course as part of **DCHA Essentials**, to take place on February 13, 2014;
- Deliver a **Crises, Stabilization and Governance (CSG)** course from February 24-28, 2014 in Dakar, Senegal;
- Receive final approval, upload and test e-modules for **DCHA At A Glance** and **DCHA In The Field**;
- Continue revising CSG materials to accommodate new DCHA e-module that is to replace session 2;
- Pilot DCHA e-modules with DCHA 101 and CSG participants prior to delivery of January and February offerings respectively;
- Reschedule and deliver the **Conflict 102** course from December 2013 that was cancelled due to inclement weather in January 2014;
- Continue writing and revising the **Guide for Conflict Sensitivity Programming**; and
- Upon DCHA senior leadership approval, administer the **DCHA Professional Development Survey** and conduct data analysis after survey response deadline.