
STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING FSN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
BTEC	Business Transformation Executive Committee
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EXO	Executive Office/Executive Officer
FS	Foreign Service
FSN	Foreign Service National
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
GAO	General Accounting Office
GS	Civil Service
IDI	International Development Intern
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M/HR	Management Bureau/Office of Human Resources
NEP	New Entry Professional
OE	Operating Expense
PER	Performance Evaluation Review
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
RIF	Reduction in Force
SBU	Sensitive But Unclassified
SO	Strategic Objective
TCN	Third Country National
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDH	U.S. Direct Hire
USG	U.S. Government

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The factors influencing the prospects for FSN professional development are complex and nuanced. On the one hand, there are significant structural constraints which present barriers to FSN advancement. On the other hand, the experiences of many missions demonstrate that it is possible to successfully develop FSN capacity even within these constraints. This report aims to shed light upon the many tensions and ambiguities within USAID and highlight best practices for managing them.

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

The analysis focuses on four interrelated themes: regulations, incentives, accountability, and culture. Each factor alone cannot explain FSN professional development. Rather, the combination of elements creates a picture of the complex web of factors that influence the possibilities for FSN professional development within USAID.

A. Regulations

USAID and Department of State regulations set real limits to the career advancement of FSNs. However, these regulations allow for much more authority and responsibility than FSNs are allowed in many missions. In fact, many interviewees report that USAID regulations are often “used as an excuse” not to share authority with FSNs, and there are numerous examples of FSNs successfully performing duties that were formally considered prohibited. Research reveals that many USDHs are in fact unclear about and misapply the letter of USAID policy.

B. Incentives

In many ways, missions that fail to take a proactive approach to FSN professional development are those that do not feel they *have* to. In other words, there is sometimes no obvious internal incentive to promote FSN career development. As a result, the issue becomes a moral question rather than a question of rational self-interest. The agency focus on developing an American foreign service corps and the lack of strategy in many mission training plans are two obstacles to FSN professional development.

C. Accountability

Because of the decentralized nature of USAID, missions are given the autonomy to develop management practices that are suitable to diverse local conditions. While decentralization allows for creativity and adaptability, it can also preclude quality control and weakens accountability. There is a wide variation in attention to FSN professional development across missions due to both a lack of clear message from Washington and a lack of capacity for measurement.

D. Culture

Culture is a critical backdrop coloring FSN-USDH relations. Although seemingly obvious, the nature of USAID intercultural relations overseas is complex, multidimensional and variable, and requires significant attention and skill to manage effectively. Culture in the context of USAID overseas missions is infused with status inequities, both historical and current.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the review of best practices underscores efforts to be initiated at the mission level, M/HR needs to develop centrally-supported mechanisms to guide missions and create incentives for FSN professional development. These recommendations highlight the role M/HR can play to address each of the four “Influential Factors” analyzed in this report. Within each section, recommendations are listed from least to most difficult.

First Priority

A. Accountability: M/HR should focus on disseminating a clear message from Washington that FSN professional development is a priority. It should develop a uniform policy for FSN career development and create systems for measurement and accountability. The best practices reviewed in this report reveal that missions have the means to engage in proactive policies when the will exists. Actions to take include:

- Define “FSN professional development” and “nurturing FSNs”
- Develop measures of “FSN professional development” and “nurturing FSNs”
- Include measures in assessments and evaluations
- Develop a management information system to measure FSN development

Second Priority

B. Incentives: M/HR should work to increase missions’ incentives to promote FSN professional development through both correct mission sizing and strategic training. Actions to take include:

- Identify and disseminate information about strategic training opportunities
- Create monetary incentives to promote FSN professional development
- Increase the efficiency of mission staffing to use FSNs to capacity

Other Priorities

C. Culture: USAID should work to manage the status inequities between FSOs and FSNs by increasing FSN representation and voice. This issue assumes greater urgency given the agency’s plans to aggressively recruit a new cadre of junior officers who will be placed in supervisory positions overseas. Actions to take include:

- Include discussion of managing status inequities in new cultural sensitivity course
- Increase FSN representation and voice through FSN positions in Washington, FSN forums and networks, and FSN-junior officer mentoring relationships

D. Regulations: Missions need to reexamine their assumptions about the limits to FSN authority. The best practices reviewed in this report demonstrate that the ADS 103.3.1.1 regulations allow for much more FSN authority than is practiced in some missions. M/HR needs to encourage higher delegation of authority to FSNs and seek further approval to empower FSNs. Actions to take include:

- Offer a refresher course on FSN authority, discussing ADS 103.3.1.1 and case studies of missions who have delegated high levels of authority to FSNs
- Seek authorities necessary to implement vision of “FSN professional development, including FSN authority to sign obligating documents and extensions to the FSN salary and grade scales

II. INTRODUCTION

Changes in the agency over the years have led USAID to rely increasingly on its FSN staff. The transition from direct implementation to contract management combined with a decade of significant downsizing has resulted in less USDHs on the ground. In 2003, FSNs represented 70% of USAID overseas workforce. In 2002, USAID managed activities in 88 countries with no USDH presence. The decline in hiring and the attrition of senior FSOs have resulted in a dearth of mid-level officers. In the face of critical human capital vulnerabilities, the agency has been called upon to make better use of its FSN staff. However, the problem of low FSN morale and limited FSN career advancement in many missions is considered common knowledge among USAID employees.

Political will at USAID/Washington to address this issue is at an all-time high. FSN career development has been called a “pressing issue” by M/HR and other USAID employees, and is on the agenda at the highest levels of the agency. The need to make better use of FSN capacity is part of USAID’s 2004-2008 Human Capital Strategic Plan. “Nurturing FSNs” was defined as one of the top three human resources priorities at a recent Business Transformation Executive Committee (BTEC) retreat. The Director of M/HR recently called this the “year of the FSN”, and has formed a working group within M/HR to develop a plan to put the BTEC’s mandate into action. The Administrator has expressed support for BTEC’s defined priorities.

While the will for change exists, the way forward is not obvious. USAID operates in an environment with numerous stakeholders, competing interests, and limited financial and human resources. To use FSNs to capacity, M/HR must navigate the ambiguities of an agency that is highly regulated, yet highly decentralized; operates under significant constraints, yet witnesses significant entrepreneurship; and is by nature international, yet remains fundamentally American.

This report aims to contribute to M/HR’s efforts to answer one central question:

How can USAID best promote the professional development of its FSN staff?

In order to answer this question, this report will examine three subquestions:

- 1) What is the nature of FSNs’ low morale? Specifically, what are their complaints?
- 2) What are the obstacles to FSN career advancement?
- 3) What are best practices for managing these constraints?

III. METHODOLOGY

Three sources of information were used in researching this report: 1) USAID surveys, 2) interviews and case studies, and 3) document review.

1. USAID Surveys

Two surveys were the primary source of information for understanding FSN concerns.

The Administrator's 2004 Employee Survey: Over 1,000 FSN write-ins to three human resources questions were reviewed. There are several methodological limitations to this survey which preclude rigorous quantitative analysis. First, the lack of randomization allows for selection bias. Second, the anonymity of the comments prevents correlation by grade level or mission. Despite these limitations, common themes emerged across all regions which are useful in informing the discussion.

Chief Accountants Network Survey: The summary report and recommendations from the Chief Accountants Network's "FSN Working Group" survey were also reviewed. This survey was distributed to FSN Committees in 60 missions. Although it suffers from the same methodological limitations as listed above, this survey was useful in reinforcing and expanding upon the general concerns expressed in the Administrator's survey.

2. Interviews and Case Studies

In order to determine the obstacles to and best practices for promoting FSN professional development, interviews were conducted with USAID staff both in Washington and overseas. In Washington, on-site interviews were conducted with staff in the Counselor's office, the Office of Human Resources, and the Regional Bureaus. Telephone interviews were conducted with the Director's Office and/or the Executive Office of nine overseas missions: Bulgaria, Egypt, Guatemala, Guinea, Mali, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Ukraine. Missions were selected to create a representative sample in terms of geography and mission size. Each interview with overseas FSOs drew forth examples from the multiple missions in which they had served, which further diversified the sample. Discussion also took place with representatives of the Department of State.

3. Document Review

Research was informed by a review of USAID policies and procedures, strategic plans, and external consultant reports.

IV. SUMMARY OF FSN SURVEYS

The two surveys studied reveal evidence of low FSN morale. While examples are largely anecdotal and may not be relevant to some missions, all USAID employees interviewed confirmed the general accuracy of these statements. Five areas of FSN discontent emerge consistently across all regions.

1. Lack of upward mobility

Many FSNs feel that there is no clear career path for them within the agency. They state that unlike USDH positions, few FSN positions have career ladders which provide a clear track for advancement.

“There is a need for an entry level for each position in which a person can learn and then move ahead.”

Many senior FSNs express frustration with the career ceiling at grade 12/13. They report that the only option for career advancement at this stage is to leave the agency.

“As professional FSNs are delegated more responsible tasks, the reward system should be amended to reflect such. Currently the highest grade for an FSN is 12. What next if a grade 12 employee reaches the highest grade step?”

Another concern expressed was the desire to be utilized more to capacity. Many FSNs articulated that they have unused competencies and are not challenged to gain new skills.

“I would prefer to have more responsibilities delegated to me and to others in my office and mission. Local staff are often treated as administrative support and our skills are not needed, even though we were hired in accordance with the position requirements. The skills that we were required are not very well used.”

2. Inadequate compensation

Below-market compensation, particularly for professional FSN positions, was reported as a concern. A senior FSN explained, “We can cross over to work with one of USAID’s implementing partners and receive thrice as much for similar work.” Frustration was also expressed with the differential pay scale and benefits for FSN and American staff, the lack of standardization of FSN compensation across missions, and the untimely salary adjustments in times of local currency devaluation and inflation.

“Generally, the Management’s mentality is that there are many unemployed people out there and if anybody is not happy let them just go to wherever they think it is greener.”

3. No clear, consistent performance criteria

There is a perceived bias in the performance evaluation system. Personal relationships with supervisors are perceived to be the main determinant of rewards, rather than work performance.

“From my experiences so far, most of the performance evaluation (relating to upgrade or salary increase) is based on the preference of the immediate supervisor and less based on the actual quality of staff performance.”

FSNs express that there is also inconsistency among supervisors in their approach to performance evaluation and rewards. Because they are not held accountable for proactive involvement in the performance evaluation process, some supervisors are diligent in coaching and writing awards nominations, while others do not make the time. According to one FSN, “Most of the time our supervisors take 2-3 months to do our PER and HRM is not bothered by it.” As a result, the quality of performance evaluation as a tool for staff development often suffers.

“During performance evaluation, the evaluators are usually late in filling out the evaluation forms and tend to copy the previous one, instead of conducting a good and thorough evaluation of performance.”

4. Few training opportunities

FSNs commented on two aspects of training. First, they noted a lack of equity in who was selected to attend training events. Differences in opportunity were observed between program-funded and OE-funded staff, between professional and support staff, and between American and FSN staff. They also expressed that there was no clear criteria for selection: some employees attend training events on a regular basis, while others receive little to no training.

“Training should be improved so that all employees get the opportunity for training, and not just the chosen few who are repeatedly trained.”

Second, the courses that most employees have access to (online courses and local courses) are not current and not USAID-specific. They would like more technical training specific to USAID positions, including more technical language training.

“Training opportunities on technical matters are very limited. USAID employees should have the knowledge to lead the way and not be a follower. I feel that we at USAID are many times behind in terms of our knowledge on technical aspects with regards to our contractors and grantees.”

5. Cultural Insensitivity

A common theme underlying FSN comments is not being treated with respect by USAID policies and personnel. Reference has been made to junior officers ungraciously delegating to experienced FSNs, to not being acknowledged as professionals or colleagues, and to being treated as “second or third class citizens.”

“My suggestion to the Administrator is that the people who are sent out as diplomats to work in the countries where USAID has a presence be put through some training to ensure that they understand the reason for their coming out to countries is to assist in the development of host countries, not to oppress the local employees.”

V. INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

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A. REGULATIONS

USAID and Department of State regulations set real limits to the career advancement of FSNs. However, these regulations allow for much more authority and responsibility than FSNs are allowed in many missions. In fact, many interviewees report that USAID regulations are often “used as an excuse” not to share authority with FSNs, and there are numerous examples of FSNs successfully performing duties that were formally considered prohibited. Research reveals that many USDHs are in fact unclear about and misapply the letter of USAID policy. This section reviews the regulatory and statutory limitations to FSN authority and cites examples of missions who have successfully worked to promote FSN career development within these bounds.

1. USAID policy

U.S. Government “members” and inherently governmental functions

A key justification for career ceilings for FSNs stems from the perceived inability of FSNs to carry out “inherently governmental functions.” However, USAID regulations do not entirely support this belief. A careful review of USAID statutes reveals that FSNs do have the authority to carry out inherently governmental functions. ADS 103.3.1.1 states that inherently governmental functions must be carried out by U.S. Government “members”, which include many types of staff such as Foreign Service Nationals (either FSNs or FSNPSCs), Third Country Nationals (TCNs), U.S. Personal Service Contractors (USPSCs), and U.S. Direct Hires (USDHs). Furthermore, FSNs generally may do the same work as USDHs. The policy states:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of USAID directive, regulations, or delegations, U.S. Citizen personal service contractors (USPSCs) and non-U.S. citizen employees (host country and third country Personal Service Contractors (PSCs) and direct hire employees) may be delegated or assigned any authority, duty or responsibility, delegable to U.S. citizen direct-hire employees (USDH employees)...”

Thus, their status as USG members gives FSNs the authority to carry out inherently governmental functions for which they are qualified and for which they have been given a delegation of authority. Furthermore, according to USAID statutes, FSNs have the same authority as USPSCs.

Exceptions to non-USDH authority

While generally authorizing non-USDHs to do the same work as USDHs, ADS 103.3.1.1 lists four exceptions:

- “(1) They may not supervise USDH employees of USAID or other U.S. Government agencies. They may supervise USPSCs and non-U.S. citizen employees.
- (2) They may not be designated a Contracting Officer or delegated authority to sign obligating or sub-obligating documents.
- (3) They may represent the Agency, except that communications that reflect a final policy, planning, or budget decision of the agency must be cleared by a USDH employee.
- (4) They may participate in personnel selection matters but may not be delegated authority to make a final decision on personnel selection matters.”

These exceptions to non-USDH authority place a steel ceiling on the career path of FSNs. According to these regulations, an FSN will never occupy the position of Mission Director or Deputy Director.

Exaggeration of limitations

While they present real limitations to the work that FSNs can do, these regulations are often overemphasized and exaggerated. A close examination of the policy reveals that these limitations involve mere formalities: reporting relationships, signatures, and check-ins. FSNs cannot *supervise* USDHs, but they can have primary responsibility for activities. FSNs cannot *sign* documents obligating funds, but they can do everything involved with managing a contract. They may represent the agency in every way, but have to check-in with a USDH before communicating final policy. They may also engage in personnel selection and recommendation, but have to consult with USDHs to make the final decision. In sum, FSNs can generally do the same work as USDHs, but need to include USDHs in the process for the sake of accountability.

Discussions with many USDHs reveal a lack of clarity about the exact letter of USAID policy and which FSN activities are allowed. There is general understanding that FSNs cannot do “inherently governmental work” and that FSNs cannot supervise USDHs. However, there is confusion about the exact nature of these concepts and how they are to be applied in everyday work. One Executive Officer explains that this partly because USAID regulations are “mindbogglingly impossible to follow. You think there’s a regulation where there is no regulation. You think there is no regulation where there is a regulation. Especially for senior folks, we read all this stuff 20 years ago and if we haven’t heard anything about it from Washington since, we assume it hasn’t changed.” Much of the understanding of how these regulations are to be applied stems from historical experience with what has generally been done at USAID. However, the agency has changed significantly, and many USDHs have been slow to reexamine their assumptions about FSN authority. New officers absorb signals from senior officers and reinforce a culture of FSN disempowerment.

Examples of successfully working within the constraints

Missions that have broken ingrained patterns and questioned assumptions about the appropriate role of FSNs are those that have been forced to operate with less USDHs for various reasons, including RIFs, civil wars, and non-presence delivery platforms.

Case Study: USAID/Bulgaria

Slated for graduation in 2008, USAID/Bulgaria has begun downsizing its USDHs. The mission has a staff of 36 people, including no more than 6 Americans. The Mission Director states, “Large missions are dependent on their USDHs... Small missions can’t operate like that. FSNs are all doing inherently governmental work.” With no Deputy Director position, an FSN 13 program officer in many ways plays this role. She engages in significant interaction with Washington, drafts portions of the mission performance plan, leads portfolio reviews, and discusses the budget with the Ambassador. The Director explains that there was initial hesitation to put her in this role, but she has received support from Washington and the arrangement has worked well. The activity managers are FSN 10-12s, and their jobs are based on both their technical skills and their ability to interact with high level government officials. All the FSNs in the mission are known and respected as peers outside USAID and by their Washington-based counterparts. Speaking about the high level of competence of her FSN staff, the Director states, “I would rather have a good FSN than a direct-hire any day. Direct-hires don’t know the language, the culture, barely know the agency, are consumed with their next post. We have gotten along just fine with an FSN-driven program staff.” A USPSC has been helpful in reading documents to do a language cross-check.

There are numerous examples from other regions of missions who have succeeded in delegating high levels of authority to FSNs within the bounds of the ADS 103.3.1.1 regulations. In El Salvador, Haiti, and Panama, FSNs assumed key leadership roles when Americans left the country due to civil war, coups, or political instability. Interviewees noted that FSNs occupied top USDH positions, including Office Director, Deputy Office Director, and SO team leaders.

Further examples highlight the expansiveness of the ADS 103.3.1.1 regulations. Although engaged in clearly governmental functions, the Office of the Inspector General in Dakar relies on a diverse group of FSN, TCN, and American auditors. Similarly, while in many missions it is considered unthinkable to have a non-American Controller, some missions have assigned FSNs to this position. Therefore, while they do limit FSN authority, the ADS regulations allow for more career advancement that is generally practiced.

Best Practice: Use “Special Advisor” and “Acting Office Chief” titles to circumvent supervisory limitation

Missions have developed innovative methods to empower FSNs despite their inability to supervise USDHs. In Mali, an FSN was already the head of the governance team when a USDH was brought in as a governance officer. Instead of replacing the FSN, the USDH became a “special advisor to the team leader”, but reported to the Deputy Director. Similarly, in Guatemala, an FSN held the position of Office Deputy, but the Mission Director gave the new USDH the “acting Office Chief” title.

Best Practice: Stretch staff with new responsibilities and motivate them through awards

While there are real constraints to upward mobility, FSN professional development does not always require promotion. Staff can be stretched and motivated in many ways. One Mission Director explains, “You don’t have to create new position. You have to make their job challenging, give them new responsibilities so they feel they are growing in their jobs.” In Mali, the Mission Director

created a “Passion Award”, an on-the-spot check for \$300 for the most hardworking and motivated employee. The competition for this award has been intense, and it has been awarded to a diverse group of employees, including the head janitor and the head of the agricultural economics team. The Director concluded, “There is a brick wall... but you have to use the tools you have to the absolute maximum you can.”

In sum, there is a general misapplication of USAID regulations governing FSN authority. While real limitations do exist, they can be used as a justification for inaction. As one Mission Director stated, USDHs that fail to promote FSN career development are “taking the easy street by saying that ‘the system’ doesn’t allow it.”

2. Department of State policy

The Department of State also sets regulations which influence the career advancement opportunities of FSNs. While some of these are binding constraints, missions nonetheless have developed innovative mechanisms to manage these limitations.

Confidentiality and security clearances

Lack of U.S. citizenship can present an obstacle to FSN career advancement because of embassy policies regarding confidentiality and security clearances. There are many embassy meetings in which it is important for FSNs to participate, but that non-U.S. citizens are not permitted to attend because they involve information that State has determined to be “classified.” Interviewees have stated that this creates an awkward situation where USDHs have to brief FSNs after the meetings.

Best Practice: Recognize large scope of work possible with SBU information

Many interviewees note that the embassy’s “fixation on security and confidentiality” is often more regulatory than material. One Mission Director stated that the information State classifies is “hardly useful information and FSNs know it anyway.” Most of the information needed to do USAID work is SBU (“sensitive but unclassified”) information, and the lack of high-level security clearance is not an obstacle to productivity. Therefore, rather than limit the scope of FSN work, missions have managed to empower FSNs within the embassy security clearance requirements.

Compensation

State regulations govern compensation plans for FSNs of all overseas government agencies. However, the compensation plans embassies set generally fall below how USAID values its own FSNs. The FSN salary scale is set according to local market conditions, whereas the FS and GS salary scales of USDHs, USPSCs, and TCNs are set according to expatriate living standards. Out of the four principal overseas employee categories, FSNs receive the lowest compensation, and salary is capped at the FSN 12/13 level. Furthermore, even according to local market conditions, the FSN salary scale is usually not the most competitive for senior FSNs, as embassies generally aim to fall around the 70-80th percentile range of the comparator groups.

While FSNs generally receive lower salaries than other employee categories, there are exceptions. In countries with highly developed private sectors, FSN salaries can be very competitive. For example, in South Africa, there are senior FSNs who earn more than some USDHs and USPSCs. Also, because they reflect local norms, benefits packages can also be higher for FSNs than for Americans. For instance, in Egypt, FSNs receive up to 30 days of paid vacation, which is exceedingly higher than the American norm. However, benefits and salary do not carry equal weight.

USAID has been unable to gain authority to determine the compensation for its own FSNs. The inequality in salary scales has been a cause of low morale for professional FSNs, sometimes more so than the level of compensation itself. While FSN salaries are relatively competitive compared to local living standards, compared to expatriate standards they are not. The disparity in salary and living conditions for what is often equal work promotes the feeling of being second class citizens. USAID has suffered the loss of more senior FSNs in recent years. Several of the Mission Directors interviewed stated that some of their very top level FSNs have left their missions because they received job offers from other international organizations that offered more competitive compensation packages.

Best Practice: Make use of TCN category to access GS salary scale

Although State policies are rigid, missions have developed strategies in recent years to motivate and retain their top FSNs. One mechanism has been to launch FSNs into the TCN category. As TCNs, FSNs can go beyond the FSN 12/13 salary level to access the GS salary scale. The Guinea mission has developed experience both sending and receiving TCNs. For example, an FSN 12 earning the equivalent of \$15,000 per year in the local compensation plan transferred to Djibouti (non-presence) to be a USAID education officer and is now earning the GS 11/12 equivalent. The Controller volunteered to spend nine months in Iraq and earned nearly three times his annual salary. There are also 2-3 TCNs in the Guinea mission (FSNs from other countries). One is a Senegalese contracting officer assistant who is earning the GS 11, and another is an accountant in the controllers office from Eritrea. Mali is another mission that has made use of the TCN category by sending staff to Afghanistan.

B. INCENTIVES

In many ways, missions that fail to take a proactive approach to FSN professional development are those that do not feel they *have* to. In other words, there is sometimes no obvious internal incentive to promote FSN career development. As a result, the issue becomes a moral question rather than a question of rational self-interest. The presence of a large USDH staff and the lack of strategy in many mission training plans are two obstacles to FSN professional development.

1. Reliance on a large USDH staff

The presence of a large USDH staff can serve as a disincentive to promote FSN professional development.

Promoting an American foreign service corps

As creating a career foreign service corps is a priority to the agency, USDHs enjoy special status in overseas missions. Career advancement is engrained in the personnel policies of the USFSO employee category. As rank-in-person employees, foreign service officers are hired based on their potential to rise through the ranks, and they are eligible for promotion throughout their career. As FSOs are career employees with job mobility, there is more of an incentive to invest in their professional development.

While FSOs are hired for a career, FSNs are hired for a specific job. Nearly all FSNs hold PSC status, which by definition does not envision career employment. PSCs are not inherently eligible for promotion, but rather receive incentive awards based on how well they are performing the duties outlined in their contract. Similar to other rank-in-position employees, FSNs can only obtain a promotion through changing contracts or jobs.

Furthermore, because of the costs associated with bringing a USDH overseas, FSOs are only recruited for positions whose required skills or qualifications cannot be found locally. In many cases, key qualifications which cannot be found locally are related to the specific authorities of a USDH. However, implicit in this practice is that non-USDH positions are readily available and substitutable in the local market.

Therefore, the different purposes inherent in the personnel categories of FSOs and PSCs create an incentive to invest more in the professional development of USDHs compared to that of FSNs.

Presence of USDHs an obstacle to FSN career advancement

USAID's emphasis on developing and maintaining an American foreign service corps promotes reliance on USDHs to do the work of the agency. Because FSOs generally occupy leadership positions overseas, the presence of USDHs can serve as an obstacle to FSN career advancement. In fact, many interviewees described an element of competition between FSNs and USDHs as they advance in their careers. One Mission Director explained that in considering the upward mobility of FSNs, he was "faced with some difficult choices" between promoting the careers of USDHs and FSNs. The tacit emphasis on USDH career advancement can preclude missions from evaluating staff solely based on merit.

Promoting FSN career development has proven most difficult in large missions. Although large missions have greater resources to dedicate to training and mentoring, they also have a larger number of USDH staff. Since management relies more heavily on USDHs and prioritizes their career advancement, the presence of their American colleagues limits the upward mobility of FSNs. One Deputy Director observed, "The career path of FSNs is dictated by the number of Americans on staff." The empirical research of this report supports this tendency.

Case Study: USAID/Egypt

Since the Camp David Accords in 1979, Egypt has been one of the largest USAID missions in the world. With an annual budget of \$1 billion, the mission used to employ 150 USDHs and 600-700 FSNs. Downsizing has since reduced the staff to its current level of 47 USDHs, 20 USPSCs, and 250 FSNs, but Egypt is still one of the largest USAID missions. Although the mission has a proactive training policy, it offers FSNs limited opportunity for upward mobility. According to the Deputy Director, the Egypt mission "has offered the least scope for FSNs to advance.... Their career path ends at project manager, which is more like a project assistant." Offices typically employ 4-5 USDHs, with Americans occupying the top positions. Although there are four FSN 13s, there is currently only one FSN team leader, and the only other senior FSN position is that of the Chief Accountant. This is due to preference afforded to USDH staff. In smaller missions, FSN project managers run a broad range of projects and become experts in their area. However, in Egypt, the USDHs play this role. FSNs usually manage one project and do not have decision-making authority. The mission will further reduce its staff by over 40%, which will eliminate some USDH positions and increase the prospects of FSNs to attain higher level positions. The Deputy Director explained, "A healthy outcome of the RIF is that it breaks things open for FSN staff."

Smaller missions have greater incentive to promote FSN professional development

Large missions can afford to rely on their USDH staff and have to contemplate real tradeoffs in supporting the advancement of their FSN staff. However, small missions do not have this opportunity. They have a real incentive to actively promote FSN professional development because it directly impacts whether the work of the agency is done.

Case Study: USAID/Sierra Leone

A “non-presence” mission, USAID/Sierra Leone is supported out of Guinea and employs no USDH staff on the ground. It operates an average annual budget of \$17 million with only four staff members: 2 FSN professionals (FSN 12s), 1 USPSC program manager, and 1 FSN administrative assistant. The Guinea-based USDH Program Director for the Sierra Leone mission stated that he has actively promoted FSN professional development because there have been no other staff upon which to rely.

For the past four years of the program’s operation, the Program Director has aggressively promoted training, mentoring, and career advancement. The Sierra Leone staff have received all the core USAID courses both regionally and overseas. While the staff have received all the packaged training, the Program Director explains that there is no substitute for the on-the-job learning. For the first three years, he spent much of his time in Freetown engaging in mentoring to transfer responsibilities to the Sierra Leone staff. In the past year, he has transferred the CTO responsibilities and now he is working to transfer programming, budgeting, and other skills. He has also facilitated mentoring relationships between FSNs in Sierra Leone and Botswana.

In addition to training and mentoring, the Program Director has promoted the upward mobility of the Sierra Leone FSNs. The administrative assistant began as a secretary, but is now a LAN manager and has been promoted to grade 9. The two FSN professionals have been promoted to grade 12. As the capacity to award an FSN grade 12 did not exist at post, he worked for 18 months with Washington to create a grade 12 position for Freetown.

While exceptional in many ways, the Sierra Leone example highlights the curiosity that many managers perceive FSN professional development as a burden rather than a necessity. In addition to excessive reliance on USDHs, one possible explanation is that staff are not being used to capacity. For example, the Guinea mission has annual budget of \$20 million (roughly the same size as that of Sierra Leone), but manages the program with 90-95 staff, including 8-9 USDH. While the complexity of the programs differ, the staff differential is substantial: Guinea has 23 times the number of staff as the Sierra Leone mission. In comparing the two missions, the Guinea-based Program Director noted, “We may be overstaffed. With the team model, if the teams are too big, you look to the next person to do the work. In Sierra Leone, where the team is small, each person has to pull his own weight.” Therefore, excessive staff can also limit the incentive for managers to promote FSN career development.

Downsizing and “surge” needs call for increased use of FSNs

A decade of downsizing and the integration of development work into the U.S. global security strategy have led USAID to become increasingly conscious of a basic fact: the agency needs its FSNs. In addition to staffing programs that have lost key USDH positions, FSNs have been serving in difficult-to-staff posts such as Iraq and Afghanistan. “Following the tanks in” to provide post-war reconstruction immediately following hostilities is a new paradigm for USAID, and many FSOs are unwilling to assume this role. Multiple reports from both the GAO and USAID highlight the agency’s need to build “surge capacity” into its staffing model to respond quickly to changing foreign policy priorities. USAID is currently in the process of creating an “FSN Roster” of highly skilled and experienced FSN staff who are ready and willing to respond to such surge requirements. As the agency increasingly taps unused FSN capacity, it will have to address FSN desires for commensurate salary increases.

2. Disincentives to training

In the context of significant budget cuts over the years, missions face competing demands on a limited amount of time and funds. The limited OE budget and the lack of strategic value in training plans may cause training to assume less priority than current work responsibilities.

Limited operating expense (OE) budget

Many missions have difficulty managing the limited operating expense (OE) budget. Established by Congress, the OE budget funds the salaries and resources provided to certain staff, including USDHs, the Executive Office, and a limited number of employees engaged in program work. While program staff have training expenses built into their contracts, OE staff must fund their training out of an increasingly limited OE budget. The lack of set-aside for training often results in limited training opportunities for OE staff. Both the limited training for OE staff and the lack of equity between OE and program staff are a cause of low morale among many OE-funded FSNs.

Best Practices: Prioritize training, manage costs, make creative use of funds, and maintain equity between program- and OE-funded staff

Despite these challenges, many missions pursue proactive training policies. When asked how this was managed, one Deputy Director responded that management simply makes training a priority. It decides that it would “rather send people to leadership training than buy new furniture.” Another Mission Director responded in a similar fashion. She stated, “It’s a value. You just have to buy less office furniture.” Prioritizing training involves collectively deciding on tradeoffs, such as business class traveling; developing strategies to manage costs, such as linking USDH training to home leave and pursuing local and regional opportunities; and engaging in budgetary entrepreneurship, such as program-funding local training for program staff and allowing OE staff to attend. Other missions have tried to maintain morale by promoting equity between program- and OE-funded staff. Therefore, experiences in various missions demonstrate that a proactive training policy is possible even within the constraints of the OE budget.

Unstrategic demand: Training plans as “wish lists”

That some missions do not prioritize training suggests that the benefits of training do not outweigh the costs. Research reveals that in many missions, there is little effort to enforce both strategic criteria for training selection and accountability after attendance. For example, training requests are often expressed in terms of skills that an employee would like to receive with only tenuous relation to the needs of the position. One EXO explained, “Staff need to understand that it’s not what the agency can do for you, but what you can do for the agency.” In another mission, the Deputy

Director described how the first training committee plan that was created was for \$500,000 and was a “wish list with no rhyme or reason.” The lack of logic in training plans can erode the legitimacy of requests and degrade the culture of training. Many interviewees commented that training requests are sometimes based on desire to travel rather than to learn, as evidenced by decreased interest when similar opportunities are found locally. As one EXO stated, “Where is their allegiance – to learning or to travel? The opportunity to see the world is a learning experience, it broadens their horizons, but we are not a tourist agency.” Furthermore, there is often no follow-up after training has taken place to ensure that the event served its purpose.

Best Practice: Create training plans based on skills assessment and strategic agency needs

Proactive missions have implemented policies to enforce strategy and accountability in training. For example, the South Africa mission challenges team leaders to conduct skills assessments with employees and justify their training plans to management. According to the Deputy Director, “At the beginning this was tough, but now people are more used to it and they think more critically about training.” The training committee has been limited to senior management to promote a candid discussion of priorities. The mission also requires staff to present the learning they gained to the rest of the mission and considers the impact of previous training as a criterion for future training selection.

Unstrategic supply: Limited access to relevant training materials

Another reason for the failure of some missions to make sacrifices for training may be the limited access to relevant training materials. Some interviewees explained that mission training plans may sometimes be haphazard because missions are often unaware of the range of relevant training opportunities available. Rather than receive information from the Pillar Bureaus or M/HR, they learn about available courses from vendors trying to sell their products. The lack of information leads them to take advantage of opportunities as they come along. In addition, some of the training courses offered may not be effective. While the leadership courses received positive feedback from the USDHs interviewed, one interviewee reported that there was “controversy” surrounding the CTO training. Attendees of this course claimed that only 1-2 days of this course were relevant to their jobs. While the data from this research cannot be considered conclusive, they raise the question of how USAID measures the impact of its training investment and whether training is necessarily the best method of professional learning in general. The Sierra Leone case highlights the importance of on-the-job learning and mentoring.

In sum, training can be a valuable tool to create a high-performing workforce. The lack of ample training opportunities may stem from two causes. First, the declining OE budget limits the funds available. Second, the costs of training may not outweigh the benefits. Both of these factors create disincentives to pursue proactive training policies.

C. ACCOUNTABILITY

Because of the decentralized nature of USAID, missions are given the autonomy to develop management practices that are suitable to diverse local conditions. While decentralization allows for creativity and adaptability, it can also preclude quality control and weakens accountability. There is a wide variation in attention to FSN professional development across missions due to both a lack of clear message from Washington and a lack of capacity for measurement.

1. No clear message from Washington

The BTEC has recently defined nurturing FSNs to be one of its top three priorities for human resources. The committee is in the process of developing a strategy to put this mandate into action. Nevertheless, to date, there has been no clear message from senior management that promoting FSN development is a priority to the agency. There has been both a lack of uniform policy and a lack of a rewards system to guide missions to promote FSN development. As a result, Mission Directors are allowed considerable leeway in how they manage their FSN staff.

No common policy

There is no uniform vision for FSN career development within USAID to guide either missions or FSNs. Both NEPs and IDIs participate in a five-week new-entry orientation providing an introduction to the agency and tools for career management. In addition, all American foreign service officers follow a common skills matrix, and the PER process occurs during a common period of time within each mission. In contrast, there are few centrally-supported career mechanisms for FSNs. Upon entering the agency, most FSNs receive little counseling or explanation of their career prospects within the agency. In fact, interviewees have stated that many FSNs are not aware of the FSN career ceiling and different limits to FSN authority when they enter the agency. Furthermore, there is no universal policy for FSN performance evaluation and skills development. Missions are in charge of developing their own set of skills standards for FSNs. In many missions, PERs for FSNs are conducted on a rolling basis, based on the anniversary of the FSN's date of service. As there is no common period for supervisors to all focus on performance appraisals, this often results in less priority given to evaluation and the quality of the evaluation can suffer. One Mission Director called the rolling FSN PERs a "management nightmare." She explained that in this system there is "no quality control and no accountability. Supervisors didn't even talk to employees."

Best Practice: Implement common PER period for FSNs

Some missions have taken it upon themselves to implement a common FSN evaluation period to provide increased attention and oversight. In Mali, the Mission Director checks a random sample of evaluations to let supervisors know she is involved and takes the process seriously. While there are examples of efforts to enforce accountability for FSN development at the mission level, the lack of universal agency policy means that these successful practices are not consistent across missions.

No clear rewards system

FSN development is not explicitly emphasized in the performance precepts of FSOs. USAID has made significant advances in recent years towards highlighting the importance of leadership and staff development skills in both evaluations and training. The number of skill areas in the performance precepts has been reduced, with resource management and leadership assuming greater prominence. Furthermore, the agency has developed a supervisory course and three different leadership courses which are widely popular. Nevertheless, there has been no tangible system in place to reward managers who implement proactive policies specifically towards the professional development of FSNs. One Mission Director stated, "The career development of USDHs tends to take priority over the career development of FSNs." Another Mission Director stated that Directors hold added credibility in the eyes of regional bureaus and peers if they are supervising more USDHs. This sends a message that Washington does not value its FSN employees as much as its USDHs. When asked about their motivation for taking a proactive approach to FSN career development, many Mission Directors cited their own management philosophy that they had developed through personal experience, rather than the management philosophy or directive of USAID. One Deputy Director stated that it is easy to "pay lip service" to Washington guidelines, but that her mission

strives to “walk the walk” and interprets policy guidelines as “a floor rather than a ceiling.” Therefore, the lack of clear directives from Washington leaves the extent of FSN development efforts to the discretion of individual managers.

2. Lack of capacity for measurement

What gets measured gets counted. USAID has neither objective criteria for FSN professional development nor sufficient capacity to measure such criteria.

No common measures

USAID management has not defined any objective criteria to guide missions in nurturing FSNs. The concept of “FSN professional development” is an abstract one, and research reveals that there are many different ideas among both USDHs and FSNs about what this means. Some define it as training attendance, while others perceive it as upward mobility, while still others consider it a question of salary. Annual evaluation forms do not set specific measures for assessing FSN career development. In the “specific skills area” component, USDHs are evaluated on staff development and other areas according to a scale of four levels: outstanding, commendable, proficient, and area for improvement. There is no mention of any basis for assigning USDHs to any of these categories. While USDHs create performance plans in which specific work objectives and performance measures are defined, FSN development generally is not an area which receives such detailed attention. Similarly, the new Mission Management Assessments have not developed objective criteria for measuring FSN development. Although considerable attention is afforded to FSN issues, the primary research method used to evaluate FSN professional development is focus groups. Qualitative discussions provide important insight into the unique characteristics of each mission. However, consistent, agency-wide targets are necessary to motivate and guide missions to promote effective FSN career development.

Insufficient management information system

The current USAID management information system has very limited capacity to measure key information regarding FSN professional development. While the eWorld system tracks non-USDH data by mission, employee, position, and salary, it has no capacity to track training attendance at the mission level. Furthermore, unlike the US foreign service NFC Payroll/Personnel system, the eWorld system has no built-in crosscheck for the data such as a payroll or budgeting system. Therefore, the information entered by missions is not always accurate. According to the information management specialist, missions are “generally pretty good at doing it, but you can’t tell if the data is up to date or accurate.” Recently, M/HR allocated funds for a mission based on the number of program-funded and OE-funded staff entered into eWorld. However, the mission contacted M/HR to complain that its estimation of program- and OE-funded staff was inaccurate, and acknowledged that the staff were misclassified in eWorld. In addition, salary information is often considered by M/HR to be “ballpark”, as salary fields are sometimes not entered or are entered in local currency rather than U.S. dollars. It is difficult to hold missions accountable for FSN professional development if there is no reliable data on FSN training attendance and grade increases. Lastly, the current information systems do not allow for a statistically robust assessment of FSN needs. The Administrator’s employee survey could only categorize respondents by region and did not allow for randomization.

In sum, decentralization is important in prompting mission creativity and adaptation to diverse local conditions. However, the lack of central involvement can create a gap in accountability.

There are no central policies, measurement systems or rewards to indicate to missions that FSN professional development is a priority.

D. CULTURE

Culture is a critical backdrop coloring FSN-USDH relations. Although seemingly an obvious statement, the nature of USAID intercultural relations overseas is complex, multidimensional and variable, and requires significant attention and skill to manage effectively. Culture in the context of USAID overseas mission is infused with status inequities, both historical and current. This section analyzes the various tensions inherent in USAID intercultural relations and describes best practices for managing them.

1. Historical origins and a changing workforce

In many ways, USAID's culture of USDH-FSN relations is influenced by its historical origins. When the agency was founded in 1961, it operated under two assumptions. First, the American was necessarily the primary actor in development projects due to higher technical competence. Second, the local workforce was less qualified, reflecting the low level of capacity of the host country. In many cases, these assumptions held true in the early years. USAID often recruited local staff who were the product of an underdeveloped educational system and weak job market, while Americans were selected based on their technical credentials. Differences in qualifications contributed to the development of a "dual workforce", with USDHs in managerial positions and FSNs in support positions.

The historical memory of the "dual workforce" and the fundamental operating assumptions of the agency influence the interactions between many USDH and FSN staff today. Many of the Mission Directors and Executive Officers interviewed stated that senior USDHs often exclude FSNs from senior staff meetings because they feel they cannot speak candidly in front of them; they do not "give FSNs a voice" in meetings and let them speak for their own activities; and they overemphasize the limitations to FSN authority. This "dual workforce" history creates a mental barrier in the mind of some staff, which colors the interpretation of regulations and decisions about what is appropriate authority for an FSN.

USAID's historical operating assumptions are no longer a rule. First, the USDH is often not the primary actor in development projects. As the agency has shifted from direct implementation to contract management, the number of USDHs has declined. In 2003, USDHs represented only 17% of USAID's overseas workforce, while FSNs accounted for 70%. Second, FSNs are often not less qualified than Americans. As host countries develop a cadre of highly educated, professional people, FSN staff are becoming progressively similar to American staff in background and qualifications. In fact, in many countries with USAID missions, local staff hold advanced degrees from American universities and have experience working for the same international organizations as Americans. One Deputy Director with an economist background stated, "Throughout my career with USAID, my FSN colleagues have always been equal to me. I have never worked with people of inferior credentials." Lastly, due to immigration, the distinction between USDH and FSN is blurred even based on nationality. Particularly in Latin America, more FSNs are becoming green card holders and travel back and forth between the United States and the overseas mission. Some FSNs have obtained citizenship and now work in the United States full-time.

Internalizing this new reality is made difficult by the high variability in FSN staff both among countries and within missions. In some countries, the local talent pool is larger than others. For example, South Africa has a highly developed private sector that produces competitive workers, whereas Sierra Leone has experienced civil conflict that has stalled the development of important local institutions. Within missions, there are sometimes differences between FSNs according to length of tenure. More recently hired staff sometimes have more competitive qualifications than staff hired twenty years ago under the old USAID paradigm.

2. Status inequities and intercultural relations

There are two intersecting aspects of cultural sensitivity in the context of USAID overseas missions: 1) managing status inequities; and 2) acknowledging cultural differences.

Managing status inequities: USDHs need to be conscious of their privileged status within USAID and wield the power of their positions graciously. As U.S. citizens and career foreign service officers, USDHs are given greater reverence and privilege than FSNs and TCNs. They often receive preferential treatment from host country government officials and international organizations. For example, one Deputy Director explained that in meetings with the IMF, staff of the international organization would speak more candidly if only Americans were in the room because they assumed greater confidentiality. Similarly, USDHs are called upon more often for ceremonial duties such as ribbon-cutting events. Based on nationality, USDHs also have more natural social capital with other Americans and expatriates with whom USAID does business. One Deputy Director explained that in her former position as Office Director, she experienced difficulty delegating the relationships necessary to the job. As Chiefs of Party and heads of projects were American and belonged to a common social community, they would unconsciously cut FSNs out of the work process. If not managed properly, the unique status of the USDH can reinforce a caste system that is inherent in USAID's structure.

Best Practice: Actively give voice and promote representation

Many missions work to counter status inequities by actively promoting FSN voice and representation. One Mission Director has a policy of always including FSNs in meetings and encouraging them to speak for their work. She explains, "I haven't had any meetings without FSNs. Zero. And I haven't seen a damn bit of problem with that." She has FSNs lead strategy meetings "because they know how the policy will affect their country and are the most effective seller of the strategy." Many missions will never consider FSNs and will put Americans in this role. Another Mission Director explained how she gives signals to American colleagues both in Washington and overseas to respect her FSNs by taking them to meetings and telling them, "This is the person you have to deal with."

Best Practice: Promote equity in "perks"

Foreign service officers receive many benefits not available to FSNs such as generous housing allowances and schooling for their children. Some missions have made an effort to balance the preferential treatment towards FSOs with preferential treatment towards FSNs. Perks geared at FSNs include cafeterias with affordable local food, televisions in the missions for staff without access to news at home, and generous health and pension benefits.

Best Practice: Counsel junior officers on appropriate treatment of FSNs

Many interviewees note that junior officers who compete with FSNs for positions sometimes delegate ungraciously to senior FSNs or fail to recognize their work. One Mission Director

explained that junior officers can be “intimidated, jealous, want to take credit and not highlight the work of FSNs.” When USDHs arrive at post, she makes an effort to “counsel, train, mentor staff – especially the young ones – who don’t know how to be sensitive to FSNs.”

Best Practice: Empower FSNs to take up their concerns with management

If FSNs have complaints, it is important to encourage them to take action on their complaints. One Executive Officer explained, “You have to be careful not to be patronizing to FSNs and treat them like children. Some people want to protect them, but FSNs are adults and need to learn to defend themselves.” For example, when FSNs in one mission complained that there were no objective performance criteria, the Mission Director urged them to form an FSN Committee and take the issue up with their supervisors. In another mission, when FSNs have complaints against their supervisors, they are encouraged to voice their complaint to the EXO.

Therefore, while USDHs will always maintain special status in overseas missions, they need to carry their status in a manner that does not breed workplace tension or limit the opportunities of their local colleagues.

Acknowledging cultural differences: In a context of status inequities, sensitivity to cultural differences is critical. When power is associated with one particular group, innocent cultural differences can be interpreted as intentionally discriminatory or demeaning to the less powerful group. Both USDHs and FSNs need to be aware of cultural differences to avert harmful cultural misunderstanding. The South Africa mission provides key insight into the dynamics of status and intercultural relations.

Case Study: USAID/South Africa

During a tumultuous time in the South Africa mission, FSNs were feeling anger towards the USDHs. They felt that the USDHs did not see them, did not acknowledge them as professionals, and did not treat them with respect. When asked how they came to this conclusion, one of the examples they provided was the behavior of USDHs in the morning. USDHs do not like to talk in the morning. They arrive at work, walk straight to their offices, close the door, and spend about an hour reading email and planning their day. After this initial period, they emerge from their offices and begin greeting their colleagues. What is normal behavior in American culture conflicted with the South African cultural norm of greeting people in the morning. In regular circumstances, the USDH behavior may have been interpreted as strange or mildly offensive by South Africans. However, in the context of status inequities, this cultural practice was interpreted as indicative of disrespect for FSNs personally and as professionals.

Best Practice: Engage in teambuilding exercises

Some missions have engaged in teambuilding exercises both to explore cultural differences and to interact socially outside of the office. As FSN discontent was high following the RIF, the South Africa mission facilitated a series of sessions with the embassy psychiatrist. FSNs and Americans separately vented their concerns and the psychiatrist distributed the list to everyone. Afterwards, the mission participated in a retreat during which fun, “getting to know you” games were played.

Another important factor that USDHs need to consider is the cultural appropriateness of many American supervisory practices. FSNs come from cultures with different practices regarding direct feedback, participation and input from subordinates, and collective decision-making. One Mission Director cited examples from his experience: “In India, FSNs don’t hesitate to tell Americans what they think, but FSNs in other Asian countries won’t give the same type of direct feedback. In some countries, any suggestion for improvement on a performance evaluation is taken deeply personally and considered a loss of face.” To effectively engage staff and promote productive performance, USDHs need to understand local cultural norms.

Sensitivity to cultural difference enhances the productivity and effectiveness of work. One Mission Director explains, “I tell my USDHs that this what you have to do if you want to get things done. People may not say anything but they hold resentment and you won’t get full cooperation.”

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

While the review of best practices underscores efforts to be initiated at the mission level, M/HR needs to develop centrally-supported mechanisms to guide missions and create incentives for FSN professional development. These recommendations highlight the role M/HR can play to address each of the four “Influential Factors” analyzed in this report. Within each section, recommendations are listed from least to most difficult.

First priority

A. Accountability: M/HR should focus on disseminating a clear message from Washington that FSN professional development is a priority. It should develop a uniform policy for FSN career development and create systems for measurement and accountability. The best practices reviewed in this report reveal that missions have the means to engage in proactive policies when the will exists. Actions to take include:

Define “FSN professional development” and “nurturing FSNs”

Before discussing *how* to promote FSN professional development, USAID needs to develop a uniform vision for *what that means*. M/HR should take the lead in facilitating a participatory effort beginning with the worldwide Mission Directors conference on May 17. The FSN working group should prepare a list of guiding questions to discuss, including:

- Notwithstanding the regulations and constraints, how should things be?
- What are our core values and what are the different facets of our mission?
- What role do FSNs play in achieving our mission?
- What authorities should FSNs be delegated?
- How has our operating model changed, and how might it change?
- What is a reasonable contract between employer and employee? What are USAID’s duties and what are FSNs’ duties?

The FSN Forum should also be included in this process.

Develop measures of “FSN professional development” and “nurturing FSNs”

Developing measures will both crystallize the vision and lay the grounds for accountability.

Measures may relate to grade and promotion, leadership positions, training, representation and relationships outside the agency, compensation, membership in professional associations, or other factors. Sample measures include:

- # of FSN grade increases and average length of time between grade increases
- # of FSNs in leadership positions (including team leaders and Office Deputies)
- # of USDHs in “special advisor to team leader” or “acting Office Chief” roles
- # of training courses attended by FSN employee

Include measures in assessments and evaluations

“FSN professional development” measures should be included in all evaluations. Mission Management Assessments should be used as a tool to evaluate these measures in depth, and the sources of any low-performing measures should be identified and corrected. Performance precepts for foreign service officers should also reflect the “FSN professional development” measures, and there should be a clear indication of steps to take to reach good performance. Precepts should actively encourage creating mechanisms to balance FSN and USDH leadership positions.

Develop management information system to measure FSN development

USAID should develop a central management information system with the capacity to track training attendance, grade increases, and other key metrics. The system should allow for cross-checks in ensure the reliability of data.

Second Priority

B. Incentives: M/HR should work to increase missions' incentives to promote FSN professional development through both correct mission sizing and strategic training. Actions to take include:

Identify and disseminate information about strategic training opportunities

- Develop a system to disseminate information about non-USAID training courses to missions. M/HR should work more systematically with Pillar Bureaus to identify technical training courses that serve the strategic needs of missions
- Make training mandatory at certain grade levels (e.g. Emerging Leaders course for all FSN 12/13s)

Create monetary incentives to promote FSN professional development

- Create a fund to which missions can apply to bring professional development opportunities to staff such as training courses, TDYs, and memberships in professional associations
- Award increases in OE account or other funds to missions meeting "FSN professional development" targets
- Use authority of U.S. government to negotiate cheaper rates for non-USAID training courses on behalf of missions
- Seek to eliminate the OE account or permission to program-fund training for OE staff

Increase the efficiency of mission staffing to use FSNs to capacity

- Use Mission Management Assessments to review staffing size to ensure employees are being used to capacity
- Evaluate further the transition to a more efficient operating model, such as regional platforms

Other Priorities

C. Culture: USAID should work to manage the status inequities between FSOs and FSNs by increasing FSN representation and voice. This issue assumes greater urgency given the agency's plans to aggressively recruit a new cadre of junior officers who will be placed in supervisory positions overseas. Actions to take include:

Augment cultural sensitivity training for USDHs

- Include discussion of managing status inequities in new cultural sensitivity course

Increase FSN representation and voice

- Create FSN/TCN positions in Washington, including rotational FSN positions in M/HR and different bureaus
- Coordinate FSN forums and regional networks
- Act on recommendation to assign FSN mentors to junior officers when they arrive overseas

D. Regulations: Missions need to reexamine their assumptions about the limits to FSN authority. The best practices reviewed in this report demonstrate that the ADS 103.3.1.1 regulations allow for much more FSN authority than is practiced in some missions. M/HR needs to encourage higher delegation of authority to FSNs and seek further approval to empower FSNs. Actions to take include:

Offer a refresher course on FSN authority

- Conduct discussion of ADS 103.3.1.1
- Review case studies of missions who have delegated high levels of authority to FSNs

Seek authorities necessary to implement vision of “FSN professional development”: The definition of “FSN professional development” will likely include a greater level of empowerment. M/HR should seek to gain approval for:

- FSN authority to sign obligating documents
- FSN authority to supervise USDHs
- Extension of FSN salary and grade scales

APPENDIX 1

Contact List

Name	Agency/Location
Mary Ott	USAID/Egypt
Chuck Drilling	USAID/Egypt
Sherif Fouad Zohdi	USAID/Egypt
Karen Hilliard	USAID/Ukraine
Rand Robinson	USAID/Ukraine
Vica Grib	USAID/Ukraine
Denise Rollins	USAID/South Africa
Brent Schaeffer	USAID/South Africa
Douglas Lawrence	USAID/South Africa
Elias Nkadimeng	USAID/South Africa
Alan Reed	USAID/Peru
Glenn Anders	USAID/Guatemala
Dave Atteberry	USAID/Guinea
Debra McFarland	USAID/Bulgaria
Nora Marinova	USAID/Bulgaria
Pam White	USAID/Mali
Dave Eckerson	USAID/Washington
Pat Brown	USAID/Washington
Carol Peasley	USAID/Washington
Sherri Fennell	USAID/Washington
Lisa Povolni	USAID/Washington
George Thompson	USAID/Washington
Jim Traweek	USAID/Washington
Wade Warren	USAID/Washington
Robert Ward	USAID/Washington
Anne Terio	USAID/Washington
Jim Aden	USAID/Washington
Ruth Derr	USAID/Washington
Sandy Sozio	USAID/Washington
Barbara Ellington-Banks	USAID/Washington
Bill Anderson	USAID/Washington
Bob Ensslin	Department of State
Fran Gidez	Department of State

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Surveys

The following list summarizes the key areas of FSN discontent, as reported by FSN staff in both the Administrator's Employee Survey and the FSN Working Group survey. Although the environment of FSN staff varies considerably from mission to mission, these concerns were remarkably consistent and widespread.

1) Salaries, Benefits and Compensation Plans

- *Below-market compensation.* FSNs report discontent with uncompetitive local compensation plans, particularly for professional FSN positions. Cases of attrition of senior FSN staff raise concern about USAID's ability to retain high level FSN staff.
 - "As an FSN in a 'professional' position, I find that USAID's remuneration system for professionals needs to be seriously revisited or missions in many countries will continue to see a high turnover rate. Especially as we can cross over to work with one of USAID's implementing partners and receive thrice as much for similar work."
 - "FSN salary scale is in dire need of upgrade. The Mission has lost a good number of qualified staff in recent years to more higher paying jobs of a similar nature, and was unable to fill senior new FSN positions with qualified individuals, not out of lack of availability or interest, but solely because salaries offered were unattractive to them."
 - "The compensation plan is not very competitive... Other organizations do offer far more than USAID does and hence some senior FSNs have left the last 1-3 years."
 - "Generally, the Management's mentality is that there are many unemployed people out there and if anybody is not happy let them just go to wherever they think it is greener."
- *Irregular and inadequate salary adjustments.* FSNs complain that salary adjustments do not occur in a timely manner and often do not reflect the changes in cost of living reported in the annual salary surveys. They often do not keep pace with local currency devaluation, inflation, and other macroeconomic shocks, causing effective compensation to decrease rather than increase over time.
 - "The survey results/increase, if any, is implemented two years after the survey, leaving the employees suffering for two years, and then the amount of increase is not effective due to more current inflation."
 - "During the past 5 years we have been working hard to obtain our latest salary increase (8-20%), while the annual inflation is 15%, and the annual local currency devaluation is 9%."
 - "During the last two years, the local currency was devalued by 75%. The rule that devaluation is not considered unless it is 100% in one single year is not fair. This rule does not cancel the fact that when devaluation is less than 100%, it still results in severe suffering by FSNs."
 - "What we do not understand is that the devaluation results in significant budget savings, and yet salary increases are not implemented because of budget constraints."
 - "HR policies that exist on paper but are never exercised to motivate FSN staff include the annual salary surveys and adjustment procedures. FSN staff adjustments are decided upon based on HT management discretion and not by facts of the survey."

- “Be responsive to FSN salary issues in a timely manner. Carry out surveys and process them in time instead of the 6 months or more time lag from the time the survey is done and salary adjustments are done. Employ more people in Washington DC HR Department to deal with FSN salary issues.”
- *Lack of standardization.* Since all local compensation plans are negotiated by the Embassies, there is considerable variation in FSN compensation packages across missions. This sends an inconsistent message about how USAID values its FSN staff.
- *Less pay for equal work.* The differential pay scales for FSN and American staff are a cause of low morale. FSNs expressed frustration with receiving lower salaries at each grade level and none of the standard FSO benefits such as cell phones, utilities, education for children, personal vehicles, competitive housing allowances, USG pension plans, danger pay and other security measures.
 - “HR policies towards FSN personnel are morale killers. The policies instituted in the 1960s have never been changed and we find them too colonial. For example, an FSN cannot earn more than an American although both individuals [may have the same qualifications]. This is a slave policy and it has to change in the 21st century. FSNs deserve respect and must be treated like human beings and not as half humans.”

2) Hiring Processes

- *Lack of transparency.* FSNs report a lack of transparency in hiring practices on the part of both Americans and FSNs.
 - “Surprisingly enough, USAID is more and more favoring nepotism rather than professionalism. Currently, it matters very much who you know and NOT, repeat, not what you know to get a job at USAID.”
 - “FSN human resources employees need very strong supervision, they tend to bend the rules to meet their own interest when they have complete power to hire new FSNs.”
 - “Hiring processes for FSNs are not very transparent and sometimes appear to be skewed towards a preferred candidate.”
 - “Management should keep special focus and attention on the conduct of Senior FSN Supervisors.... Despite the best of the rewards systems instituted by the Agency, the nepotism practiced by these FSN supervisors kills even the self starters who are otherwise self-motivated.... If someone tries to bring this to the management’s attention, he/she is made to understand that American bosses come and go and it’s the FSN supervisor who has a greater say in keeping someone on the rolls. Therefore, despite effective Mission leadership and good rewarding systems for the FSN work force, every one does not get an equal opportunity to grow professionally and it also results in a few FSNs keeping charge of a number of important official issues in their own hands. Though this might not be happening here in our mission, through the grapevine, and through contacts across the missions, I have noted that this is a very common problem badly affecting employee morale.”
 - “FSN HR in [x] is doing all kinds of cooking and unfairness according to personal favoritism. I believe this office should be thoroughly audited especially concerning prequalification of applicants for vacancies and its intervention in the selection process.”

3) Performance Evaluation, Awards, and Promotion

- *No objective criteria for awards and promotion.* There is a perceived bias in the performance evaluation system. Positive appraisals, awards, and promotion are perceived to

be based more on supervisor discretion rather than on any objective criteria towards which staff can work. This results in inconsistencies in what is required of a position and how much effort individual employees are expected to give.

- “The Agency Incentive System in my operating unit is not used to reward an employee for his work, mainly it is used to reward an employee for flattering an American supervisor.”
- “There is a big discrimination in incentives and awards. Some people get spot awards just for nothing.”
- “From my experiences so far, most of the performance evaluation (relating to upgrade or salary increase) is based on the preference of the immediate supervisor and less based on the actual quality of staff performance.”
- “Performance evaluations for FSN are not fair or equal. Depending on your supervisor you might have a fair try. Some supervisors do not sit employees down to discuss work objectives or appraisals.”
- “Performance evaluation reports are not honest. Supervisors like to give outstanding just so they won’t hear the employee complaints. Others are sometimes not fair and give lower scores than what the employee deserves.”
- *Lack of punishment for poor performance.* There is also a lack of objective criteria for punishment, which creates inconsistencies in what is acceptable performance in the mission.
 - “There is no system to penalize the non performers and in fact the people who are getting awards are the less deserving. It all depends on the relationship with your supervisor. There seems to be no committee to vet the nominations for awards.”
 - “Even though there is a rule to deal with poor performers, there is not a tradition within the Agency or a course of actions that will immediately identify a poor performer and reprimand him or her. As a result, some supervisors tend to be less demanding than others and not all cases are treated the same. This affects the employee’s morale tremendously.”
 - “The HR seldom takes effective actions toward poor performers.... That decreases the overall morale of responsible/efficient people.
- *No incentive for supervisors to conduct meaningful performance evaluations and recommend rewards.* While there are no objective criteria for employee performance, there are also no objective criteria for supervisor performance. In many missions, supervisors are not held accountable for proactive involvement in the performance evaluation process of FSNs.
 - “The recognition and rewards system is dependent on a supervisor’s diligence to write a nomination. Some supervisors just don’t bother.”
 - “HRM at my work station needs to improve on the annual Performance Evaluation Reports (PER), especially for FSNs. Most of the time our supervisors take 2-3 months to do our PER and HRM is not bothered by it and yet it affects our morale at work and gives the impression that our performance is not being valued.”
 - “How come FSNs do not have an evaluation cycle like the USDHs? When my mission is evaluating USDHs, that is top priority but my evaluation is not considered likewise.”
 - “During performance evaluation, the evaluators are usually late in filling out the evaluation forms and tend to copy the previous one, instead of conducting a good and thorough evaluation of performance. Once again, everything is being done in a rush and the performance issue is usually given a very low priority.”

4) Training and Orientation

- *Lack of equal opportunity.* Due to limited funds, not all FSNs who wish to develop their skills receive approval to attend training sessions. In general, inequities exist between program-funded and OE-funded staff; between professional and support staff; and between American and FSN staff. Most courses are based in Washington and there are few opportunities for less expensive local or regional training.
 - “The systems of the M/HR have been more directed in providing quality services and training for American staff and FSNs have been put in the back seat. Most of the trainings are held in Washington and FSNs are not allowed by some Americans to attend. FSNs should be more institutionally recognized and given more respect and space for their performance and benefits.”
 - “It is very difficult to be selected for training if you are grade 6 and below.”
 - “Training is the area which is somehow grey particularly for low-cadre staff.”
 - “OE-funded employees are not given the same opportunities as program-funded employees for training attendance. Since training funds for OE are limited, there is a fight between OE-funded sections to use the training budget, and this creates stress. It has been noticed that employees at the Contracting Office have so many mandatory trainings that they use the majority of OE-funded training funds.”
 - “Good trainings are available but often they are in the regional hubs or Washington which leads to only a selected few getting the training due to paucity of OE funds. I would suggest creation of a separate pool of funds for trainings which could satisfy the training needs of all.”
- *No objective criteria for selection.* There is a perception that supervisors approve training based on personal preference, rather than on the needs of the position. A common observation was that the same employees are selected for training on a regular basis, while others never attend.
 - “There is no training committee in my office and it is not clear how trainings are approved. Some people go for training more often (say twice a year) and yet others have taken years without training at all.”
 - “Training plans are not rational. The FSNs closer to the supervisors get all the opportunities.”
 - “Training for all staff needs to be looked at closely and not the same person getting it each time.”
 - “Training should be improved so that all employees get opportunity for training, and not just the chosen few who are repeatedly trained.”
 - “Training should be packaged as part of a position and not left to just the discretion of the supervisors. A job should have N trainings in defined areas for each year.”
 - “Training programs decisions are also arbitrary. Some staff are provided training and distance education opportunities while others are denied. Therefore, the Agency should put in place a training plan that will treat every employee equally and fairly.”
- *Few relevant training materials.* FSN expressed that most courses (including online courses) are too general. They would like more technical training specific to USAID positions, including more technical language training.
 - “Training opportunities on technical matters are very limited. USAID employees should have the knowledge to lead the way and not be a follower. I feel that we at USAID are many times behind in terms of updated knowledge on technical aspects with regards to our contractors and grantees.”

- “The training available is very limited; it has not been changed in the last five years and covers very few areas of USAID’s work. It needs to be broadened, diversified, and has to include technical/professional training as well.”
- “The training process. It would be useful to have a broader range of training course that include not just general topics but also specific topics for various technical areas.”
- *Training not prioritized.* FSNs state that in many missions, training is perceived as a reward rather than a requirement. Some FSN staff report that their desire for training is not taken seriously or that it is difficult to engage in self-study during working hours.
 - “The current Mission Management doesn’t encourage training. In fact on several occasions when we have identified training opportunities, they have been referred to as opportunities to travel. Our request for trainers to come train us at the mission have not been responded to either.”
 - “If we could have it as a policy that a staff member have say 2.5 hours of time to do online programs, or do programs that he has registered for. Sometimes when I take an hour of my work time to study material related to my job I feel guilty. And this should not be the case as I want to improve my skills to benefit the Agency.”
 - “Trainings should not be like blessings or grants. Each employee has the right to improve his skills to work better and improve productivity.”
- *Training opportunities are not actively disseminated.* There is no proactive, systematic way of announcing training opportunities available. Employees often do not know when opportunities arise in their fields.
 - “More information about training possibilities should be provided in a proactive manner to allow each employee to shape her or his development in his line of work.”
 - “More information on training needs, most of the people do not know what courses are being held in different locations, maybe make them public on the intranet site in a specific site because sometimes you really don’t know where to look.”
 - “We do not get systematic information about training opportunities in our fields of expertise. Missions do not actively promote training for their employees, there is a cumbersome process to approve/disapprove training.”
- *Poor orientation for new employees.* Many FSNs report that little orientation is given to new staff regarding agency procedures and values, training opportunities, expectations for career advancement, etc.

5) Career Advancement and Upward Mobility

- *Career ceiling for senior FSNs.* Currently, FSN positions cannot exceed grade 12. Senior FSNs report that the only option for career advancement at this stage is to leave the agency.
 - “As professional FSNs are delegated more responsible tasks, the reward system should be amended to reflect such. Currently the highest grade for an FSN is 12. What next if a grade 12 employee reaches the highest grade step?”
 - “There is no incentive system designed to reward innovation, initiative, and career growth. M/HR only rewards Direct Hire employees and provides for their career growth. For instance, the USAID/FSN system CAJEs all CTOs/Activity Managers at the glass ceiling of Grades 10 and 11. There is no mechanism to reward stellar or outstanding performance beyond FSN Grade 11 to FSN Grade 12, 13 and above. The only incentive is to leave USAID if you are an outstanding performer.”
 - “FSNs reach a point when they are really frustrated: The Agency needs to be innovative and have a way of rotating FSNs within their region, at least.”

- “Please look at the possibility of an FSN to exceed or go over the grade 12/13.”
- *No career path.* Unlike many USDH positions, few FSN positions have career ladders which allow a clear track for advancement within the agency. There is also little lateral movement to allow for changes in career direction.
 - “There is a need for an entry level for each position in which a person can learn and then move ahead (no one graduates out of university with previous experience).”
 - “Been with the Agency for ages, haven’t seen any concrete direction as to career path of FSNs.”
 - “I am an exec assistant who aspires to move on in life and not remain a secretary for the rest of my life. I have exhausted all available training for secretaries and admin assistants and am now stifled because all other training is now irrelevant to my current job. I am currently paying for a Bachelor of Administration degree on my own so that I can move on. What other options are there for a case like this?”
 - “FSNs have practically no horizontal or vertical mobility limiting reward for good performance.”
- *Little internal recruitment.* FSNs note that USAID tends to hire externally when new positions open up within the agency, rather than offering the positions to existing FSN staff who wish to advance their careers.
 - “AID does not value its own employees. If new positions pop up, the external candidate is hired.”
 - “Encouraging of career development and internal recruitment would positively affect employees’ morale.”
- *Unmet desire for challenge.* Many FSNs express the desire to be utilized more to capacity. They feel they have skills that are left unused or are not challenged to gain new skills.
 - “I would prefer to have more responsibilities delegated to me and to others in my office and mission. Local staff are often treated as administrative support and our skills are not needed, even though we were hired in accordance with the position requirements. The skills that we were required are not very well used.”
 - “FSNs should be more challenged in their careers in the Agency by allowing them to take on additional responsibilities without restrictions.”

6) Representation, Consultation, and Grievance

- *FSNs have no voice on issues affecting them.* In terms of State, local HR, AID/W.
 - “FSN issues are ignored or neglected.”
 - “The FSN handbook does not help protect FSNs. An FSN can be fired at will by the USDH supervisor, and the FSN has nowhere to ask for redress or to be heard. Regional human resource officers are there for the USDH and do not work with the FSNs. Provide a chance for FSNs to be heard or seek redress on personnel issues.”
 - “The FSNs don’t have an “ear” or a “voice” in Washington... FSNs have little or no voice in policy decisions. Rules are changed without consultation of those affected.”
 - “More communication is required. Also, information and regulations must be known and complied with by everybody. In many cases, only the Chiefs, or Leaders have access or are communicated to regarding several important topics.”
 - Complaints address by American supervisor was “that this is the way things work at USAID and if you are not satisfied you should be working for a different organization.”
- *FSNs receive little support from their local Personnel/Human Resources department.* This is due to lack of training in how to deal with human resources issues, deference to

American supervisors, a transactional rather than supportive approach, and poor customer service.

- “HR Office should be more responsive and listen to employees more carefully. HR should also advise supervisors on their behavior... In sum, HR should be a neutral position.”
- “Human Resources does not support its human resources. Although this sounds harsh, throughout the time I have been here I have seen that staff do not feel represented by the HR Office. Motivation, When we had the Management Assessment, we were told how to behave, what to do, what not to do and this created a closed environment whereby staff were unable to express their concerns openly.”
- “It think it is more an attitude manner than what HR really does. The person in charge is not an open one!”
- “In my Missions the Human Resources Office has no representation at all. The HRS Supervisor is a former secretary without any academic education, no objectivity and training in human resources skills. No competition for that position, skills are needed. For an Agency that has a lot of staff working we will need a professional in the area with the capabilities to handle difficult situations. In the past we had suffered difficult situations and it was handled without any respect to others and no transparency.”
- “There is no one specifically assigned to deal with human resource issues as it concerns (1) problems between management and staff, and (2) problems between staff and staff. The EXO is not fully equipped to deal with these matters. As a result I have observed persons receiving awards as a result of favoritism, with no real or adequate work achievement behind the award. I have observed unfounded victimization of individuals, arising from problems with favoritism, and when the matter is brought to the attention of the EXO, they are unable to prevent unfair treatment to the victimized staff. I do hope that these matters can be addressed urgently to prevent unfair treatment to innocent, hardworking staff.”
- “To start with, the Mission should have selected a professional with a degree in human resources or some other related field to fill the position of Human Resources Supervisor. However, this position is currently held by a former secretary who does not have any tact to deal with the Mission staff nor academic studies that are essential for this position. I consider this to be one of the reasons for the mission staff’s low morale”
- “They should answer their phone. The norm is to listen to a tape. And if you e-mail them, they do not answer emails either.”
- “No innovative or motivating exercises coming from HR, they stick to pure technical aspects of employee-employer relationship.”
- “Make sure the local staff assigned to this position has the relevant skills and capacity to deal properly with human resources issues.”
- “Human Resources personnel should be more honest, reliable, and trustful.”
- “Not sure that M/HR is in charge of personnel departments at the Missions. I suggest that the M/HR provides TRAINED personnel officers to the mission. General Administrative staff and clerks should not be turned into personnel officers. Personnel Officers from Washington should be posted to the Mission in addition to EXOs.”

- “Our HR department has to look at their procedures and customer services. Communication is non existent and feedback and follow up is not something they do.”
- “Our human resources office is not very well organized and cannot always provide you with the answers you need. They need to be more service oriented and more willing to help.”
- “The HR should be the first one to acknowledge and reward employees with outstanding performance. In my workplace, the HR is always shooting down any recommendation of hardworking employees.”
- “The office of HR should have a human face.”
- “As an HR specialist, I never attended training in personnel management and I strongly need it in order to better perform my daily work.”
- “HR staff are not capable of helping/assisting the FSN staff. They are too concerned about the opinion of the American supervisors.”
- “Communication should be more effective, sometimes email is less effective than a phone call.”
- “They should answer their phone. The norm is to listen to a tape. And if you e-mail them, they do not answer emails either.”
- “The HR unit in our Mission seems to have ‘Encouraging mediocrity and punishing excellence’ as its theme.”

7) Cultural Sensitivity

- *Lack of training on cultural sensitivity issues.* Ungracious delegation.
 - “My suggestion to the Administrator is that the people who are sent out as diplomats to work in the countries where USAID has a presence to be put through some training to ensure that they understand the reason of their coming out to countries is to assist in the development of host countries, not to oppress the local employees.”
 - “There is a lack of cultural sensitivity, local employees are often times treated as second or third class citizens.”
 - “Assign more competent USDH overseas; people who know the regulations and from whom FSNs can learn the rules; people who are more culturally sensitive and who will support the continuity of activities and not just start new ones; people who don’t mind learning from FSNs who after all are better attuned to local needs and situations; people who genuinely care for other people’s welfare and development.”
 - “If possible, all Americans that are to be assigned overseas should be given some kind of training so that they know that they might find a different culture in the country where they are assigned. As much as the FSNs respect U.S. culture, they should do the same in return.”
 - “Officers being sent to the field should be more sensitive and accepting to the country’s culture while at post.”
- *Poor communication and leadership skills of supervisors*
 - “Hiring of DH seems to have deteriorated. We are getting new NEPs with very limited training. This is causing conflict with senior FSNs with PhDs from top notch US universities and with several years of experience because these NEPs feel threatened and they respond by reprimanding arbitrarily FSNs.”
 - “The feedback on performance should be given by a professional. Sometimes colleagues and supervisors don’t have the skills to adequately and effectively communicate what is needed to improve weak areas or reinforce good performance.”

- “I have noticed that the new heads of office that are coming to our operating unit are very effective in the technical work they do, but they lack a lot of essential knowledge/skills to effectively manage human resources; therefore, our productivity as employees is affected.”
- “Please send only professional people to the posts. No more stupid people.”

8) Bureaucratic Culture

- “The whole system is too much regulated, there is not much opportunity for being creative.”
- “Employees should be given more opportunity to express creativity and innovation.”