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# MSI EVALUATION TRAINING FOR MISSION STAFF, AFRICA BUREAU REPORT FOR CERTIFICATE TRAINING PROGRAM

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This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Molly Hageboeck, Richard Blue and Khoti Gausi, Management Systems International.

# **MSI EVALUATION TRAINING FOR MISSION STAFF, AFRICA BUREAU**

## **REPORT FOR CERTIFICATE TRAINING PROGRAM**



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# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>1. BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. USAID AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNER PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. COURSE INSTRUCTORS AND THE USAID COURSE MANAGER .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. TRAINING WORKBOOKS AND SCHEDULE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. PARTICIPANT EVALUATION TEAMS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7. TOPICAL FOCUS OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF THE THREE AFRICA COURSES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE GAINS FROM PHASE I OF THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. PRODUCTS AND DISCUSSION OUTCOMES FROM PHASE III EXERCISES.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A. Program level or Meta-Evaluation Exercises.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B. Techniques for Improving the Utilization of Evaluation Findings.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>C. Expanding African Evaluation Capacity .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>D. Participant Action Plans .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10. PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT TO WHICH THE COURSE ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>A. Quantitative Rankings of Aspects of the Certificate Program in Evaluation .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>B. Written/Qualitative Participant Comments on the Course .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>11. INSTRUCTOR OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>A. Observations.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>B. Recommendations.....</b>	<b>24</b>

## ANNEXES

Annex A: Core Phase I Curriculum – MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation .....	29
Annex B: Illustrative Class Agendas for Phase I and Phase III .....	31
Annex C: Participant List.....	33
Annex D: Evaluation Review Criteria.....	35
Annex E: Pre-Test Results.....	37
Annex F: Program Level or Meta-Evaluation Questions Addressed by Participant Teams .....	97
Annex G: Conflict Management Projects In East Africa.....	101
Annex H: A General Guide to the Construction of an Evaluation Report.....	111

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between June and October, 2004, 63 individuals from USAID staff and USAID implementing partners participated in the Management Systems International (MSI) Certificate Program in Evaluation, sponsored by USAID's Bureau for Africa. The Certificate Program is an experiential learning course comprised of three phases: two weeks of classroom training, with one week of fieldwork in between during which students evaluate a small USAID program or a component of a larger program.

The objectives of MSI's course are to ensure that USAID participants:

- Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle;
- Improve skills they need to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work;
- Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation;
- Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kind of information needed to answer evaluation questions;
- Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports with an eye on improving them; and
- Utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

The core curriculum for the course covers the full cycle of an activity or program evaluation (see Annex A). Illustrative agendas for Phase I (classroom) and Phase III (classroom) are found in Annex B.

Students attend one week of classroom training during which they work in teams to prepare a Scope of Work and develop a methodology to conduct an evaluation of a USAID project. In Phase II, the teams spend a week collecting and analyzing data for their evaluation report. In Phase III, participants return for the second week of classroom work that focuses on how to systematically review and critique evaluation reports (see Annex D for the course checklist) and foster their utilization.

This training program was conducted three times during the period; in East Africa for 14 participants, in southern Africa for 24 participants, and in West Africa for 25 participants. Of the 63 individuals who started the Certificate Program, 57 completed all three phases; the remaining participants completed two of the three phases. (See Annex C for the list of participants and instructors for each class.)

The course participants, operating in small teams, conducted 19 evaluations of USAID-funded activities in nine African countries and one West Africa regional program. The class evaluations shared a common theme or purpose, either conflict reduction (Tanzania course), service delivery of NGOs that had received institutional strengthening (South Africa), or a combination of the two (Ghana). A list of these evaluations is provided on page 6.

In addition to critiquing each project evaluation, participants conducted a program-level meta-analysis, using data from all of the evaluations carried out by the class to determine what general lessons the cluster of projects held for USAID. The meta-analysis work gave participants experience with the type of analysis USAID expects when it carries out a stocktaking or evaluation synthesis activity.

## THE IMPACT OF TRAINING OFTEN SHOWS UP QUICKLY

After Phase I, I was called to sit on a briefing by the evaluators on one of our projects. I felt so confident and raised questions that were found sound. And then it was proposed that I should also be shown the draft evaluation report for review.

—Course Participant

Participants completed a pre-course and two post-course evaluation forms, at the end of Phase I and Phase III. (Scores from all evaluations, including qualitative comments are found in Annex E.) Both the classroom and fieldwork phases of the training program received high marks from USAID participants and many compared it favorably to other USAID courses they had taken:

- 90 percent of the participants reported that the course provided the right level of information on the various topics it covered in the classroom portion of the training.
- 81 percent of participants reported that the field portion of this course was well worth the expense and effort involved.
- While not all participants had been exposed to USAID training programs prior to this course, 67 percent of all participants rated it as being more useful than other USAID courses they had taken.

Building on the meta-analysis done by participants in the Tanzania course, one of the course instructors prepared a formal review of the common findings from the conflict mitigation projects, as an illustration of the information and lessons that emerged from the participant evaluations. (See Annex G. for this synthesis.) An annotated Guide to Preparing an Evaluation Report was another new product developed by an instructor for participants in these courses (See Annex H).



# I. BACKGROUND

The MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation was first provided to USAID staff in 2003 under a contract between Management Systems International (MSI) and USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E). USAID staff in that bureau had identified evaluation as a field where there was both a need for and interest in enhancing staff capacity. Originally developed in 1997 for NGO leaders in Russia, the Certificate Program in Evaluation has been periodically taught by MSI both overseas, to leaders of host country non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of universities and private firms, and, in the United States, at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.

USAID's Bureau for Africa's Program Office (POSE), in collaboration with its Regional Office in Kenya (REDSO), contacted MSI to offer two courses to USAID Staff in the Bureau's missions. The course filled a critical need to enhance staff skills in evaluation. Two courses were offered initially: in Tanzania for the East African (EA) missions and in South Africa, for southern African missions. West African missions were invited to send participants to either course. Phase I for EA began on June 14, 2004, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and on August 9, 2004 in Pretoria, South Africa.

## A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF BASIC USAID TASKS EMERGES

I now have a clear idea of how to write an SOW, set up review committees, etc., for an evaluation that I've been putting off for 2 years because of the complexity of writing a good SOW for it.

— Course Participant

As plans for these courses moved forward, three mission directors from the West Africa Region asked that a third course be added. This course began on August 16, 2004 in Accra, Ghana. POSE staff planned with missions on the types of projects participants would evaluate. East Africa focused on community-based conflict mitigation programs. In southern Africa, USAID decided to evaluate the impact of services provided by organizations that had received institutional strengthening from PVOs. This theme was continued in West Africa, but with an effort to address at least some projects that focused on conflict.<sup>1</sup>

# 2. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation is an experiential learning course comprised of three phases: two weeks of classroom work, separated by one week of field work to evaluate a USAID program (see Annex A for the list of modules).

The objectives of the course are to ensure that USAID participants:

- Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle;
- Improve skills they need to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work;
- Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation;
- Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kind of information needed to answer evaluation questions;
- Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports with an eye on improving them; and

---

<sup>1</sup> The course is similar in approach and style to the USAID Development Studies Program, which, for a number of years, provided practical training in program and project development for USAID officers.

- Utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

The core curriculum for the Certificate Program in Evaluation covers the full cycle of an activity or project evaluation as well as the role of an evaluator in that process. Topics normally included in the Phase I curriculum range from articulating the questions an evaluation must address to writing evaluation scopes of work (SOWs). Also covered are methods for collecting data, data analysis techniques, and evaluation report writing.



In addition, Phase I incorporates program theory into the curriculum, that is, the theory of development practice related to the main topic of the projects being evaluated.

- In the Tanzania course, the program theory module covered current approaches to evaluating activities that focus on conflict or are carried out in an environment where conflict is present. A number of readings were provided to participants and discussed. Two course participants from USAID's Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) Office presented conflict models and work that is being done to support M&E in this field.
- In southern Africa, where activities dealing with NGO strengthening had been selected, a generic model was introduced for looking at the way in which assistance provided by a PVO to an NGO flows forward to transform services to beneficiaries. A REDSO guide to institutional capacity assessment was also discussed. This guide contains tools that a number of U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) use to analyze host country non-governmental organizations (NGOs) capacity.
- In Ghana a combination of these reading materials was introduced in a discussion of the kinds of hypotheses embedded in projects the teams from that training program were preparing to evaluate.

Phase III curriculum includes a review and critique of participant fieldwork as well as a number of supplementary modules such as assessing cost-effectiveness through an evaluation. Topics covered in Phase III build upon skills that the participants have already acquired.

During the week, each team makes an oral presentation, simulating the presentations evaluation teams are asked to make in missions. While one team reports, the class scores the report and presentation against a set of criteria for judging the quality of an evaluation (see Annex D for the list of criteria for reviewing an evaluation). During each presentation, participants play the role of the Mission Director, technical staff, and representatives of the organization that had been evaluated.



Phase III also includes opportunities for participants to examine patterns in findings from their evaluations through a program level or meta-evaluation. They are also able to examine approaches for improving the utilization of evaluation findings in their missions and M&E capacity in the countries in which they work.

While the list of topics this course covers is an important indication of the technical level of the course, the experiential nature of this training is what distinguishes it from many other courses. At every step, course participants have to apply what they are learning. Throughout the course they are experiencing steps in the evaluation process that they will likely use again when they return to their missions, e.g., preparing Scopes of

Work (SOW) or reviewing draft evaluations. Participants finish the course with a much better sense of what evaluation SOWs require of those who they ask to carry out evaluations on USAID's behalf. Through the course, by virtue of the level of detail at which they examine the project they are assigned, most participants also come away with an appreciation for good project design and a heightened awareness of the relationship between good design and the achievement of results.

### 3. USAID AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNER PARTICIPANTS

Sixty-three (63) participants, most of whom were USAID field staff from Africa Bureau missions and regional offices, completed Phase I of the Certificate Program in Evaluation. Two individuals from USAID/W's Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) Office and two from the Bureau's Program Office attended. One FEWSNET and three COMESA representatives participated in the three courses held in Africa. A list of course participants and the segments they completed is provided in Annex C.

Most participants (73%) indicated at the start of the training program that monitoring and evaluation are a component of their job, with about one fourth of all participants (22%) reporting that monitoring and evaluation is their primary responsibility



### 4. COURSE INSTRUCTORS AND THE USAID COURSE MANAGER



Two MSI instructors presented the Certificate Program in Evaluation each time it was presented. MSI's instructors for the East Africa and Ghana courses were Molly Hageboeck, MSI's course designer and senior evaluator<sup>2</sup> and Richard Blue, the course's co-designer and an MSI senior associate.<sup>3</sup> In South Africa, the MSI team included Molly Hageboeck and Khoti Gausi.<sup>4</sup> During both phases of all three courses, Janet Kerley (USAID/AFR/POSE) served as course manager and co-trainer. For all three Africa Bureau trainings, Ms. Kerley worked with missions to identify both participants and projects they would evaluate. This task

<sup>2</sup> Ms. Hageboeck, who, in an earlier era headed USAID/PPC's Evaluation Systems Division, has been a member of the teaching staff each time this evaluation course has been taught.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Blue is a retired Foreign Service Officer who led the Development Studies Program and created USAID's Impact Evaluation program and publication series.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gausi is the southern African regional M&E Officer for WHO and served as co-trainer for this course when it was given for NGO leaders in Malawi in 2000.

proved to be exceptionally demanding and time-consuming, and Ms. Kerley's work was greatly appreciated by the course instructors.

## 5. TRAINING WORKBOOKS AND SCHEDULE

For both Phase I and Phase III, participants, instructors and USAID/Washington course observers received course notebooks with hard-copy versions of the PowerPoint slides for these modules. The workbooks also included supplementary reading materials linked to each module.

The course agenda serves as a loose guide to the sequencing and timing of presentations and exercises, and is provided at the start of Phase I and Phase III, along with the caveat that it will not be followed rigidly. Between the Tanzania and South Africa courses, some adjustments were made to the course agenda, such as shifting the Scope of Work module in front of the Evaluation Questions module to give participants an overview of several topics within a Scope of Work that would be covered in detail over the next day. Illustrative agendas for Phases I and III, based on the courses in South Africa and Ghana, are provided in Annex B.

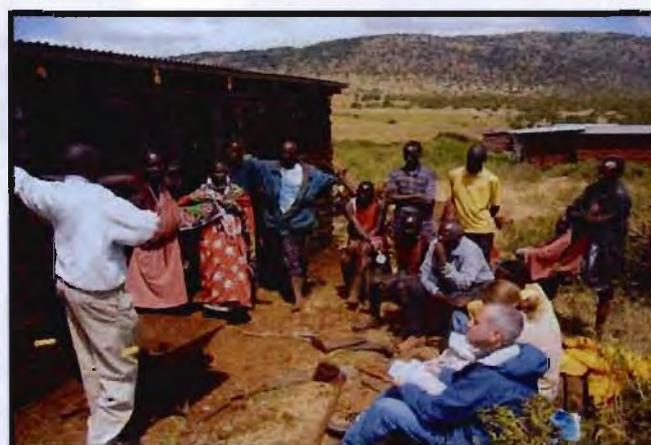
### A PERSONAL EVALUATION LIBRARY

I was amazed at the wealth of information provided. The manual is the best I have ever seen in a USAID training course

– Course Participant

## 6. PARTICIPANT EVALUATION TEAMS

At the beginning of each course, participants were assigned to teams of three. At least two of them were to have no previous involvement with the project they were going to evaluate. For the purposes of this training program, three is the ideal number of evaluation team members. This size team is capable of carrying out all of the assigned tasks within the time allotted, as long as the size of the evaluation task they are given is reasonable. The team can visit only one or two sites; those must be within a reasonable distance of each other and not inherently inaccessible. This approach was followed, with only a few exceptions:



Gathering Data from Pastoralists Outside of Arusha,

- In the Tanzania course, one two-person team was formed to allow the two CMM staff members to carry out an evaluation immediately following Phase I.
- In Ghana, where a regional program had been selected, a five-person team was created in order to ensure that several sites in the region could be visited.
- In the Ghana course, a second large team emerged when two smaller teams, both of which were going to look at aspects of a single program, decided to merge.

In the Africa Bureau courses, every team ended Phase I with a manageable Scope of Work in hand and good preliminary ideas about how they would carry out their fieldwork. Some teams took more time than others in Phase I to begin developing the questionnaires they would use and identifying the roles that each would play on the evaluation team. Teams that did this often reported in Phase III that it helped them to have done so. Teams that did little by way of detailed preparation before assembling in the field to start their evaluation ended up wishing that they had, as a group, focused more quickly on practical steps and methods for their team in Phase I.

In addition, the field experiences of several teams, including the CMM team, indicate that some amount of elapsed time between Phase I and the start of fieldwork actually helped a team do a better job with their evaluation. That elapsed time allows participants to absorb Phase I and focus systematically on Phase II in a manner that jumping directly into Phase II does not permit.



Participant Evaluation Interview Peacebuilding Project – West Pokot, Kenya

weaknesses and offering constructive suggestions to teams, which is precisely what we expect graduates of this course to be able to do when they return to their missions.

When they returned for Phase III, participants made oral presentations of their findings and critiqued each other's reports. For each oral presentation, one participant is assigned the role of Mission Director and another is assigned to comment on the evaluation as the head of the NGO whose program had been evaluated. At the start of these critique sessions, participants ask only a few questions and the instructors often carry the burden of the detailed critique and praise each evaluation team deserves. By the time the third oral presentation comes around, however, roles are reversed, with participants out in front leading the critique, leaving the course instructors with little to say except that participants are clearly becoming better and better at spotting

## 7. TOPICAL FOCUS OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF THE THREE AFRICA COURSES



MSI Course instructors have learned that it is useful to select a set of evaluations for the fieldwork that have something in common. This way, in Phase III, the individual project or activity evaluations carried out in Phase II can be used as the basis for the meta- or program evaluation. Further, this allows students to draw common findings from several evaluations and use them to frame conclusions, lessons and, where relevant, draft recommendations for USAID.

A list of the 19 evaluations completed by participants in these courses is provided on in Box I below.<sup>5</sup> The titles in this list show the country distribution of the evaluations participants undertook while evaluation titles suggest the range of themes examined. Of the 19 evaluations listed below, Tanzania course participants prepared five, Ghana course participants prepared six, and South Africa course participants prepared eight.

**BOX I**  
**LIST OF EVALUATIONS COMPLETED BY COURSE PARTICIPANTS**  
**AFRICA BUREAU SPONSORED CERTIFICATE COURSES IN EVALUATION**  
**JUNE – OCTOBER 2004**

**BENIN**

1. Babagbeto, Romain, Lina Piripiri and Eveline Viegas. *Evaluation of the Community Action for Girls Education (CAGE)*. October 2004.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

2. Eagleton, Mary Louise, Pam Fessenden and Victor Mangindula. *Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society and Business to Promote Sustainable Economic Growth along the Congo River and its Tributaries*. Mid-Term Evaluation. October 2004.

**GHANA**

3. Donnay, Tim (Team leader); Avril Kudzi, Adeline Ofori-Bah, and Edward Soyir-Yariga. *Evaluation of the Community Mobilization Component of Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education (SAGE)*. October 2004.
4. Achade, Pierre, Brian Chigawa, and Patrick Fosu-Siaw (Team leader). *Evaluation of the Government Accountability Improves Trust (GAIT) Project*. Team I. October 2004.
5. Dembele, Augustin, Yacouba Konte, and Elsie Menorkpor. *Evaluation of the Government Accountability Improves Trust (GAIT) Project*. Team II. October 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Twenty teams were set up during the training course. Two teams from the Ghana training that were assigned different sites under the Mali World Education Program merged. They designed, wrote and presented their work as a single team.

#### KENYA/USAID/REDSO

6. Kabare, Grace, Sam Kona and Polly A. Mughisha. *Intermediate Technology Development Group Eastern Africa (ITDG EA): Northern Kenya Conflict Resolution Initiative Project. End of Project Evaluation Report.* July 2004.
7. Bacon, Brian, Wangeci Chege, and Issac Ndahiro. *Famine Early Warning system Network (FEWS NET) – Early Warning and Mitigation of Resource-Based Conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa Project. Mid-term Evaluation Report: Karamoja Cluster Peace Newsletter.* Draft. August 2, 2004.
8. Karuru, Njeri, Halima Hashi, and Elizabeth Mutunga. *Evaluation of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) Community and Development Peace Building Project.* July 2004.
9. Msaki, Jimmy, Alice Nibitanga, and Josphat Wachira. *Evaluation of the POKATUSA Peace Building Project.* August 2004.
10. Mutuale, Stella, Charles Oluchina, and Beatrice Wamalwa. *Evaluation of the Impact of USAID NGO Strengthening Support.* PACT/MWENGO ISGM

#### USAID/KENYA

11. Chilala, Winnie, Pharesh Ratego, and Shireen Strauss. *Evaluation of the Impact of USAID NGO Strengthening Support. Final Evaluation of Lakipia Wildlife Forum, Nanyuki, Kenya. DRAFT.* October 6, 2004.
12. Kenuthia, Henry, Tom Muga, and Ben Wandago. *Evaluation Report of the Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary Kwale District, Kenya. Draft.* October 2004.

#### MALAWI

13. Hackner, Allan, Nyirongo, Mexon and Patricia Ziwa. *Umoyo Network-Malawi AIDS Counseling and Resource Organization (MACRO).* October 2004.
14. Gross, Michele, Alick Mtika, and Ramsey Sosola. *Evaluation of the Capacity Building and Support for MANET and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) Support Groups. DRAFT.* October 2004.

#### MALI

15. Lesser, Jo, Ibrahim Litny, and Souleymane Sogoba. *Impact Evaluation of the Cooperative League of the United States (CLUSA) Mali Project. 1997-2003: G-FORCE and Livestock Cooperative Component.* October 2004.
16. Farroe, Meryvn, Moussokoro Kane, and Alpha Wade, Laura Burnham, Sikoro Keita, and Sounka Ndiaye. *Evaluation of the World Education Program.* October 2004.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

17. Challenor, Herschelle, Kalinde Chindebvuvu and Brian Frantz. *The Rehabilitation of Young Criminals in South Africa: A Case Study of Khulisa.* November 2004.

#### TANZANIA

18. Benner, Holly and Adam Reisman. *Pastoralist Indigenous Nongovernmental Organization's Forum (PINGO's Forum): Mid-Term Evaluation Report.* DRAFT. August 2004.

#### WARP (West Africa Regional Program)

19. Aden, Abdi, Dennis Bilodeau, Carolyn Jefferson, Juliana Pwamang (Team leader) and Letitia Sam. *Evaluation of the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP).*

Adapted from JKerley, 12/10/04

## 8. PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE GAINS FROM PHASE I OF THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN EVALUATION

The phased nature of the Certificate Program in Evaluation provides multiple opportunities for assessing knowledge gains. The first opportunity comes at the start of Phase I when a pre-test is administered to determine participant's prior exposure to concepts that will be covered in the course. Knowledge gained from the first classroom phase of the course is directly assessed at the end of the week. This first post-test covers some items included in the pre-test. A second opportunity comes during Phase III, when instructors and participants assess the completeness and quality of the evaluations participant teams have produced and participants complete a Phase III course evaluation. This section discusses knowledge gained by participants during Phase I of the course.



Pre-test responses indicated that roughly one third of all participants had at least a modest understanding of evaluation concepts at the start of Phase I. This is consistent with self-reporting by participants which indicated that two-thirds of the participants in the Africa Bureau trainings had some prior training in monitoring and evaluations, mostly on-the-job. Most other participants reported that they had previously read at least some materials on the topic.

When pre- and post-test answers were compared at the end of Phase I, substantial changes were found on a number of evaluation concepts, as Table I illustrates. Nearly three times as many participants scored themselves as understanding concepts "very well" in the Phase I post-test as compared to the start of Phase I. The number that described themselves as not understanding concepts well dropped for every concept on which a comparison of ratings was made. This degree of change between the start and end of Phase I is roughly the same as that which occurred in the 2003 training provided for USAID's E&E Bureau.

### FIELDWORK IS THE HEART OF THE COURSE

Doing an actual evaluation was invaluable. No amount of class work could have accomplished this.

– Course Participant

**TABLE I. PARTICIPANT SELF-REPORTING ON UNDERSTANDING AT THE START AND END OF PHASE I**

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea					
	Not well		Somewhat		Very well	
<i>Matched Items Before and After Phase I Training</i>	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
The meaning of the term evaluation	1	0	28	1	20	59
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation	5	0	22	5	21	56
How to select a sample that is not biased	14	3	28	30	7	26
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential	21	0	20	19	9	40
When an evaluation is needed	6	0	25	13	16	43
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time	34	12	12	29	4	29
When to use open-ended questions and when to use closed-ended questions	17	4	22	23	10	34
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	27	2	12	25	3	31
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview	19	0	21	15	9	48
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	32	9	16	24	2	22

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

Pre-test and post-test forms from Phase I, as well as final course evaluation forms from Phase III, are provided in Annex E, along with a summary of quantitative responses for all three courses on each of the concepts and a listing of all of the qualitative answers and other comments participants provided.

## 9. PRODUCTS AND DISCUSSION OUTCOMES FROM PHASE III EXERCISES

In addition to providing participants with feedback on their evaluation reports and oral presentations, Phase III provides several exercises that focus at the program or meta-evaluation level to identify patterns of findings across evaluations. Topics also covered include: the utilization of evaluation findings, host country M&E capacity, ways USAID could help increase M&E, and individual and mission action plans outlining what participants hope to do to improve the evaluation enterprise in their missions once they return home.

### A. PROGRAM LEVEL OR META-EVALUATION EXERCISES

In Phase III, course participants were given a short presentation on meta-analysis techniques and then formed into new working groups. Generally, these groups were made up of one participant from each evaluation team in a class. The program level, or meta-analysis, questions given to participants from the Tanzania course focused on issues relevant to projects in conflict settings. Questions for both the South Africa and Ghana evaluations focused on institutional capacity change, service delivery improvement, and beneficiary impact from NGO projects. A list of meta-analysis questions given to the participants in each course is presented in Annex F.



#### THE VALUE OF SYNTHESIZING THE RESULTS OF MULTIPLE EVALUATIONS

I could have sworn, when we completed our evaluation that the project we examined caused a reduction in conflict. Now I see that other projects also claim this result and more importantly, I see that the result cannot as easily be attributed to a single source as I was convinced was possible when we wrote our report.

– Course Participant

When participants begin using evaluations as data sources to answer program level questions, they start to “own” the information they have collected and synthesized in a very different way than they do when they passively read evaluation reports. The process almost always brings to light aspects of their evaluations that could have been stronger i.e., more careful data collection, better analysis. Nevertheless, participants also find their evaluations are rich collective resources which almost always suggest patterns that explain why a particular type of project

was effective or ineffective.

This is precisely the sort of learning experience that REDSO/East Africa appeared to be aiming for when it asked that conflict projects be the focus for the Tanzania training. When participants were asked to use the five evaluations they had conducted to answer meta-evaluation questions, they realized that they had sufficient data to reach conclusions about the



type of conflict prevention projects they had examined. By the end of their meta-analysis task, they had evidence to support fairly strong conclusions<sup>6</sup> including that:

- There is a need for better situation analysis and strategy formulation before NGO conflict prevention/mitigation projects are funded;
- Longer term and more adequate funding for NGO conflict prevention/mitigation projects is needed. One year projects are not realistic;
- Institutional development should be an important component of each such intervention; and
- Sustainability is an inherent challenge. It has to be planned and worked at, not assumed.



Participants in South Africa and Ghana had similar experiences. In South Africa, one group of participants found, by examining several evaluations, that intended beneficiary impact was not well defined in the evaluation reports. They blamed this, in turn, on a lack of clarity about expected benefits in the grant project documentation their teams had examined. Another group in South Africa found that NGO service delivery had improved in a number of projects, but their evaluations did not give them enough of a factual basis to attribute any particular change to a USAID intervention. Participants also found that USAID funded training correlated with positive changes in NGO service delivery. This might not be the only explanation for the service improvements since their evaluation data showed that NGOs seemed to be learning from each other and from their environments, perhaps more than from the training PVOs had provided them.

In Ghana, where participants looked at five evaluations with an NGO strengthening element, they found that only a weak link between organizational capacity development and service improvements at the NGO level could be proven. This team offered clear recommendations for the NGOs and for USAID:

*For NGOs: Improve data collection and record keeping.*

*For USAID: Commission small studies to examine why linkages, or at least proof concerning linkages, between PVO “strengthening” interventions and NGO services seem to be weak.*

Commenting on these participant products, course instructors noted that these kinds of program level conclusions cannot be reached when one evaluation is considered at a time. The type of work participants do in the meta-analysis session is comparable to what the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) suggested when it talks about the needed to undertake broad evaluations that inform the process of moving from one strategy period to the next.

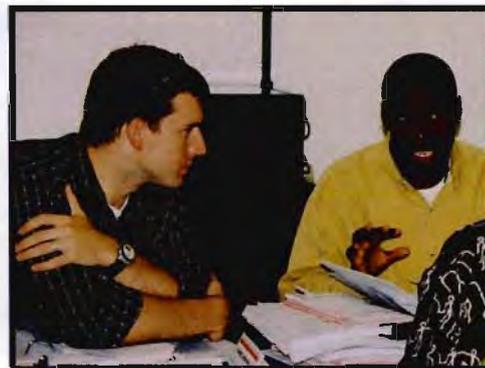
#### **READY FOR SO LEVEL EVALUATIONS**

In all three courses, participants stated in class or approached the course instructors and told them that the meta-evaluation segment was the most eye-opening course segment of all. Several said that they felt they now had the skills to talk with their SO teams about multi-project evaluations and even SO-level evaluations.

<sup>6</sup> USAID’s manager for this round of evaluation trainings found the findings of the meta-evaluation carried out by participants in Tanzania evaluations so useful that she asked one of the course instructors to prepare a more formal version of that synthesis, which is included as Annex G.

## **B. TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING THE UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS**

In order to facilitate a class discussion in Phase III, participants were given "homework" questions pertaining to the utilization of evaluation findings in their offices and missions to research during the period between the two classroom phases of the course. The homework questions on this topic are shown in Box 2 below.



### **BOX 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON THE UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION REPORTS**

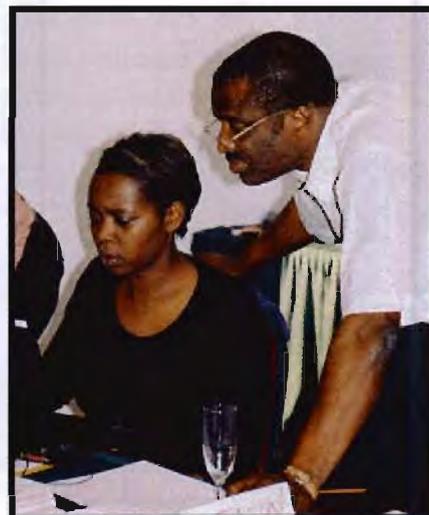
1. Does the mission have a formal system through which it records all of the evaluations it undertakes, i.e., when initiated, by whom, written copy of the SOW, date evaluation received, review comments, whether and when evaluation report was accepted?
2. When an evaluation report is received/accepted – in final form – is there a formal mission process for reviewing the evaluation's recommendations and deciding which to accept and act upon and which recommendations not to accept?
3. Is there a formal process for reviewing and accepting/rejecting evaluation recommendations? Who chairs these meetings?
4. During a review of an evaluation report's recommendations, is a written record made of decisions about what evaluation recommendations for action are accepted, who will be responsible for taking those actions, and by what deadline?
5. If a post-evaluation action plan based on recommendations is prepared, who is responsible for following up and recording whether agreed-upon actions were actually taken?
6. Who in the mission is responsible for sending final copies of all evaluations to CDIE?
7. Does the mission also routinely provide the mission library with copies of all evaluations?
8. Does the mission have a procedure for determining who else would benefit from having a copy of an evaluation and making sure they receive it, e.g., implementers, government, other donors, beneficiary groups, etc? Where does the responsibility for making this distribution lie?
9. Please provide 2-3 examples of strong mission utilization of an evaluation report. Identify the SO or project for which the evaluation was undertaken and briefly describe what changed because of the evaluation.
10. Please provide 2-3 examples of weak mission utilization of an evaluation report. Identify the SO or project for which the evaluation was undertaken and briefly describe what makes you feel that the evaluation was underutilized or not utilized.

In class, the discussion of utilization began with an exercise in which participants rated the “evaluation culture” in their missions, based on their homework. They rated their missions against a set of factors derived from a course reading.<sup>7</sup> In all three courses, participants scored their missions positively on all but two of these factors. Missions generally scored high on being “forward looking” and “action oriented” but low on being “humble and self-critical” and “truth seeking.” Identifying these traits focused the discussion on how the evaluation climate could be improved in their organizations.

Shifting to the utilization of evaluation reports, instructors offered examples from their own experience and elicited participant experiences with the utilization of evaluations by missions. These discussions of utilization brought out the fact that while some participants could talk about instances where their mission had taken action based on an evaluation, others could not – because their missions had not undertaken any evaluations that the participants were aware of. Responses of this sort led instructors to ask participants, on a country-by-country basis, whether and how many evaluations had been carried out in their mission during the past year. The informal tally, initially carried out in Tanzania, and repeated in South Africa and Ghana, showed that missions vary considerably in terms of their investment in evaluations as a program management tool.

One of the most important factors associated with a mission's use of evaluations, participants indicated, was the presence of a full-time, or close to full-time, M&E officer in a unit. Participant responses on other discussion items were equally interesting and the cross-talk between participants from different missions on various utilization questions was particularly appreciated. Some of the discoveries participants made by sharing what they knew about utilization in their missions include the following:

- **Mission Evaluation Plans and Scopes of Work.** Mission evaluation plans are not widely used. Even where the existence of an evaluation plan was reported, the mission did not have a central point through which all evaluation scopes of work, draft, and final evaluations flow, even in missions with a full time M&E officer. One southern African M&E officer said, for example, that while his office prepared a mission Evaluation Plan annually, he was only consulted on evaluation scopes for work when Offices felt they needed assistance.
- **Tracking Completed Evaluations.** Missions differ on how progress on planned evaluations is tracked and how evaluations are handled once they are received. Only a few participants believed that their missions counted up the number of planned evaluations that were actually completed during the year for which they were planned. None of the participants reported that a score sheet showing planned versus actual evaluations carried out during a year was prepared and circulated to staff, though one or two thought that this might be occurring as part of the mission's annual report preparation process.
- **Evaluation Reviews.** Participants from at least a few missions represented in the trainings reported that their missions hold formal reviews when evaluation reports are received. Those who did have reviews indicated that they generally were held at the SO level, rather than on a wide basis with Mission Director involvement. A few instances of this kind of high-level evaluation report review were mentioned.



<sup>7</sup> William M.K. Trochim, “An Evaluation Culture” available at <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/evalcult.htm>

- **Utilization of Evaluation Results.** Participants in all courses discussed the actual utilization of evaluation findings through examples. The most frequent use of evaluation findings was to inform and help design follow-on activities. Mid-term evaluations were also described as useful, as many led to important modifications in on-going activities. Participants in every course also indicated that there were some evaluations where it was not clear that utilization had occurred. These evaluations were not deliberately set aside, rather they just did not seem to be connected to any important mission decisions or actions.
- **Systematic Follow-Up On Evaluation Recommendations.** Responses from participants indicated that follow-up on evaluation recommendations is occurring in some instances, but missions have not usually established formal systems for tracking the results to determine the status of accepted recommendations. Most doubted that this idea had ever come up in their missions. A number of participants said they found the idea intriguing as a way of monitoring evaluation utilization.
- **Dissemination of Evaluation Reports.** Most missions do not have standard procedures for distributing evaluations internally, to implementing partners, government, other donors, or the public. Some participants indicated that their missions had disseminated certain evaluations quite widely among program stakeholders, but this was not always done. Only a few missions had posted evaluations on their websites, and even then postings were not necessarily comprehensive. Missions in French-speaking countries were more likely to report that the Executive Summaries from their evaluation reports, or entire evaluations, were translated into a second language, but that process was not necessarily systematic and universal.

The discussion of utilization provided an opportunity for participants to compare their mission or office to similar units and to a vision of what an organization that is very pro-active with respect to the utilization of evaluations might do to promote and establish norms in that regard. Ideas discussed in this session often reappeared later in the training program in the form of “action plan” items participants included on lists they developed toward the end of the training to take back to their missions.

### **C. EXPANDING AFRICAN EVALUATION CAPACITY**

The second homework questions focused on the extent to which institutions, particularly government ministries, in the host country incorporated monitoring and evaluation into their work. Focus questions for this discussion are shown in Box 3 below.

While discussions of host country M&E capacity were brief in all three courses, they did reveal that host country M&E capacity has not been a focus in USAID-funded programs. Only one mission represented at the South Africa training reported that the mission had made an explicit effort, through one of its projects, to encourage monitoring by a government entity.



### BOX 3

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT GOVERNMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES

1. Is there any legislation or an Executive Directive or Order in your country that requires that government funded programs to be monitored or evaluated? How long has this law/regulation existed?
2. Are there any national ministries or government departments that are known to have a serious or active program of monitoring or evaluation in place? If so, which ones are viewed as taking these tasks seriously?
3. If government requires monitoring and/or evaluation, do government employees carryout these tasks?
4. Does the government have a training institute or program that teaches government employees about monitoring and/or evaluation?
5. Have you ever seen or heard about a program or project evaluation produced by your government? If yes, what was evaluated?
6. Outside government, is there any national organization that has an established capacity for monitoring and/or evaluation? What types of organizations, e.g., NGOs, academics, think tanks?
7. How many local professional program/project evaluators would you estimate there are in your country?
8. Does government use the skills of local organizations and/or individuals that have professional skills in monitoring and evaluation?
9. Where have the people in your country that you consider to have professional monitoring/evaluation skills received their training? Do any local institutes or schools teach these skills?

During these sessions, the instructors shared information about the existence of national-level evaluation associations in several African countries and the continent-wide African Evaluation Association. The accompanying map shows countries that have already formed national associations of people working in monitoring and evaluation. It comes from the African Evaluation Association, at <http://www.afrea.org/>, which provides links to each national association website. The AFREA organizes an annual conference each year where M&E professionals present papers and exchange lessons.

Few USAID participants were aware of the existence of these African evaluation associations. For most, this information came as a surprise and a number commented to course instructors that they had no idea that such a broad and organized movement to build capacity in their region existed, let alone that it had been organized by Africans and was expanding at a fairly rapid pace.



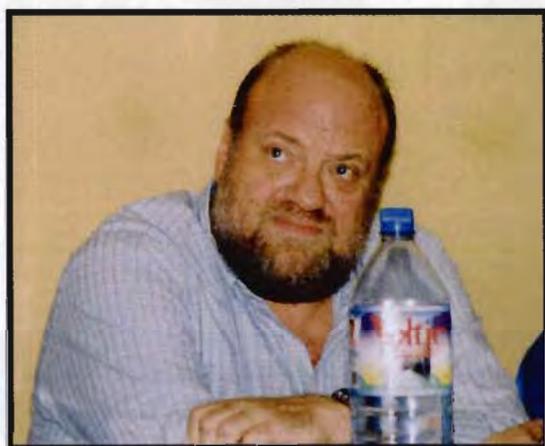
African Evaluation Association's Map of National Level Evaluation Networks and Associations in Africa

Course instructors also shared information about the World Bank's program for assisting countries, and particularly government ministries on monitoring and evaluation. The Bank held a regional workshop in 2000 in Johannesburg, South Africa and has an on-going pilot project in Uganda in this field.<sup>8</sup> In addition, participants learned about mission-level efforts, such as USAID/Uganda's development of a roster of Ugandan firms and individuals who have monitoring and evaluation skills. The list is updated annually and made available to all Activity Managers and all USAID Implementing Partner organizations.

## D. PARTICIPANT ACTION PLANS

At the end of Phase III individuals were asked to develop draft Action Plans that they could share with their mission colleagues for improving mission monitoring and evaluation activities. Plans were not shared with course instructors in written form, but at the end of the Action Planning period, participants were asked to identify the top priorities they had put on their action plans. The major activities noted were:

- Complete their mission level performance monitoring plans along with improvements in evaluation;
- Set up mission evaluation plans and a process for comparing these plans to what missions actually accomplished;
- Mission orders on evaluation were contemplated by several teams;
- Establish processes for improving the evaluations, e.g.: carry out formal reviews when evaluations are received by a mission, record decisions made about what evaluation recommendations the mission agrees with and plans to implement, and follow-up to determine whether accepted recommendations were actually implemented.



Entries in Box 4 from the South Africa course illustrate the full range of innovations that participants are recommending for action in their missions.

## 10. PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT TO WHICH THE COURSE ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES

At the start of the Certificate Program in Evaluation the six objectives for the course were shared with the participants. In the final evaluation, students were asked to judge how well the course had met those objectives (i.e., fully, partially, marginally or not at all). As Table 3 shows, better than 80 percent of the 55 participants who rated the course on its achievement of course objectives said that it had fully achieved three of the six. Over 70 percent of participants said that the other three objectives has also been fully achieved. Most other scores said that objectives had been partially achieved.

<sup>8</sup> Relevant World Bank documents can be found at: <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/ecdl/>.

## BOX 4

### HIGHLIGHTS OF PARTICIPANT ACTION PLAN – SOUTH AFRICA COURSE

#### South Africa

- Create a PMP database
- Improve data quality checks
- Prepare a Mission Evaluation Plan

#### Benin

- Consolidate evaluation plans on a mission-wide basis
- Improve evaluation SOWs
- Create more momentum for a process that really reviews results

#### Democratic Republic of the Congo

- Finalize PMP database the mission has started to develop
- Provide staff with data quality assessment training
- Draft a Mission Order on M&E

#### Ghana

- “Train the Bosses” to be better users of evaluation findings
- Update the Mission Order on M&E

#### Malawi

- Try an SO level evaluation, a whole program area, including all USAID activities in that area
- Develop a system for tracking the implementation of evaluation recommendations

#### Angola

- Develop more formal evaluation plans
- Put new mechanisms for guiding evaluations in place
- Follow-up on evaluation recommendations

#### Kenya

- Provide M&E training to other staff
- Obtain software that can help with evaluation planning, tracking, content analysis

#### Namibia

- Develop a sensitization training in evaluation culture
- Institute a more formal process for reviewing evaluations and deciding what recommendations to accept
- Improve data quality assessment

## A. QUANTITATIVE RANKINGS OF ASPECTS OF THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN EVALUATION



This section reviews participant views on the degree to which the course achieved its objectives; their sense of how well it prepared them for various practical exercises they were expected to complete, the applicability of the knowledge gained to their work in USAID missions, and their sense of the value and cost-effectiveness of this course compared to other USAID courses. The information is based on the post-course evaluation of Phase III.

The three objectives on which participants provided the most positive ratings (“objective fully met”) are those that are the most critical in terms of their ability to

carryout core evaluation responsibilities in USAID, i.e., understanding the role of evaluation, writing evaluation SOWs, and reviewing draft evaluation reports.

**TABLE 2. ACHIEVEMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Course Objective	Degree to which Objective Was Achieved (N = 55 participants)			
	Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not
Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle.	95%	5%		
Improve skills needed to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work.	84%	16%		
Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation.	73%	25%	2%	
Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kinds of information needed to answer evaluation questions	73%	24%	3%	
Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports – with an eye to improving them.	87%	13%		
Improve understanding of how to utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.	76%	22%	2%	

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

Three quarters of the participants indicated that they have improved their understanding of how to use evaluation findings to inform management decisions. In addition, participants were asked to describe the utilization of evaluations in their work environment. However, many participants described their missions as not being very interested in evaluation, as having weak “evaluation cultures,” or undertaking very few evaluations. Thus, they found it particularly difficult to discern how they might improve utilization within this environment. Many expressed interest in techniques such as formal evaluation reviews, systematic recording of decisions made on which evaluation recommendations to accept, and steps that could be instituted in missions to track whether recommendations that are accepted are actually implemented.



Some 88 percent said they had sufficient preparation for fieldwork in Phase II, (rating a 4 or 5), while 70 percent scored class exercises and 76 percent scored class discussion opportunities at the 4 to 5 level. Most individual modules also scored high, with an exception being data analysis and sampling. Most participants scored this module somewhat lower on the scales, noting the need for more time on these difficult topics.

Participants indicated that they had been provided the right amount of information in most areas, as Table 4 illustrates. Fewer than 10 percent said they had received too much information in an area. A higher percentage (20%) said that “not quite enough” information had been provided on research design, data collection, and project design. The students requested more time be spent on techniques for data analysis.

**TABLE 3. ADEQUACY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED IN PHASE I**

Adequacy of Information Provided in Phase I	Too Much	Right Amount	Not Quite Enough	Not at all
Did the classroom experience in Phase I provide you with sufficient theory on the purposes, ethics and evolution of evaluation?	6%	90%	4%	
Did the classroom experience give you enough information on evaluation design to develop a valid and efficient approach to your field evaluation assignment?	9%	71%	20%	
Did the classroom experience give you enough information on methods of collecting data for you to select and apply appropriate data collection methods to your field assignment?	8%	65%	27%	
Did the classroom experience give you enough information on data analysis techniques for you to organize, summarize, interpret and display the data you collected?	9%	42%	47%	2%
Did the classroom experience give you enough insight into good project design for you to identify project design weaknesses in the projects you evaluated as part of your field assignment?	7%	71%	22%	
Did the classroom experience give you enough information to write a professional report on the evaluation you carried out during your field assignment?	9%	66%	25%	

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

Commenting on the field experience, two-thirds of the participants rated their teams as functioning well, while two percent said their teams did not function well.

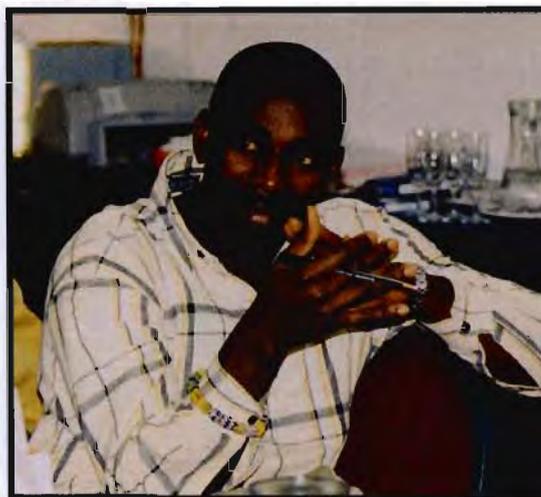
The majority of participants said that they did not collect an adequate amount of data during their fieldwork and did not do enough analysis of the data they did collect. Lack of time for fieldwork was the issue for all teams as well as lack of time to prepare their written report. Only two percent of participants said they had sufficient time to complete the Phase II task to their satisfaction.

**TABLE 4. ADEQUACY OF TEAM ACTIVITY AND TIME IN PHASE II**

Adequacy of Phase II Teamwork and Time	Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
Was your "team" able to function effectively as a "team" in the manner that the course had suggested is appropriate for evaluation work?	59%	28%	11%	2%
Looking back, do you feel that your team developed an adequate plan for its fieldwork?	51%	42%	7%	
Looking back, do you feel that you collected the data that you needed to prepare your evaluation report?	28%	68%	4%	
Looking back, do you feel that you adequately analyzed the data you collected?	40%	48%	12%	
Looking back, do you feel that you had enough time to complete your field assignment?	2%	45%	32%	21%

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

Despite their sense that they did not have as much time as they would have liked for Phase II, which is also typical of the evaluation teams USAID hires, 81 percent rated the field work portion of the course highly, fully justifying the effort and expense involved. The other 19 percent marked partially justified on their evaluation forms.



This overall response from Africa Bureau participants was virtually identical to the answers provided by participants in the E&E Bureau in 2003 on this question. There were, however, some differences among the three courses given in Africa with regard to this question. A higher percentage of respondents from the course based in Tanzania (75%) and the one based in South Africa (80%) rated this question as "fully justified,"

compared to 50 percent of participants from the course based in Ghana. This lower score from Ghana may be a function of the larger teams that existed in that class and how well they functioned, though the anonymous nature of the data on this question means the answers cannot be linked directly to specific participants.

A third set of questions on the course evaluation focused on participant views of the elements of Phase III. Table 6 provides information on the participatory aspects of Phase III.

The major tasks of the second week of class - team presentations, discussion on the field work, and feedback sessions with course instructors - were considered very important to over 80 percent of the participants (Table 6). The responses to these three questions were similar across the three African courses.

**TABLE 5. IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY SESSIONS IN PHASE III**

Importance of Participatory Sessions During Phase III	Very important	Important	Marginally important	Not at all
How important to your overall experience was the task of making a presentation on your evaluation?	84%	15%	1%	
How important for you was the discussion among all teams of their field assignment experiences?	82%	16%	2%	
How important was the feedback session with the course instructors for your team?	85%	15%		
How important was your participation in an effort to look across the project evaluations and develop general findings about the whole group of projects, i.e., the cross-project analysis?	61%	30%	7%	2%

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

Participant responses concerning the importance of the Phase III meta-analysis segment of the course differed widely among the three classes. All students from the Tanzania course (100%) rated this segment as being very important, compared with 64 percent and 43 percent from South Africa and Ghana respectively. Participant answers to this question varied directly with the amount of time allocated for the meta-analysis exercise. In Tanzania, it was given the full amount of time allocated in the course plan. In South Africa, to some degree, and in even a more pronounced way in Ghana, time provided to participants to re-draft their evaluation reports competed for and in the end encroached upon the block of time set aside for meta-analysis.



In the course evaluation, participants were also asked to identify the impact of the course on their work in the missions. The most frequent responses were:

- The course gave me enough experience that with some technical assistance I am now confident that I am able to develop evaluation SOWs that will result in evaluations my mission finds informative and useful. (67% of the participants).
- Because of what I learned in this course, I am now able to participate on an evaluation as an expert member of an evaluation team (67%).
- I now feel sufficiently confident of my evaluation skills that I could be a team leader and principal author of a project evaluation for USAID or any other international donor organization (52%).
- I may not be able to participate in many evaluations in the future, but I now have a good idea of how to use evaluations to learn more and improve my mission's programs (47%).

Finally, participants were asked to indicate whether they had already begun to apply what they were learning. Forty-eight of the 57 participants who returned for Phase III (84%) provided answers that demonstrated that they had begun to use what they had learned. The most frequently cited were preparing evaluation Scopes of Work and reviewing evaluation reports. Participant responses are shown in the text boxes in this report and in Annex E.

In a final question, participants were asked to compare the Certificate Program in Evaluation to other USAID courses they have taken. Sixty seven percent (67%) indicated that the course was more useful than other USAID training courses they have taken, as Table 7 indicates. The high ratings on this question exceeded those given for this course by E&E Bureau participants in 2003.

**TABLE 6. VALUE OF THE COURSE COMPARED TO OTHER COURSES**

Much less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Somewhat less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	About the same as other USAID training courses	Somewhat more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Much more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken
		10%	23%	67%

Source: Pre and Post Evaluation forms administered by course instructors.

## B. WRITTEN/QUALITATIVE PARTICIPANT COMMENTS ON THE COURSE

Written comments on the course as a whole were consistent with participants overall high ratings; a number of participants in each class wrote that this was the best USAID training course they had attended.

Participants provided a number of suggestions for improving aspects of the course. The most common suggestions were:



- Provide more training in data analysis, sampling, and evaluation design in Phase I.
- Put some readings on CDs.
- Provide more time for the field work.
- Insist that teams stay together after collecting data to begin their analysis and start a draft of their report, agreeing, at a minimum, on the key findings.
- Give even more guidance on how to write good reports, both before and after they do their fieldwork.
- Provide even more detailed feedback and coaching on finalizing reports (instructor feedback was greatly appreciated).

In response to participant recommendations at the end of Phase I of the Tanzania course that additional guidance be provided on writing evaluation reports, Richard Blue, one of the course instructors, produced a small guide on this topic. The pamphlet was subsequently handed out in Phase III of the Tanzania course and in Phase I of the South Africa and Ghana courses. This new document is provided in Annex H, as it may be worth USAID's consideration as the basis for a new TIPS.

Participants' narrative answers to all open-ended questions are provided in Annex E, on a course-by-course basis.

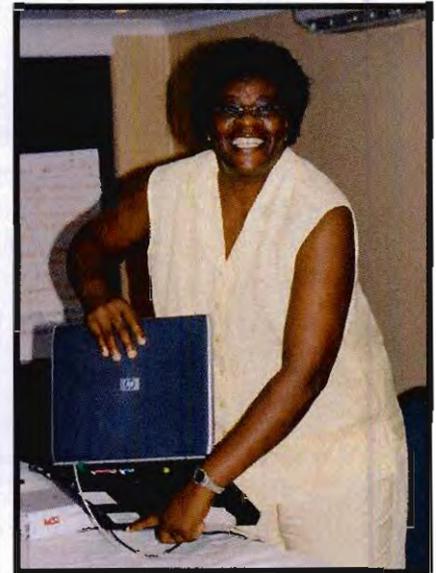
## II. INSTRUCTOR OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes observations and conclusions of the course instructors and presents the recommendations for future courses that follow from them.

### A. OBSERVATIONS

Generally speaking, the results for participants from the MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation courses given for USAID in Africa paralleled results elsewhere for this course.

- Participants in all three of the Africa Bureau presentations of the MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation were actively engaged in all phases of this course.
- The small number of individuals who did not complete the course all faced either insurmountable logistical impediments to doing so or were drawn away by personal emergencies and commitments they could not ignore. To the best of their ability, individuals who found themselves in this situation appear to have tried to help their team members complete the exercise and produce solid evaluation reports and presentations.
- All of the fundamental characteristics of the course – a team approach for the participants and the application of concepts at every stage of the program– continue to work exceptionally well.
- Teams and fieldwork remain the heart of the course.
- Africa Bureau participants gained the most by applying concepts presented in class to a real evaluation, as with other classes that have completed this course. It is the practical experience combined with classroom training that they appreciated. For the instructor team, the growth of their capacities during Phase I over the course of their fieldwork, and in Phase III, is practically tangible. We see their ability to think critically improve, and then improve again. We see the fear that some have of standing at the front of the room or offering critical advice in a public setting fade away. Their confidence, presence, and certainty that they can handle evaluations for USAID and do it well grew right before our eyes.

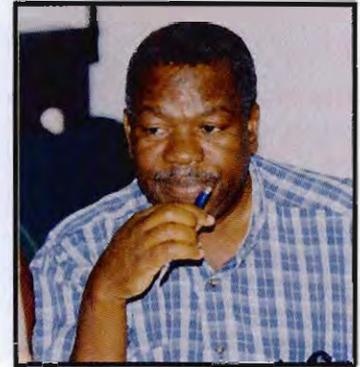


Course instructors also observed that:

- When this training is organized around a specific theme, a good deal of time is needed in advance to synthesize available materials and provide them to teams in an orderly and easily accessed form. This happened in South Africa and Ghana, where background information on NGO strengthening projects provided to participants was carefully selected and limited to a simple logic diagram of how most NGO strengthening projects work and a small REDSO/East Africa guide to the key characteristics of NGOs that such programs are expected to strengthen. By contrast, in Tanzania, the instructors, with the best of intentions, provided participants with the equivalent of a state-of-the-art library on monitoring and

evaluation in program settings where conflict is a factor or the central focus of the program. Participants were overwhelmed by the volume of paper they received and were not able to use it efficiently during the course.

- Exceptions made in the Ghana round of the course to the practice of limiting the number of participants on an evaluation team to three did not produce better results than were realized by teams of three in Ghana or in the other two courses. Large teams, among other things, tend to reduce the responsibilities of each team member. With smaller teams, every team member has to function in multiple roles, which is what the instructors intend. In addition, a three-person team is intentionally uneven, creating a natural mechanism for decision making as the team does its work.
- Evaluation reports delivered at the start of Phase III by course participants represent a good first effort, but they all needed work to move from a first draft stage to final. One problem that appeared in most evaluation reports was that they failed to provide a clear explanation at the start of the project's intentions, i.e., the results they were expected to produce and the *theory of change* underlying the intended transformation of activity or program resources into direct results (outputs) and broader impacts. The instructors noted that this is perhaps a problem that could be addressed in Phase I and if that were done, other aspects of participant "draft" evaluation reports from Phase II might benefit.
- Looking back, in a "lessons learned" sense, the course instructors noted that the time taken away from meta-analysis and re-allocated, in South Africa and Ghana, for participants to finalize their evaluation reports had adverse effects. Course evaluation forms completed by participants indicated that differences in the amount of time devoted to meta-evaluation mattered in terms of the value received from that course segment. As program level evaluation skills are a central objective of the course, the instructors concluded that this "trade-off" had more costs than benefits.

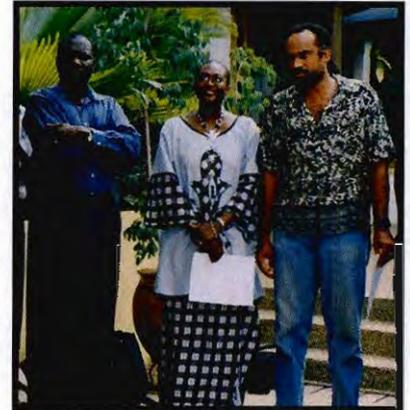


## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Retain the time frame established for the three-week course. While some participants lamented that they needed more time for their class and field exercises, it is MSI's sense that most participants learned what the course is intended to teach within the time frame established for this three-phase Certificate Program. Three full weeks, plus additional time on-line for planning a field visit and producing an evaluation report, is a significant investment. With less time, however, participants would be unlikely to complete the full cycle of formal and practical training included in this curriculum.
2. Use small teams of three for the fieldwork. MSI instructors also came away from this round of three classes more convinced than ever that small teams produce the optimal learning experience. Instructor perceptions in this regard are supported by ratings given by participants on certain aspects of their experience. In the future, MSI instructors will work with USAID course managers to screen out projects that might require large teams or mergers among small teams.
3. Select the projects for field evaluations sooner and always select a few more than appear to be needed. MSI encourages USAID missions to identify candidate projects earlier in the planning process. More than the minimum number is needed to avoid situations where two teams are looking at the same project, albeit at different sites and regional projects, i.e., the situations that led to larger and

merged teams in the Ghana course. Having additional options ready also helps in situations where logistical arrangements do not permit a team to go to a particular site, for logistical or country clearance reasons.

4. Start asking participants to draft the introductory section of their evaluation report, i.e., the program description and the broad outlines of their methodology, during Phase I and expect instructors to review these draft sections and provide comments to teams within a week, i.e., in advance of the start of fieldwork. This feedback should help teams reduce the time they need for rewriting in Phase III after they receive an oral critique of their draft report in class.
5. Require students to stay together during their fieldwork, and for at least a full day after collecting their evaluation data to begin to analyze it and agree upon their strongest findings, conclusions and recommendations. In these courses, as in the E&E course in 2003, differences between reports prepared by teams that had worked face-to-face on their main findings, conclusions and recommendations and those that had not were apparent in their documents and oral presentations.
6. Add more time between the participants' deadline for delivery of their draft reports in Phase III and the start of Phase III. During the additional time, have at least one instructor read each report and e-mail pre-Phase III comments to the team. This should help them improve their oral presentations, on an *a priori* basis as well as give them advance warning regarding structural issues in their drafts. This would also give participants more time before Phase III starts to read each other's reports.
7. Restore the original amount of time allocated for program level, or meta-analysis of the evaluations participants produce. Find an alternative to reducing the time for this Phase III course segment to allow participants to finalize their evaluation reports. Class time allocated for report rewriting does not take good advantage of the limited time participants and instructors have to work together to build participant skills in program level evaluation.
8. Require participants to send some information on their homework on utilization and host country M&E capacity to the instructors late in Phase II, thus allowing the instructors to tabulate results prior to Phase III. This will help to improve the Phase III class sessions on these topics by grounding them in facts generated through the homework process. There is insufficient time in these sessions to both collate participant's findings and fully discuss them.



## **ANNEXES**

- Annex A Core Phase I Curriculum – MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation
- Annex B Illustrative Class Agendas for Phase I and Phase III
- Annex C Participant List
- Annex D Evaluation Review Criteria
- Annex E Pre-Test Results
- Annex F Program Level or Meta-Evaluation Questions Addressed by Participant Teams
- Annex G Conflict Management Projects In East Africa
- Annex H A General Guide to the Construction of an Evaluation Report

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## Annex A: Core Phase I Curriculum – MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation

- **Evaluation – The Evolution of the Concept** introduces participants to a range of ideas about the purpose of evaluation, the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process and other concepts that help to define this discipline.
- **Evaluation in the Project Cycle** places evaluation into the context of development programs.
- **Evaluation and the Evaluation Officer in USAID.** This module, which is linked to evaluation culture, was designed to provide participants with an understanding of the pioneer role USAID has played in evaluation among development agencies and the importance it continues to attach to evaluation as a management tool.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation – What’s the Difference?** This module highlights the evolution of monitoring from a concern with budget and schedule to the kind of performance monitoring systems found in development organizations today. The different and complementary roles of monitoring and evaluation are defined.
- **Evaluation Scopes of Work (SOW).** This module focuses on all of the elements of an evaluation scope of work and the role these elements play in procurement and in guiding the work of an evaluation team.
- **Evaluation Questions.** This is a core module that highlights the importance of questions as the focus of an evaluation. Differences in the types of questions that are appropriate for mid-term, final, and impact evaluations are examined.
- **Evaluation Schedule and Budget.** This module complements the SOW module by providing guidelines from experience about the level of effort needed for each stage of an evaluation. Basic scheduling concepts are also reviewed. The module focuses on the fact that time and budget constraints on evaluations require evaluators to make practical choices with respect to the methods to be used for data collection and analysis.
- **Values and Ethics in Evaluation.** Basic concepts are discussed, including the need to guard against bias, the need to avoid leading questions, and other common problems in evaluation.
- **Building an Evaluation Team.** This module briefly introduces basic team selection and management concepts appropriate to evaluation.
- **Evaluation Design.** This module focuses on the development of a framework for carrying out an evaluation. The methods that are used to develop evaluation questions play a central role in soliciting responses that are appropriate and manageable. Evaluation plans are presented as composites of the best methodologies selected to address the questions in evaluation SOW.
- **Sampling.** This topic is included to assist participant evaluation teams in selecting sites they will visit as well as individuals they will interview. Probability and non-probability sampling are explained and the appropriate uses of both defined.
- **Data Collection Toolbox.** This module introduces participants to a wide range of data collection approaches including observation, the use of instruments to collect information and interrogation, or the art of asking questions. Reactive and non-reactive methods of data collection are discussed.
- **Data Analysis** is a module that teaches participants to focus on how data will be analyzed when an evaluation plan is prepared. Basic analysis techniques are presented for quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Evaluation Reports.** This module focuses on the differences between findings, conclusions and recommendations. A sample report outline is provided, highlighting these three elements and indicating what kinds of materials are best relegated to an evaluation report annex.

## Additional Topics – MSI Certificate Program in Evaluation

- **Program Theory.** This segment focuses on the underlying logic of the types of projects participants will evaluate.
- **Evaluation in the USAID Automated Directives System.** This module, which is sometimes useful as a closing to Phase I review module, takes participants through the USAID ADS on evaluation, allowing them to discover at the end of the course that they already understand all parts of this guidance.
- **Utilization of Evaluations.** This module focuses on steps that can be taken both at the start of an evaluation and once it is completed help ensure that utilization occurs. This issue is introduced in Phase I through discussions and key readings. The issue is addressed in greater detail in Phase III.
- **Assessing Cost-Effectiveness through Evaluation.** This module provides an overview of techniques for incorporating a cost-effectiveness analysis in an evaluation. Given time constraints, and that participants are not expected to incorporate this type of analysis in their field work in Phase II, this module is often presented during Phase III.
- **Multi-Method Evaluation.** As evaluations increasingly utilize a multi-method strategy for gathering data, the need has arisen for techniques that help evaluators integrate information from different sources in their analysis. The module introduces an innovative approach for weighting data from different sources.
- **Data Quality.** The module on data quality helps participants put the experience they gain in assessing the quality of evaluations carried out during the course into a broader context. This module draws on USAID's ADS data quality assessment guidance.
- **Program, Cross-Site and Meta Evaluation.** This module introduces participants to program level evaluation, which for USAID includes evaluations undertaken at the level of a Strategic Objective. The module also covers cross-site evaluations, which for USAID, often means topical evaluations of similar activities in several missions. Meta-evaluation, a term that is generally used to describe reviews of existing evaluations to assess either their quality or the substantive lessons they provide is also included in this module. Practical application of both meta-evaluation techniques and cross-site evaluation techniques takes place during Phase III of the course.
- **Gender in Evaluation.** The module focuses on a variety of issues that may trigger data disaggregation, e.g., concerns about differential impacts on people living in different locations; of different age groups or ethnic backgrounds; with different levels of education or income, etc. Participants learn to address gender in evaluations and how this variable may impact data collection and analysis.
- **Participatory Evaluation.** This topic, touched on in Phase I, is revisited, in the light of participant field experiences. Having carried out an evaluation, course participants have a better basis for understanding both the complexity and potential value of involving a range of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, in evaluations at the design stage, during data collection and analysis; in the framing of recommendations, and as recipients of evaluation results.
- **Evaluation Standards.** This module introduces participants to a set of standards for practitioners of evaluation that have been established and promulgated by the American Evaluation Association. The module also examines the cross-cultural validity of these standards, drawing upon participant knowledge of their own cultures and upon published research into the cross-cultural validity of these evaluation standards.
- **Evaluation Capacity in the Region.** This module introduces course participants to efforts underway around the world to build evaluation capacity at the national level in developing and transition countries. Participants receive information on grass-roots evaluation networks and associations that are emerging in these countries. In Africa, this discussion focused on the continent wide African Evaluation Association and linked national-level organizations at the national level in a number of countries.

## Annex B: Illustrative Class Agendas for Phase I and Phase III

### Phase I Class Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30	<p>Course Opening, Introductions, and Needs Assessment</p> <p>Course Structure, Objectives and Requirements</p> <p><i>Evaluation: The Evolution of a Concept</i></p>	<p>Class continues to develop questions:</p> <p>(a) Common questions for all evaluations – class as a whole</p> <p>(b) Shift into teams and develop three project specific questions per team</p>	<p>Teams present key Evaluation SOW elements:</p> <p>10 minutes per team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 project specific questions and why they are important</li> <li>▪ Timing of field work - GANTT</li> </ul>	<p>Selecting Samples from a Population</p> <p><i>Sampling Exercise</i></p>	<p>Teams Presentations</p> <p>10 minutes per team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How all evaluation questions will be answered through data collection and analysis</li> </ul>
10:00	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:15	<p><i>Evaluation in the USAID Management Cycle</i></p> <p><i>Scope of Work (SOW) for an Evaluation</i></p>	<p><i>Evaluation Process</i></p> <p><i>Schedule and Budget Considerations</i></p>	<p><i>The Q&amp;A Matrix – an Evaluation Planning Tool</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation Design</i></p> <p>Exercise on using comparisons to answer evaluation questions</p>	<p><i>Data Analysis</i></p>	<p><i>Discussion of the Strengths, Weaknesses and Complementarity of the Evaluation Plans</i></p>
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30		<p><i>Effective Evaluation Teams</i></p>	<p><i>The Data Collection Toolkit</i></p> <p><i>The Art of Asking Questions</i></p>	<p><i>Consolidation of Evaluation Plan</i></p> <p>Teams work on their Q&amp;A Matrix, instruments and overall plan</p>	<p><i>Values and Ethics in Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation Reports (Written and Oral)</i></p>
3:45	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
4:00	<p><i>Class develops three common questions to be answered by all evaluation teams</i></p>	<p>Team Hour:</p> <p>(a) Finish project specific questions</p> <p>(b) Interview each other on skills &amp; experience and select a team leader</p> <p>(d) Decided when field work will be carried out – which week – draft a GANTT chart</p>	<p><i>Teams practice interview skills and pre-test interview techniques &amp; instruments on class</i></p>	<p><i>Considering Costs in Evaluations</i></p>	<p>Participant Evaluation of Phase I</p> <p>Planning for Phase III</p> <p>Closing of Phase I Session</p>

### Phase III Class Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30	Welcome Back  Overview of Team Experiences/key problems faced		<i>Program, cross-site and meta-evaluation approaches and methods</i>  Break out sessions work on cross-site analysis of three questions and three cross-cutting issues	<i>Utilization of Evaluations</i>  USAID Missions -- home task analysis and discussion	<i>Action Plan Presentations</i>  <i>10 minutes per mission</i>
10:00	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:15			Break out sessions continue	<i>Role of the USAID Evaluation Officer</i>  Discussion with focus on evaluation planning and utilization	<i>Evaluation in Africa</i>  Current Practices and Capacity Building – home task analysis and discussion
12:00	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
1:30			Presentations from break out sessions & discussion/finalization of cross-site findings, conclusions and recommendations for USAID	<i>Program Evaluation Standards</i>	Course evaluation
3:45	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break and Certificates Issued. Course ends.
4:00	Oral Presentations and Critiques	<i>Team time to plan how they will revise their reports and meet deadline for delivery of final version.</i>	<i>Synthesizing Findings from Mixed Method Evaluations</i>	<i>Action Planning</i>  <i>Participants meet as mission groups and develop post-training action plans for their missions</i>	

## Annex C: Participant List

Name, Surname	Office/Mission	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>Tanzania Course</b>				
Brian Bacon	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Holly Brenner	USAID/CMM	●	●	
Wangechi Chege	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Halima Hashi	USAID/Tanzania	●	●	●
Grace Kabare	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Njeri Karuru	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Samuel Epokhor Kona	FEWSNET	●	●	●
Jimmy Rama Msaki	USAID/Tanzania	●	●	●
Polly Mugisha	USAID/Uganda	●	●	●
Elizabeth Ntue Mutunga	COMESA	●	●	●
Issac Ndahiro	COMESA	●	●	
Alice Nibitanga	USAID/Burundi	●	●	●
Adam Reisman	USAID/CMM	●	●	
Josphat Kabinga Wachira	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
<b>South Africa Course</b>				
Pierre Achade	USAID/Benin	●	●	●
Romain Babagbeto	USAID/Benin	●	●	●
Herschelle Challenor	AAAS Fellow USAID/AFR	●	●	
Brian Chigawa	COMESA	●	●	●
Winne Chilala	USAID/Zambia	●	●	●
Kalinde Chindebvu	USAID/Malawi	●	●	●
Mary Louise Eagleton	USAID/DROC	●	●	●
Pamela Fessenden	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Patrick Fosu-Siaw	USAID/Ghana	●	●	●
Brian Franz	New Entry Program USAID/AFR	●	●	●
Michele Gross	USAID/Mozambique	●	●	●
Allan Hackner	USAID/South Africa	●	●	●
Victor Mangindula	USAID/DRC	●	●	●
Alick Mtika	USAID/Malawi	●	●	●
Stella Mutale-Nalwamba	USAID/Zambia	●	●	●
Mexon Nyirono	USAID/Malawi	●	●	●
Charles Oluchina	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●
Lina Pirpiri	USAID/DRC	●	●	●
Pharesh Ratego	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●
Ramsey Sosola	USAID/Malawi	●	●	●
Shireen Strauss	USAID/Namibia	●		●
Eveline Viegas	USAID/Angola	●	●	●
Beatrice Wamalwa	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●
Patricia Ziwa	USAID/Malawi	●	●	●

Name, Surname	Office/Mission	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>Ghana Course</b>				
Abdi Aden	USAID/Ethiopia	●	●	●
Dennis Bilodeau	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Laura Burnham	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Mamadou A. Dembele	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Timothy Donnay	USAID/Ghana	●	●	●
Mervyn Farroe	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Moussokoro Kane	USAID/WARP	●	●	●
Sikoro Keita	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Yacouba Konate	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Avril Kudzi	USAID/WARP	●	●	●
Henry Kinuthia	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●
Jo Lesser	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Ibrahim Litny	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Carolyn Jefferson	USAID/REDSO	●	●	●
Elsie Menorkpor	USAID/Ghana	●	●	●
Herrick Mpuku	USAID/Zambia	●	●	*
Tom Muga	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●
Sounka Nydiaye	USAID/Senegal	●	●	●
Adeline Ofari-Bah	USAID/Ghana	●	●	●
Juliana Pwamang	USAID/Ghana	●	●	●
Letitia Sam	USAID/WARP	●	●	●
Souleymane Sogoba	USAID/Mali	●	●	●
Edward Soyir-Yariga	USAID/WARP	●	●	●
Alpha Wade	USAID/Senegal	●	●	●
Ben Wandao	USAID/Kenya	●	●	●

\*Left USAID employment.

### Course Instructors and Observers

Name, Surname	Office/Mission	Email Address	Tanzania	South Africa	Ghana
Molly Hageboeck	MSI	<a href="mailto:mhageboeck@msi-inc.com">mhageboeck@msi-inc.com</a>	●	●	●
Richard Blue	MSI Senior Associate	<a href="mailto:richardblue@earthlink.net">richardblue@earthlink.net</a>	●		●
Khoti Gausi	WHO Southern Africa Regional Evaluation Officer & MSI Associate	<a href="mailto:GausiK@whoafr.org">GausiK@whoafr.org</a>		●	
Janet Kerley	USAID	<a href="mailto:jkerley@usaid.gov">jkerley@usaid.gov</a>	●	●	●

## Annex D: Evaluation Review Criteria

Evaluation Review Criteria	Rating <sup>9</sup>
Does the Executive Summary concisely state the main points of the evaluation?	
Does the report adequately summarize the context in which the activity took place and the problem it was supposed to address?	
Does the report include a copy of the full evaluation Scope of Work as an annex?	
Does the report clearly state the purpose of the evaluation?	
Does it describe the evaluation questions clearly in the body of the report?	
<b>Does the report adequately separate and specify the project's inputs, its direct results (outputs), higher level results and goals, so that a new reader would understand the logical structure of the project and what it was suppose to accomplish?</b>	
If the logical structure of intended results was unclear in the project's documentation, does the report attempt to restate the project's intentions in a more logical sequence or manner, i.e., setting the stage for a systematic review of accomplishments?	
Does the evaluation state how the team planned to determine whether activities and intended results were achieved? Does it identify the indicators the project expected would be used to judge success at each level of the project's logical structure?	
Does the evaluation provide a clear description of how it went about collecting data on activities and each of the levels of results it examined, i.e., are data collection methods described in terms of the specific kinds of data they were used to gather, or simply listed all together?	
Did the evaluation team describe any creative or innovative solutions they used deal with data collection problems they faced?	
Are the evaluation's data limitations, i.e., its weak areas from a methods and data standpoint identified?	
Are the evaluations FINDINGS clear and related to major dimensions of the project, i.e., activities, direct results, higher level results or goals? and to the evaluation questions the team set out to answer?	
Are FINDINGS supported by relevant quantitative or qualitative data?	
When quantitative data are presented as percentages, is it always clear what the total number of cases was for which the percentage was calculated, i.e., is the N (denominator) always stated?	
Is there an effort to explain FINDINGS about the project through an analysis of its "if-then" hypotheses about cause and effect relationships in the project design? Are alternative hypotheses considered, i.e., alternative reasons for success or failure other than the project activities?	
Is there a clear distinction in the evaluation report between CONCLUSIONS and FINDINGS?	
Is every CONCLUSION in the report supported by a specific or clearly defined set of FINDINGS?	
Are RECOMMENDATIONS presented separate from CONCLUSIONS?	
Are CONCLUSIONS that may have weak evidence to support them clearly identified?	
Are all RECOMMENDATIONS presented in the evaluation report clearly supported by a specific or clearly defined set of FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS?	
Are the RECOMMENDATIONS presented relevant and practical?	
Are the RECOMMENDATIONS responsive to the purpose of the evaluation?	
Does the report have a Table of Contents	
Does the report have a Glossary, where acronyms are used extensively	
Does the report have questionnaires or other study instruments – as an appendix	
Are reference materials and works cited identified in an annex?	
Is the organization of the report clear, delineating each topic well and providing enough subheadings for easy reading?	
Does the presentation highlight important information in any special way?	
Is the analysis of data the team collected reasonably complete, i.e., data from all sources used and analyzed?	
Are charts and graphs used to present or summarize data?	
Does the evaluation report give the appearance of a thoughtful, well-researched and well organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why?	

<sup>9</sup> 0 = No; 1 = Partial; 2 = Yes

## **Annex E: Pre-Test Results**

**End of Phase I Evaluation**

**End of Course Evaluation**

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## MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

## Three Country Summary – Quantitative Responses

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

- A. How would you describe your previous experience with monitoring and evaluation? Put **only one X** in **each column**, one to describe your formal knowledge of monitoring and one for evaluation.

Level of Prior Experience	Monitoring	Evaluation
I have previously received formal training on this subject before	20	15
I have been informally trained on this subject by colleagues	12	13
I have read materials on this subject by never been trained by anyone	13	15
I have not read much nor been trained in this subject. It is new to me.	9	11

- B. Are you directly responsible for monitoring or evaluation in the organization for which you work?

8 (22%) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, it is my main job  
 27 (73%) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, but it is only part of my job  
 2 (5%) \_\_\_\_\_ No, it is not one of my direct responsibilities

- D. Even if you have not been trained before, there are some concepts with which you may be familiar. Please complete the table below by putting an X in the column that best describes your familiarity with each idea.

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation	1 (20%)	28 (57%)	20 (23%)
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation	5 (10%)	22 (46%)	21 (44%)
How to select a sample that is not biased	14 (28%)	28 (57%)	7 (15%)
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.	21 (42%)	20 (40%)	9 (18%)
When an evaluation is needed	6 (13%)	26 (54%)	16 (33%)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	34 (68%)	12 (24%)	4 (8%)
When to use open-ended questions and when to use closed-ended questions	17 (35%)	22 (45%)	10 (20%)
The difference between monitoring and evaluation	7 (14%)	26 (51%)	18 (35%)
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	27 (64%)	12 (29%)	3 (7%)
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized	31 (63%)	17 (35%)	1 (2%)
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.	19 (39%)	21 (43%)	9 (18%)
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	32 (64%)	16 (32%)	2 (4%)

USAID/Africa Bureau  
MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

- A. How would you describe your previous experience with monitoring and evaluation? Put **only one X** in **each column**, one to describe your formal knowledge of monitoring and one for evaluation.

Level of Prior Experience	Monitoring	Evaluation
I have previously received formal training on this subject before	4	4
I have been informally trained on this subject by colleagues		1
I have read materials on this subject by never been trained by anyone	5	3
I have not read much nor been trained in this subject. It is new to me.	6	6

- B. Are you directly responsible for monitoring or evaluation in the organization for which you work?

3 Yes, it is my main job  
8 Yes, but it is only part of my job  
2 No, it is not one of my direct responsibilities

- C. Have you every participated established performance indicators for a real program. Strategic Objective (SO), Intermediate Results (IR) or USAID Implementing Partner Activity?

4\_ Once    4 More than Once    5 Never

If yes:        1 Individually    9 Part of a team

- D. Have you ever collected the data for a performance monitoring report directly from an original or secondary source described in the Performance Monitoring Plan or Indicator Data Sheet for an SO, IR or?

2 Once    4 More than Once    8 Never

If yes:        1 Individually    8 As part of a team

- E. Have you ever prepared monitoring and evaluation information for use in an Activity Review or a USAID Mission Portfolio Review?

1 Once    5 More than Once    8 Never

If yes:        \_\_\_\_\_ Individually    7 As part of a team

F. Have you ever prepared or reviewed a draft Mission Order on Monitoring and Evaluation for a Mission or other USAID operating unit.

\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 14 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_ Individually \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ As part of a team

G. Have you ever participated in making the decision to evaluate a USAID SO, IR or activity

\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_ Individual decision \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ Decided as part of a team

H. Have you ever prepared a Scope of Work for an evaluation for USAID or another development organization (donor, government, or implementing partner?)

\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_ Individually \_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_ As part of a team

I. Have you ever supervised the work of a contracted evaluation team?

\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ Individually \_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_ As part of a team

J. Have you ever written an evaluation report for USAID or another development organization (donor, government, or implementing partner?)

\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ Principal Author \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ As part of a team

K. Have you ever been responsible for substantively reviewing a draft evaluation report and personally deciding whether it should be accepted or that more work was needed before it could be considered adequate?

\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ Once \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ More than Once \_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_ Never

If yes: \_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ Individually \_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_ As part of a team

L. Even if you have not been trained before, there are some concepts with which you may be familiar. Please complete the table below by putting an X in the column that best describes your familiarity with each idea.

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation	1	8	5
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation	3	6	5
How to select a sample that is not biased	2	10	1
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.	4	8	2
When an evaluation is needed	3	7	3
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	13	1	
When to use open-ended questions and when to use closed-ended questions	5	6	2
The difference between monitoring and evaluation	2	9	3
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	9	1	2
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized	11	2	
The difference between a group interview and a focus group interview.	5	8	1
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	10	4	

USAID/Africa Bureau  
MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Pretoria, South Africa

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

- A. How would you describe your previous experience with monitoring and evaluation? Put **only one X** in **each column**, one to describe your formal knowledge of monitoring and one for evaluation.

Level of Prior Experience	Monitoring	Evaluation
I have previously received formal training on this subject before	11	6
I have been informally trained on this subject by colleagues	7	7
I have read materials on this subject by never been trained by anyone	3	7
I have not read much nor been trained in this subject. It is new to me.	3	4

- B. Are you directly responsible for monitoring or evaluation in the organization for which you work?

\_\_\_4\_\_\_ Yes, it is my main job  
 \_\_\_16\_\_\_ Yes, but it is only part of my job  
 \_\_\_2\_\_\_ No, it is not one of my direct responsibilities

- C. Have you every participated on a team that carried out a formal or planned evaluation of a project?

\_\_\_11\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_10\_\_\_ No

- D. Even if you have not been trained before, there are some concepts with which you may be familiar. Please complete the table below by putting an X in the column that best describes your familiarity with each idea.

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation		13	9
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation	2	10	10
How to select a sample that is not biased	10	9	3
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.	11	5	6
When an evaluation is needed	3	11	8
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	13	6	3
When to use open-ended questions and when to use closed-ended questions	9	9	4
The difference between monitoring and evaluation	3	9	10
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	13	7	1
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized	11	10	1
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.	11	5	5
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	14	7	1

USAID/Africa Bureau  
MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Accra, Ghana

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

- A. How would you describe your previous experience with monitoring and evaluation? Put **only one X** in **each column**, one to describe your formal knowledge of monitoring and one for evaluation.

Level of Prior Experience	Monitoring	Evaluation
I have previously received formal training on this subject before	5	5
I have been informally trained on this subject by colleagues	5	5
I have read materials on this subject by never been trained by anyone	5	5
I have not read much nor been trained in this subject. It is new to me.		1

- B. Are you directly responsible for monitoring or evaluation in the organization for which you work?

4 Yes, it is my main job  
 11 Yes, but it is only part of my job  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No, it is not one of my direct responsibilities

- C. Have you every participated on a team that carried out a formal or planned evaluation of a project?

8 Yes     6 No

- D. Even if you have not been trained before, there are some concepts with which you may be familiar. Please complete the table below by putting an X in the column that best describes your familiarity with each idea.

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation		7	6
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation	2	6	6
How to select a sample that is not biased	2	9	3
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.	6	7	1
When an evaluation is needed		8	5
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	8	5	1
When to use open-ended questions and when to used closed-ended questions	3	7	4
The difference between monitoring and evaluation	2	8	5
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	5	4	
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized	9	5	
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.	3	8	3
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	8	5	1

USAID, The Africa Bureau

MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Participant Assessment

Three Country Summary – Quantitative Responses

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

A. Understanding of Concepts

(Place an X in the box that describes your level of understanding)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation		1 (2%)	59 (98%)
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation		5 (8%)	56 (92%)
That both monitoring and evaluation gather information about <i>what</i> happened in a project or program		4 (7%)	56 (93%)
That evaluations are expected to provide information about <i>why</i> projects are/are not succeeding		2 (3%)	58 (97%)
That evaluation is different from auditing	1 (2%)	10 (17%)	48 (81%)
How to select a sample that is not biased	3 (5%)	30 (51%)	26 (44%)
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.		19 (31%)	40 (69%)
That the questions asked by clients and other stakeholders should be the main focus for an evaluation team		14 (23%)	47 (77%)
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized		21 (34%)	40 (66%)
That comparison – before and after, or Project A to Project B is almost always an element of a good evaluation		7 (12%)	53 (88%)
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	12 (22%)	21 (39%)	21 (39%)
That evaluation teams have a right/obligation to ask sponsors and clients to clarify the evaluation purpose and questions if they are not clear in an evaluation Scope of Work		12 (16%)	52 (81%)
When an evaluation is needed		13 (23%)	43 (77%)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
How to write a closed-ended question	5 (8%)	19 (31%)	37 (61%)
When to use open-ended questions and when to use closed-ended questions	4 (6%)	23 (38%)	34 (56%)
That creating more precise definitions and measures for projects is often part of an evaluator's job.	1 (2%)	17 (28%)	42 (70%)
That most project evaluations try to compare planned to actual performance	1 (2%)	8 (13%)	51 (85%)
The difference between a probability and non-probability sample	2 (5%)	23 (43%)	29 (52%)
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	2 (2%)	25 (43%)	31 (53%)
That an evaluation team must make a special effort if it wants to learn about the unplanned results of projects and programs		9 (15%)	51 (85%)
That when an innovative project is evaluated, the evaluation comparisons are sometimes built into the project design in the form of a "comparison" group that does not receive project services	5 (12%)	24 (39%)	30 (49%)
That existing data and information may be used by an evaluator. Evaluators do not have to rely only on the new data they collect themselves.		1 (2%)	49 (98%)
That the process of data collection can cause a reaction, i.e., that people often try to give evaluators the answers they think the evaluators want.		3 (5%)	57 (95%)
How to prepare tables and other formats for recording data from different interviews and site visits in a common way	3 (6%)	28 (47%)	28 (47%)
The role of an evaluation officer in USAID	2 (3%)	33 (55%)	25 (42%)
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.		15 (24%)	48 (76%)
That evaluation teams actually design a structure or framework for an evaluation before they go out to gather data		5 (8%)	55 (92%)
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	9 (16%)	24 (44%)	22 (40%)

## B. EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Please rate the usefulness of workshop elements listed below using a ✓ in the appropriate column

Workshop Element		Participant Ratings of Usefulness of Training Elements (One = low and Five = high)				
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Trainers	Molly Hageboeck				10 (17%)	48 (83%)
	Richard Blue/Khoti Gausi		1 (1%)	1 (1%)	19 (34%)	37 (64%)
Course Content: Presentations and Slides	Evaluation – Evolution of Concept		1 (2%)	6 (10%)	24 (40%)	29 (48%)
	USAID Evaluation Through the Decades		2 (3%)	7 (12%)	26 (45%)	23 (40%)
	Evaluation in the Management Cycle		2 (3%)	6 (10%)	21 (36%)	30 (51%)
	Evaluation Questions			4 (7%)	19 (33%)	35 (60%)
	Scope of Work			2 (3%)	15 (25%)	43 (72%)
	Evaluation Process			1 (2%)	20 (34%)	37 (64%)
	Evaluation Teams		1 (2%)	2 (3%)	26 (43%)	31 (52%)
	Evaluation Schedule and Budget		1 (1%)	13 (21%)	18 (30%)	29 (48%)
	Values and Ethics		2 (3%)	11 (20%)	19 (34%)	24 (43%)
	Evaluation Design			4 (7%)	15 (26%)	39 (67%)
	Data Collection Toolbox/Asking Questions			4 (7%)	22 (37%)	33 (56%)
	Sampling	2 (4%)	4 (7%)	10 (17%)	18 (31%)	24 (41%)
	Data Analysis		4 (8%)	7 (12%)	19 (33%)	27 (47%)
	Evaluation Reports			7 (10%)	16 (30%)	35 (60%)
	Participant Notebooks – Readings and Handouts				3 (7%)	14 (33%)
Class Exercises	In Class Exercises		1 (2%)	17 (28%)	17 (28%)	25 (42%)
	Team Preparation for Phase II Evaluations			7 (12%)	18 (30%)	35 (58%)
Opportunities for Participation and Discussion			4 (7%)	9 (17%)	19 (35%)	22 (41%)

USAID, The Africa Bureau

MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Participant Assessment

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

A. Understanding of Concepts

(Place an X in the box that describes your level of understanding)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation		1	13
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation			14
That both monitoring and evaluation gather information about <i>what</i> happened in a project or program			14
That evaluations are expected to provide information about <i>why</i> projects are/are not succeeding		1	13
That evaluation is different from auditing	1	4	9
How to select a sample that is not biased	3	10	1
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.	1	4	9
That the questions asked by clients and other stakeholders should be the main focus for an evaluation team		5	9
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized		7	7
That comparison – before and after, or Project A to Project B is almost always an element of a good evaluation		3	11
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.		8	6
That evaluation teams have a right/obligation to ask sponsors and clients to clarify the evaluation purpose and questions if they are not clear in an evaluation Scope of Work		1	12
When an evaluation is needed		3	11
How to write a closed-ended question		5	9
When to use open-ended questions and when to used closed-ended questions		3	11
That creating more precise definitions and measures for projects is often part of an evaluator's job.	1	2	10
That most project evaluations try to compare planned to actual performance		1	13
The difference between a probability and non-probability sample	1	5	1
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	1	6	7

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
That an evaluation team must make a special effort if it wants to learn about the unplanned results of projects and programs		2	12
That when an innovative project is evaluated, the evaluation comparisons are sometimes built into the project design in the form of a "comparison" group that does not receive project services	1	8	4
That existing data and information may be used by an evaluator. Evaluators do not have to rely only on the new data they collect themselves.		1	3
That the process of data collection can cause a reaction, i.e., that people often try to give evaluators the answers they think the evaluators want.			14
How to prepare tables and other formats for recording data from different interviews and site visits in a common way		10	4
The role of an evaluation officer in USAID	2	9	3
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.		1	12
That evaluation teams actually design a structure or framework for an evaluation before they go out to gather data		1	13
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	2	8	4

## B. EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Please rate the usefulness of workshop elements listed below using a ✓ in the appropriate column

Workshop Element		Participant Ratings of Usefulness of Training Elements (One = low and Five = high)				
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Trainers	Molly Hageboeck				4	10
	Richard Blue				5	9
Course Content: Presentations and Slides	Evaluation – Evolution of Concept			2	6	6
	USAID Evaluation Through the Decades		1	2	5	5
	Evaluation in the Management Cycle		2	3	3	6
	Evaluation Questions			2	3	8
	Scope of Work			1	4	9
	Evaluation Process				8	6
	Evaluation Teams		1		8	5
	Evaluation Schedule and Budget		1	5	2	6
	Values and Ethics		2	4	4	3
	Evaluation Design			1	3	8
	Data Collection Toolbox/Asking Questions			1	7	5
	Sampling	2	2	2	2	3
	Data Analysis		2	1	7	3
Evaluation Reports			2	3	9	
Participant Notebooks – Readings and Handouts					2	4
Class Exercises	In Class Exercises		1	9	5	
	Team Preparation for Phase II Evaluations			3	7	4
Opportunities for Participation and Discussion			3	5	4	

## C. What was most useful in Phase I of the Course?

- All were useful
- The generic introduction to the concepts in evaluation and the topic of evaluation itself.
- Evaluation design, process, data collection, analysis, report writing, etc.
- Preparation for the plan to conduct evaluations, including SOW, methodology and method of data analysis. The most useful part was also how the groups were formed and the interaction mode between them.
- Team work
- Experiences of trainers in the field
- Complementing materials for review
- Participants role playing interviews
- All the information was very useful, including the homework

- Practical side of evaluation process (i.e., design, toolbox, data analysis). Sampler of past evaluations. Deep knowledge and experience of the trainers.
- Writing an evaluation SOW
- The most useful was when we got to the 'toolkit' needed for evaluators and learned nuts and bolts procedures/evaluation design. Being forced to do our own plans was painful but helpful. I would recommend making the course less top heavy (theory and definitions) and spend more time on questions and tools. It would be useful to read as a class some good and bad evaluation reports and pick them apart. In this way we would have a better sense of what we are trying to get to. Instructor stories are helpful illustrations – but too much experience.
- Evaluation reports and scopes of work
- Evaluation reports
- Construction of scopes of work and questions matrix
- Utilized and demonstrated knowledge presented in sessions
- Top quality trainers and AID/W experience
- Very useful for understanding the concepts and processes related to evaluation. And I believe all the documentation will increase not only my understanding of evaluation but also conflict programming and analysis

**D. What was least useful during Phase II**

- None
- USAID evaluation through the decades
- All was useful.
- Too little time was available for teams to work on their exercises
- Way too much paper. Weed out all but the most important stuff and put the rest on a CD Rom.
- Consider doing all the phases of the course together, so that D.C. based staff could do it all without having to buy a second (or third) airline ticket.
- Too much paper. CD Rom
- Bit of over-stimulation, burying us in lots of material. It would have been useful to prune.
- Less theory, more practical.
- Evaluation through the decades
- Evaluation in the management cycle
- Fewer slides, less hurried schedule and presentations, group work late in the day can be less than efficient
- Though I appreciate the background and related handouts, it is unlikely that I will have time to read 1/3 of them – possibly more selective (less academic, more generalist focused)
- More foreign service officer involvement (it would help to reinforce M&E as important to the mission)
- Nothing, but I wish there was more room for class exercises, although I recognize constraints and the usefulness of all the training materials handed out.

**E. Suggestions for topics I would like to learn about in Phase III of the course (the second classroom phase, after teams have completed their field work).**

Content suggestions:

- Data analysis methods
- USAID evaluations

- Uses of the evaluation report and if the organization denies the information from the report, what happens. I would also like to know the problems encountered when presenting the evaluation report.
- No specific topic but I may identify one after the fieldwork.
- Methods used for evaluations
- Designing instruments for evaluations
- Analysis of data/report writing/drawing conclusions from findings
- Cost-effectiveness in evaluations
- Mixed-method evaluation.
- The topics that were not covered
- The role of the evaluation officer in USAID
- Reading more examples of completed reports – good/bad.
- More on the role of evaluation in USAID programming context
- Assess whether models of M&E fit for conflict situations
- Cost-effectiveness
- Analysis of mixed methods
- Evaluation standards
- Detailed data analysis
- Tools and instruments for measuring attitude change
- Report writing skills
- More evaluation reports reviewed
- Sector specific considerations for M&E
- Sampling, data analysis, including cost-effectiveness analysis and other analysis methods

#### Logistical suggestions

- A photocopier and printer would be useful in a training secretariat
- Please arrange for a well stocked secretariat
- The class should end at 5:00 p.m. or there about
- More energizers
- The course is short, more time would be useful
- Some of the training hours were too long and could probably have used more breaks

USAID, The Africa Bureau

MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Participant Assessment

Pretoria, South Africa

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

**A. Understanding of Concepts**

(Place an X in the box that describes your level of understanding)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation			22
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation			23
That both monitoring and evaluation gather information about <i>what</i> happened in a project or program			23
That evaluations are expected to provide information about <i>why</i> projects are/are not succeeding			22
That evaluation is different from auditing		5	17
How to select a sample that is not biased		10	13
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.		8	15
That the questions asked by clients and other stakeholders should be the main focus for an evaluation team		2	21
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized		6	17
That comparison – before and after, or Project A to Project B is almost always an element of a good evaluation			22
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	1	11	11
That evaluation teams have a right/obligation to ask sponsors and clients to clarify the evaluation purpose and questions if they are not clear in an evaluation Scope of Work		1	22
When an evaluation is needed		3	20
How to write a closed-ended question	2	6	15
When to use open-ended questions and when to used closed-ended questions	2	10	11
That creating more precise definitions and measures for projects is often part of an evaluator's job.		7	16

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
That most project evaluations try to compare planned to actual performance		3	19
The difference between a probability and non-probability sample	1	10	12
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool	1	10	11
That an evaluation team must make a special effort if it wants to learn about the unplanned results of projects and programs		2	21
That when an innovative project is evaluated, the evaluation comparisons are sometimes built into the project design in the form of a "comparison" group that does not receive project services	1	10	11
That existing data and information may be used by an evaluator. Evaluators do not have to rely only on the new data they collect themselves.			22
That the process of data collection can cause a reaction, i.e., that people often try to give evaluators the answers they think the evaluators want.		1	21
How to prepare tables and other formats for recording data from different interviews and site visits in a common way	1	11	9
The role of an evaluation officer in USAID		9	13
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.		7	14
That evaluation teams actually design a structure or framework for an evaluation before they go out to gather data		2	20
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	2	7	8

## B. Evaluation of the Workshop

Please rate the usefulness of workshop elements listed below using a ✓ in the appropriate column

Workshop Element		Participant Ratings of Usefulness of Training Elements (One = low and Five = high)				
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Trainers	Molly Hageboeck				3	17
	Khoti Gausi		1	1	8	10
Course Content: Presentations and Slides	Evaluation – Evolution of Concept		1	2	9	9
	USAID Evaluation Through the Decades		1	4	13	4
	Evaluation in the Management Cycle			2	9	10
	Evaluation Questions			1	4	17
	Scope of Work			1	4	17
	Evaluation Process			1	6	15
	Evaluation Teams			1	10	12
	Evaluation Schedule and Budget			2	8	13
	Values and Ethics			1	10	11
	Evaluation Design			1	4	17
	Data Collection Toolbox/Asking Questions			1	7	14
	Sampling		1	3	7	11
	Data Analysis			2	8	12
	Evaluation Reports			2	4	14
Participant Notebooks – Readings and Handouts				1	6	11
Class Exercises	In Class Exercises			2	8	13
	Team Preparation for Phase II Evaluations			1	6	16
Opportunities for Participation and Discussion				3	7	10

## C. What was most useful in Phase I of the Course?

- Practical exercises, teamwork
- Designing evaluation SOW
- Involving major stakeholders in designing evaluations
- Evaluation questions that are necessary to give the right picture of project performance
- Sampling techniques that make evaluations widely acceptable
- Team work to design SOW, evaluation plan, Q&A matrix, GANTT chart
- Practical planning for fieldwork and applications of theory learned to anticipated evaluation exercise
- Presentations and discussions
- The idea of doing an evaluation or at least being able to look at evaluations done in missions with a critical eye
- The mix of countries and missions represented

- The experience of the trainers
- The selection of class materials
- The presentations and written information were very useful
- Knowing that the course is designed around doing an active evaluation; preparing the SOW and evaluation design to be used in that evaluation
- All was useful. Being in the evaluation area, everything ranked equally important as I could link knowledge to what I know already
- Understanding the concept of evaluation, its usefulness and how to go about it
- Concepts and practices presented in such a way that the novices and students with some evaluation experience could both find it valuable
- Coursework/classroom exercises extremely helpful, as was the presentation and class feedback session.
- Preparing the scope of work for the evaluation and developing an evaluation plan, and also collecting and analyzing data
- Probably the most stimulating topic was evaluation design – developing the theory to explain a chain of causality and how to go about testing/investigating that theory.
- Overall, an excellent course
- Sampling and data analysis
- Evaluation design and teamwork
- The reading materials
- Team building
- Pre-arrangements for field evaluations
- Oral presentation of plans and open critique is a positive way to better enable the teams to be prepared -- would have been better if even more critical
- More one on one time with course instructors and teams to help develop the Q&A matrix would have been useful
- Gaining understanding on how to prepare for an evaluation vis scope of work development, questions, schedule
- Actual field evaluation process vis interviews, data collection
- Data analysis and reporting
- Why, when and how we should conduct evaluations
- Evaluation, in all aspects treated, as well as active participation on the part of both trainers and trainees
- Writing SOW and Q&A matrix
- Difference between monitoring and evaluation

**D. What was least useful during Phase I?**

- Covering important topics in the afternoon
- Evolution of evaluation
- Rushing through some very important topics that are crucial in evaluation
- Not giving participants adequate time to discuss experiences during specific lectures
- Sometimes lectures were too fast as presentations tried to capture too much within a short time
- Complex ways of calculating and analyzing data. I won't be using it again soon – too complicated
- In certain cases there was not enough time to talk through a concept or a set of "musts" particularly for those who have not been doing USAID evaluations
- Some of the presentations could have been shorter with more time for preparing the team evaluation plan
- Everything was useful
- Would have appreciated some teacher imposed discipline on the binder readings and a bit more discussion of the handouts that were included in the binders. It started out that way in Days 1 and 2, but tapered off.
- Biggest suggestion for the future is that since the class involves a lot of reading, it would be good to circulate certain basic readings (or references to key readings) in advance so that they might be read before entering the course
- All topics were very useful
- Not the least useful, but I felt that data analysis and sampling should be addressed in more depth to facilitate comprehension
- Lack of group work
- Too confined to classroom
- Budgeting information and detail
- Values in evaluation
- Bias in evaluation

**E. Suggestions for topics I would like to learn about in Phase III of the course (the second classroom phase, after teams have completed their field work).**

- Sampling error
- Data analysis
- Cross-tabulation
- Increasing the possibility of getting evaluation results used by management
- How to go around distributing results without distorting the evaluation credibility
- Areas not well understood, per ratings on prior pages
- More on data analysis
- Sampling techniques
- Summary of multivariate method of analysis and documentation of cause and effect determination
- It is critical that the hotel have business facilities and adequate space to work there, that people be informed in advance to bring laptops and certain supplies or that supplies be provided. Since there is so much information, perhaps some could be sent to the field as well, rather than having to carry it back on the plane
- There needs to be quiet in the room, as it is difficult to hear with a lot of background noise. [Note: the hotel was doing construction in a nearby wing of the hotel.]
- Relationship between project monitoring and evaluation, and how the concepts can support each other.

- It will be good to learn from each others evaluations in Phase III – hopefully we will spend significant time on that
- Good feedback from course teachers on our field work (honest feedback)
- More on utilization of evaluation conclusions/recommendations – how to ensure that decision-makers pay attention
- How to review and critique an evaluation report
- More on generalizability of evaluation findings
- I think I need more understanding of how to read evaluation reports critically
- How to review an evaluation
- Data analysis
- Presentation skills
- How to evaluate an evaluation and demand results reporting that you requested from a team and how to ask for rewrites and when to accept or give up on rewrites
- Utilization, utilization, utilization!!!
- More about section and chapter linkages in evaluation reports
- Designing community level M&E systems
- Role of M&E point person in reviewing M&E components of proposals submitted by implementing partners
- Make slides more readable
- More information on open-ended questions

USAID, The Africa Bureau

MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Participant Assessment

Accra, Ghana

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

**A. Understanding of Concepts**

(Place a X in the box that describes your level of understanding)

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
The meaning of the term evaluation			24
The difference between a finding or fact, a conclusion and a recommendation		5	19
That both monitoring and evaluation gather information about what happened in a project or program		4	19
That evaluations are expected to provide information about why projects are/are not succeeding		1	23
That evaluation is different from auditing		1	22
How to select a sample that is not biased	1	10	12
Why evaluators usually treat beneficiary data as being confidential.		7	16
That the questions asked by clients and other stakeholders should be the main focus for an evaluation team		7	17
What to do to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be utilized		8	16
That comparison – before and after, or Project A to Project B is almost always an element of a good evaluation		4	20
How to use a cross-tabulation to display and analyze the answers to two questions at the same time.	2	10	12
That evaluation teams have a right/obligation to ask sponsors and clients to clarify the evaluation purpose and questions if they are not clear in an evaluation Scope of Work		1	23
When an evaluation is needed		7	12
How to write a closed-ended question	3	8	13
When to use open-ended questions and when to used closed-ended questions	2	10	12
That creating more precise definitions and measures for projects is often part of an evaluator's job.		8	16

Concept or Idea Presented in the Training Program	How Well I Understand the Concept or Idea		
	Not well	Somewhat	Very well
That most project evaluations try to compare planned to actual performance	1	4	19
The difference between a probability and non-probability sample		8	16
How to make observation a systematic data collection tool		9	13
That an evaluation team must make a special effort if it wants to learn about the unplanned results of projects and programs		5	18
That when an innovative project is evaluated, the evaluation comparisons are sometimes built into the project design in the form of a "comparison" group that does not receive project services	3	6	15
That existing data and information may be used by an evaluator. Evaluators do not have to rely only on the new data they collect themselves.			24
That the process of data collection can cause a reaction, i.e., that people often try to give evaluators the answers they think the evaluators want.		2	22
How to prepare tables and other formats for recording data from different interviews and site visits in a common way	2	7	15
The role of an evaluation officer in USAID		15	9
The difference between a group interview and a focus groups interview.		7	22
That evaluation teams actually design a structure or framework for an evaluation before they go out to gather data		2	22
How to create a scale that can be used to gather data on opinions or perceptions	5	9	10

## B. Evaluation of the Workshop

Please rate the usefulness of workshop elements listed below using a ✓ in the appropriate column

Workshop Element		Participant Ratings of Usefulness of Training Elements (One = low and Five = high)				
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Trainers	Molly Hageboeck				3	21
	Richard Blue				6	18
Course Content: Presentations and Slides	Evaluation – Evolution of Concept			2	9	14
	USAID Evaluation Through the Decades			1	8	14
	Evaluation in the Management Cycle			1	9	14
	Evaluation Questions			1	12	10
	Scope of Work				7	17
	Evaluation Process				6	16
	Evaluation Teams			1	8	14
	Evaluation Schedule and Budget			6	8	10
	Values and Ethics			6	5	10
	Evaluation Design			1	8	14
	Data Collection Toolbox/Asking Questions			2	8	14
	Sampling		1	5	9	10
	Data Analysis		2	4	4	13
Evaluation Reports			3	9	12	
Participant Notebooks – Readings and Handouts				2	6	11
Class Exercises	In Class Exercises			6	4	12
	Team Preparation for Phase II Evaluations			3	5	15
Opportunities for Participation and Discussion			1	1	8	12

### C. WHAT WAS MOST USEFUL IN PHASE I OF THE COURSE?

- Team/small group work
- All techniques and components equally useful
- I was amazed at the wealth of information provided. The manual is the best I have ever seen in a USAID training course. The facilitators are highly skilled and experienced and bring real life examples to the curriculum. Fabulous course.
- Developing and refining a SOW
- Working through the evaluation questions to develop criteria, identify sources of data, etc.
- I really felt it was all useful. Presentations were clear and so were exercises for starting our evaluations.
- The practical experience shared by experienced evaluators
- The handouts on evaluation
- The explanation of concepts
- The course was very useful
- Evaluation design, group exercises, illustrations from past evaluations
- Process of data collection
- Evaluation process and design
- Evaluation Design
- All
- Scope of work, reporting presentation, evaluation questions, evaluation process
- Data collection toolbox and data analysis
- Elements of an SOW
- Preparation for an evaluation
- Defining evaluation and all segments on conducting field evaluations, THEN realizing that we had to apply the learning very soon, pushing ourselves to design a good evaluation
- Readings and field experience
- Understanding how useful evaluations are for projects/programs
- As a beginner in evaluation, the understanding of the concept and the practical field work are very useful to me
- All of the modules were useful and relevant. However time did not permit us to absorb the amount of information provided by the trainers. The mix of theory and practice was a great approach
- Team presentations and exchanges of experience
- I learned about the functioning of USAID projects and programs and about the difference between monitoring and evaluation
- Lectures and Phase II preparation
- Drafting a scope of work and allowing time for comments from colleagues.
- The process of using concepts with the design of evaluations, especially doing so with all the details needed.
- Evaluation SOWs, designs and reports

#### D. What was least useful during Phase I?

- Role-plays – if role plays are overused (and I like role plays), have the participants "play" a real role whereby they read what happened. Use a true-life situation.
- I can't think of anything that wasn't useful, but if I had to pick, I'd say the module on the history of evaluation in USAID
- All very useful
- I can't say that anything was not useful. I think it would help though to have missions provide Section C of the contract for the projects we are suppose to evaluate so that we have them when we do the SOWs in class. It would also help if missions told us why they picked specific projects and how they wanted to use the evaluations of them. It would also help to have project documents electronically, even if they have to be scanned to make that happen.
- Course materials could be provided on a CD
- Sampling
- None, all was useful
- Exercise on group interviews
- Sampling
- Evolution of the concept
- All was useful, but it would be better to put group work after lunch to ensure people don't fall asleep.
- Add "unit of analysis" to the Q&A matrix and possibly remove "relevant criteria"
- Understanding that projects throughout Africa have challenges, whether East or West
- All useful – I'm interested in the whole thing
- Everything was useful
- Everything was important, only time was short. More time is needed for class to prepare for the field evaluations
- Not enough detail on evaluation tools. Most of us do not have Excel or SPSS skills.

#### E. Suggestions for topics I would like to learn about in Phase III of the course (the second classroom phase, after teams have completed their field work).

- How to set up a data set for SPSS and constructing quantitative data sets, so that participants can brush up on these skills
- More on data analysis and presentations. Statistical methods and procedures
- More discussion of sampling, reducing bias, and having confidence in findings
- More in-depth discussion of exposure to evaluation techniques
- After the field phase, and a chance to read more of the information in the handbook, I'll have a better idea of what I need
- More on creating evaluation questions and more hands on experience in analysis/analysis methods.
- Presentation skills
- A brief session on monitoring would be useful for comparison and better understanding.
- Having documentation and requirements clear
- Private sessions with trainers
- Sampling
- Data Analysis
- Evaluating through performance indicators
- More on values and ethics
- More on methods for determining sample size. How to calculate them and determine confidence intervals.

- Returning to the beginning and focusing on how to get others to be thinking about evaluation at the time a project is designed.
- Steps to follow to carry out a program evaluation
- More about sampling, writing questions and systematic data collection
- After the evaluation, what next – who uses these reports and how are they used
- How to better prepare an evaluation schedule and budget
- Analysis and interpretation
- More on data analysis
- Evaluation report presentation to mission leadership
- More focus on project monitoring

USAID, The Africa Bureau

MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I

Final Phase III Participant Assessment

Three Country Summary – Quantitative Responses

A. Purposes of the Certificate Program

The Certificate Program in Evaluation had six objectives:

1. Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle.
2. Improve skills needed to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work.
3. Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation.
4. Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kinds of information needed to answer evaluation questions.
5. Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports – with an eye to improving them.
6. Improve understanding of how to utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

Overall Achievement of Course Objectives

Keeping in mind these objectives, please give us your honest assessment of this course:

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	No
1	Did the course achieve Objective 1?	52 (95%)	3 (5%)		
2	Did the course achieve Objective 2?	47 (84%)	9 (16%)		
3	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	40 (73%)	14 (25%)	1 (2%)	
4	Did the course achieve Objective 4?	40 (73%)	13 (24%)	2 (3%)	
5	Did the course achieve Objective 5?	48 (87%)	7 (13%)		
6	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	42 (76%)	12 (22%)	1 (2%)	

**B. PHASE I: CLASSROOM TRAINING**

Thinking back to Phase I of this course, please answer the following questions

		Too Much	Right Amount	Not Quite Enough	Not at all
7	Did the classroom experience in Phase I provide you with sufficient theory on the purposes, ethics and evolution of evaluation?	3 (6%)	45 (90%)	2 (4%)	
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on evaluation design to develop a valid and efficient approach to your field evaluation assignment?	5 (9%)	39 (71%)	11 (20%)	
6	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on methods of collecting data for you to select and apply appropriate data collection methods to your field assignment?	4 (8%)	36 (65%)	15 (27%)	
7	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on data analysis techniques for you to organize, summarize, interpret and display the data you collected?	5 (9%)	23 (42%)	26 (47%)	1 (2%)
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough insight into good project design for you to identify project design weaknesses in the projects you evaluated as part of your field assignment?	4 (7%)	39 (71%)	12 (22%)	
9	Did the classroom experience give you enough information to write a professional report on the evaluation you carried out during your field assignment?	5 (9%)	35 (66%)	13 (25%)	

**C. Phase II: On-Site Evaluation**

Thinking back to the evaluation you carried out as part of a team, please answer the following questions. If you did not participate in the fieldwork portion of this course, please skip to Section D of this questionnaire.

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
11	Was your "team" able to function effectively as a "team" in the manner that the course had suggested is appropriate for evaluation work?	32 (59%)	15 (28%)	6 (11%)	1 (2%)
12	Looking back, do you feel that your team developed an adequate plan for its fieldwork?	27 (51%)	22 (42%)	4 (7%)	
13	Looking back, do you feel that you collected the data that you needed to prepare your evaluation report?	14 (28%)	34 (68%)	2 (4%)	
14	Looking back, do you feel that you adequately analyzed the data you collected?	19 (40%)	23 (48%)	6 (12%)	
15	Looking back, do you feel that you had enough time to complete your field assignment?	1 (2%)	24 (45%)	17 (32%)	11 (21%)

18. Did the Phase II on-site evaluation research and report writing phase of this course justify the expense and effort involved?

39 (81%) Fully 9 (19%) Partially \_\_\_\_\_ Marginally \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all

#### D. Phase III: Classroom Work

		Very important	Important	Marginally important	Not at all
20	How important to your overall experience was the task of making a presentation on your evaluation?	46 (84%)	8 (15%)	1 (1%)	
21	How important for you was the discussion among all teams of their field assignment experiences?	45 (82%)	9 (16%)	1 (2%)	
22	How important was the feedback session for your team with the course instructors?	46 (85%)	8 (15%)		
23	How important was your participation in an effort to look across the project evaluations and develop general findings about the whole group of projects, i.e., the cross-project analysis?	33 (61%)	16 (30%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
24	How useful were the additional training sessions presented during this classroom phase (see list below)				
25	Data Quality	38 (72%)	12 (23%)	3 (5%)	
26	Program, Cross-Site and Meta-Evaluation Approaches	33 (57%)	18 (31%)	6 (10%)	1 (2%)
27	Evaluation Standards	28 (50%)	24 (43%)	4 (7%)	

**E. Final Thoughts**

29. Please mark the statements which best describe the overall assessment of the impact of this course on your knowledge and skills. (Put a mark in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column for as many statements as many as apply)

a	The course was interesting but it is not likely that I will be able to use much in my future work.	1
b	I did not find much in this course that was relevant or useful for my work at USAID.	
c	I may not be able to participate in many evaluations in the future, but I now have a good understanding of how to use evaluations to learn more and improve my mission's programs.	30
d	The course gave me enough experience that, with some technical assistance, I am now confident that I am able to develop evaluation scopes of work that will result in evaluations my mission finds informative and useful.	43
e	Because of what I learned in this course, I am now able to participate on an evaluation expert member of an evaluation team.	43
f	I now feel sufficiently confident of my evaluation skills that I could be a team leader and principle author of a project evaluation for USAID or any other international donor organization.	33
g	By funding my participation in this three week off-site course, my mission is unlikely to fund my participation in other key USAID courses such as CTO training or the Planning, Achieving and Learning (PAL) Course on ADS 2000.	4
h	Because I am a part time Evaluation Officer in addition to other duties, this course was too long.	1

31. Reflecting on what you have learned in this course, how would you compare it to other USAID training courses you have take – considering both the length of the course and its cost to your Mission?

Much less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Somewhat less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	About the same as other USAID training courses	Somewhat more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Much more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken
		5 (10%)	11 (23%)	32 (67%)

USAID, The Africa Bureau  
 MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I  
 Final Phase III Participant Assessment  
 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**A. Purposes of the Certificate Program**

The Certificate Program in Evaluation had six objectives:

7. Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle.
8. Improve skills needed to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work.
9. Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation.
10. Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kinds of information needed to answer evaluation questions.
11. Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports – with an eye to improving them.
12. Improve understanding of how to utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

**Overall Achievement of Course Objectives**

Keeping in mind these objectives, please give us your honest assessment of this course:

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	No
1	Did the course achieve Objective 1?	8	1		
2	Did the course achieve Objective 2?	8	1		
3	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	5	3	1	
4	Did the course achieve Objective 4?	6	3		
5	Did the course achieve Objective 5?	8	1		
6	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	8	1		

**B. Phase I: Classroom Training**

Thinking back to Phase I of this course, please answer the following questions

		Too Much	Right Amount	Not Quite Enough	Not at all
7	Did the classroom experience in Phase I provide you with sufficient theory on the purposes, ethics and evolution of evaluation?	2	5	2	
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on evaluation design to develop a valid and efficient approach to your field evaluation assignment?	1	4	4	
6	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on methods of collecting data for you to select and apply appropriate data collection methods to your field assignment?	1	8		
7	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on data analysis techniques for you to organize, summarize, interpret and display the data you collected?	1	4	4	
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough insight into good project design for you to identify project design weaknesses in the projects you evaluated as part of your field assignment?	2	4	3	
9	Did the classroom experience give you enough information to write a professional report on the evaluation you carried out during your field assignment?	1	6	2	

10. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase I of this course?

- My feeling is that the section on history of the evaluation should be simplified to a few words to allow more time on, for example, data analysis.
- More time needed to review. Make existing secondary data on projects available.
- Projects should be identified and vetted through the Activity Manager before the commencement of Phase I.
- It was a crash program – too much information was shared with little time to “inhale”
- Pre-project information to be provided at this point.
- Make explicit what is expected in a quality evaluation report.
- Ensure course participants write the background of their evaluation projects before embarking on fieldwork.
- As discussed in the sessions, i.e., we should talk more about changes that we would have made if we were to repeat our work.
- More details on data analysis, conclusions and recommendations.
- Better guidelines for field research.
- Expected results from the field – what would the trainers want from the field?

### C. Phase II: On-Site Evaluation

Thinking back to the evaluation you carried out as part of a team, please answer the following questions. If you did not participate in the fieldwork portion of this course, please skip to Section D of this questionnaire.

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
11	Was your "team" able to function effectively as a "team" in the manner that the course had suggested is appropriate for evaluation work?	4	4	1	
12	Looking back, do you feel that your team developed an adequate plan for its fieldwork?	4	4	1	
13	Looking back, do you feel that you collected the data that you needed to prepare your evaluation report?	1	8		
14	Looking back, do you feel that you adequately analyzed the data you collected?	4	4	1	
15	Looking back, do you feel that you had enough time to complete your field assignment?		5	3	1

16. If you did not have enough time, what aspect of your evaluation suffered from insufficient time?

- Because the planning phase was also the same time we had office assignments, we did not concentrate on gathering project background information, preparing and pre-testing instruments, etc.
- Analysis and report writing suffered because the team separated and some members did not complete their tasks in good time.
- Data analysis and report writing
- Analysis and report writing
- Report writing
- Reaching conclusions with imperfect data sources and report writing.
- Report writing
- Data collection. There was too much out there and more data would have removed/reduced any bias.
- Team building – differences members had different outlooks from the training. This ended up with individuals bringing personal experience in, which was not good for the exercise.

17. Was the choice of evaluating community development projects a good idea?

- Yes
- Yes, this made me understand the problems facing the community and I can now identify with the problems the region is facing.
- Yes
- Yes
- Excellent! Because the most effective and sustainable change has to be supported by community-level pillars.
- Yes, conflict was an appropriate focus.
- Not good, but rather excellent.
- Very.
- Good, but there was limited information available and USAID had a minimal role in the project, which posed problems for information.

18. Did the Phase II on-site evaluation research and report writing phase of this course justify the expense and effort involved?

  9   Fully             Partially        Marginally             Not at all

19. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase II of this course?

- More guidance on data collection, analysis and report content, before letting people go into the field.
- More days (3 more days) should be set aside for report writing immediately after the field work phase.
- Insistence of data collection should be emphasized.
- Officers should be given enough time for field work and report writing. Our organizations should be informed of such.
- More time for analysis
- Extend Phase II to two weeks.
- Give more time for data collection.
- More time to discuss problems, i.e., insufficient data.
- Be very clear about report and particularly the link: F – C – R.

#### D. Phase III: Classroom Work

		Very important	Important	Marginally Important	Not at all
20	How important to your overall experience was the task of making a presentation on your evaluation?	9			
21	How important for you was the discussion among all teams of their field assignment experiences?	9			
22	How important was the feedback session for your team with the course instructors?	9			
23	How important was your participation in an effort to look across the project evaluations and develop general findings about the whole group of projects, i.e., the cross-project analysis?	9			
24	How useful were the additional training sessions presented during this classroom phase (see list below)				
25	Data Quality	9			
26	Program, Cross-Site and Meta-Evaluation Approaches	9			
27	Evaluation Standards	7		2	

28. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase III of this course?

- Maybe it is unrealistic but if people could have the opportunity to present their revised evaluation reports.
- Reduce presentation time so that we can have more time for the meta exercise.
- How to sell the idea to management without sounding like, "I've just been trained and I know it....."
- Presenters should be given time to respond to questions raised after the presentation.
- Participants should be given enough time to read each other's reports so as to make positive criticism.
- Reduce team presentations time and invest more in cross-site and meta-analysis; and knowledge/skill transfers.
- Phase III should be preceded by a day of consolidation of reports by the trainees who come from different places. The presentations teams do would be more helpful and well prepared this way.
- Give participants time to read each other's reports and enough time to rewrite their reports.
- More on polishing reports.
- Role of the M&E Officer in USAID
- Importance of the roles in M&E for effective management and evaluation in the missions.
- Instruments that could be used by M&E officer and other staff on M&E.

## E. Final Thoughts

29. Please mark the statements which best describe the overall assessment of the impact of this course on your knowledge and skills. (Put a mark in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column for as many statements as many as apply)

a	The course was interesting but it is not likely that I will be able to use much in my future work.	
b	I did not find much in this course that was relevant or useful for my work at USAID.	
c	I may not be able to participate in many evaluations in the future, but I now have a good understanding of how to use evaluations to learn more and improve my mission's programs	
d	The course gave me enough experience that with some technical assistance, I am now confident that I am able to develop evaluation scopes of work that will result in evaluations my mission finds informative and useful.	6
e	Because of what I learned in this course, I am now able to participate on an evaluation expert member of an evaluation team.	6
f	I now feel sufficiently confident of my evaluation skills that I could be a team leader and principle author of a project evaluation for USAID or any other international donor organization.	5
g	By funding my participation in this three week off-site course, my mission is unlikely to fund my participation in other key USAID courses such as CTO training or the Planning, Achieving and Learning (PAL) Course on ADS 2000.	1
h	Because I am a part time Evaluation Officer in addition to other duties, this course was too long	

30. Is there any information you learned in this course – or skills you developed – that you have already applied in your mission? If you have already found ways to apply what you have learned to your work in your mission, please briefly describe those applications.

- After Phase I, I was called to sit on a briefing by the evaluators on one of our projects. I felt so confident and raised questions that were found sound. And then it was proposed that I should also be shown the draft evaluation report for review.
- I had the chance to discuss the progress of some of our projects with our partners with more understanding of our focus on expected outcomes.
- Not yet, but will as now I am fully equipped with evaluation skills.
- Developing SOWs for evaluations – this way related to mission evaluations.
- Participated in reviewing questions developed by a consultant for interviews.
- Reviewed draft evaluation reports.

31. Reflecting on what you have learned in this course, how would you compare it to other USAID training courses you have take – considering both the length of the course and its cost to your mission?

Much less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Somewhat less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	About the same as other USAID training courses	Somewhat more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Much more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken
		1	1	6

32. Reflecting on what you have learned through this course, can you suggest any other type of training course or experience that would have provided you with the same level of knowledge and skills – but at a lower cost, in terms your mission’s investment of time, travel and other costs your mission bore directly to provide you with this training?

- I don't see any because to have been able to do a class training, followed by a so real field practice, then a review in class seems to me to be the best form of training. What else?
- Doing the training in Kenya
- I think this is the lowest cost every possible
- Management of program portfolio

33. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with this course?

- This course has given me a very interesting amount of information. I realized that by reading all the material we have, I can get really knowledgeable, not only in evaluation but on a wide range of topics, i.e., conflict theories. I'm also excited by the practical action that I can undertake, at various levels. This has been a wonderful opportunity, thanks so much Janet, Richard and Molly and the trainee team.
- I have particularly learned a lot on writing skills from my team members (Sam Kona and Polly Mugisha).
- Thank you for the evaluation skills, training...before which I hadn't realized I so needed to perfect and improve my work as a program specialist. Thank you again. This is great for Africa.
- It was fantastic and informative.
- Yes! The course was enriched with practical experience of the instructors making it real, practical and possible.
- The course timetable is too packed and there was a chance that a few of us could loose concentration within the week.
- It is an excellent course; we never had such a course before. All the courses that I attended were only theoretical, but this was real, as I "learned by doing." I also arranged to get both "conflict" and 'evaluation" skills. Thanks to the facilitators and Janet.
- Doing an actual evaluation was invaluable. No amount of class work could have accomplished this.
- This has been one of the best courses I've had in USAID and I hope they will follow-up with training that would look at program planning and management (not PAL), which would be in line with program evaluations.

USAID, The Africa Bureau  
 MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I  
 Final Phase III Participant Assessment  
 Johannesburg, South Africa

**A. Purposes of the Certificate Program**

The Certificate Program in Evaluation had six objectives:

- 13. Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle.
- 14. Improve skills needed to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work.
- 15. Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation.
- 16. Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kinds of information needed to answer evaluation questions.
- 17. Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports – with an eye to improving them.
- 18. Improve understanding of how to utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

**Overall Achievement of Course Objectives**

Keeping in mind these objectives, please give us your honest assessment of this course:

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	No
1	Did the course achieve Objective 1?	22			
2	Did the course achieve Objective 2?	20	3		
3	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	17	5		
4	Did the course achieve Objective 4?	19	3		
5	Did the course achieve Objective 5?	21	1		
6	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	16	6		

## B. Phase I: Classroom Training

Thinking back to Phase I of this course, please answer the following questions

		Too Much	Right Amount	Not Quite Enough	Not at all
7	Did the classroom experience in Phase I provide you with sufficient theory on the purposes, ethics and evolution of evaluation?	1	16		
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on evaluation design to develop a valid and efficient approach to your field evaluation assignment?	2	17	3	
6	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on methods of collecting data for you to select and apply appropriate data collection methods to your field assignment?	2	13	7	
7	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on data analysis techniques for you to organize, summarize, interpret and display the data you collected?	2	9	10	1
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough insight into good project design for you to identify project design weaknesses in the projects you evaluated as part of your field assignment?	1	18	3	
9	Did the classroom experience give you enough information to write a professional report on the evaluation you carried out during your field assignment?	2	14	6	

- One participant wrote, with reference to (7): Not enough on attribution, especially controlling environmental factors.
- One participant wrote with reference to this set of questions: Could have done more group work instead of presentations.
- One participant wrote with reference to these questions: Need more on multivariate analysis to establish cause and effect relationship with confidence.

10. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase I of this course?

- The course was too condensed. Need more time to absorb some of the reading references. Need to send participants to websites of some of the material.
- Too much details and reading materials within a very short time. There was too much of a rush to cover a very large ground and it times it became difficult for participants to cope.
- Simplify data and sampling to facilitate comprehension or have an entire comprehensive session
- More time for the course implementers to critically look at people's SOWs and more importantly survey instruments to be used by teams. Allow course time to develop them.

- Not everybody has a background in data collection, analysis and interpretation, so consideration needs to be given to this aspect of the course. Also, there is a need to work more thoroughly with teams, as necessary, to walk them through writing a professional report.
- Spend more time on how to rigorously demonstrate impact of projects (i.e., sorting out attribution).
- Provide more insight into data collection and analysis methods.
- More focus on how to organize and analyze data for evaluations. What to do in the absence of good data. How to be consistent with questions and answers and well prepared.
- Provide more teaching on data analysis
- More information on the analysis and packaging of data/results of evaluation.
- Improve the presentation of sample size estimation
- Just two more days.
- Presentation needs to be improved.
- Extend the days for the classroom work
- A couple of themes need elaborate explanation. They were more or less treated as a crash program.
- Enough time should be given for data collection and analysis in the course.

### C. Phase II: On-Site Evaluation

Thinking back to the evaluation you carried out as part of a team, please answer the following questions. If you did not participate in the fieldwork portion of this course, please skip to Section D of this questionnaire.

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
11	Was your "team" able to function effectively as a "team" in the manner that the course had suggested is appropriate for evaluation work?	16	3	2	
12	Looking back, do you feel that your team developed an adequate plan for its fieldwork?	11	8	1	
13	Looking back, do you feel that you collected the data that you needed to prepare your evaluation report?	8	14		
14	Looking back, do you feel that you adequately analyzed the data you collected?	8	11	1	
15	Looking back, do you feel that you had enough time to complete your field assignment?	1	9	6	4

16. If you did not have enough time, what aspect of your evaluation suffered from insufficient time?

- Data collection – the area to be covered was too big without accessibility, making the team spend too much time on the road
- Data analysis and report writing due to pressure from office
- Time together to work as a team to complete the report as opposed to completing the work via e-mail.
- More time needed to collect appropriate data.
- Field work and report writing
- The evaluation suffered because too much time had to be spent understanding a lot of background and sorting out logistics.

- It would have improved the evolution had time been allocated to follow-up on questions once analysis of data had been completed.
- Data collection
- Consistent data with a good sample size
- Data collection and analysis
- Field work – not enough time to prepare for field work due to office work
- Number of sites visited, information collected
- Joint preparation/drafting of report
- Validation of quality of secondary and pre-project data
- Collect data from comparative sites
- Primary data analysis during and after data collection while we are together.
- We managed to finish everything but we had to squeeze our selves and worked very long hours to meet the deadline.
- Fact finding and analysis of results
- Report writing
- Sample size should have been larger for better results.
- Data collection, analysis and report writing

17. Was the choice of evaluating community development projects a good idea?

- Yes
- Yes, but I think all of the evaluations didn't look at institutional strengthening projects (Khulisa) and some had many layers (Manet) that should have been more pinpointed as to institutional development at what level.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, NGO strengthening was a good topic, but also difficult as this area is very broad.
- Yes
- Yes and no. Very difficult evaluations but now that they are completed, I feel confident that I could evaluate other types of projects.
- Yes
- Yes
- Very
- Yes, it was also in line with policy on implementation of health programs and their impacts at the community level.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Great idea

18. Did the Phase II on-site evaluation research and report writing phase of this course justify the expense and effort involved?

16 Fully    2 Partially    \_\_\_\_\_ Marginally    \_\_\_\_\_ Not at all

- Once participant commented that it depends on the quality of the final report to be produced. If it is purely for the value of the experience, then the answer is yes.

19. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase II of this course?

- Need two weeks of field visits if the teams can or resources allow.
- Mission management should be made to understand the importance of this course so that they can facilitate rather than blocking
- Giving more time
- Discourage teams from going directly from Phase I to Phase II, because we had to do most of our background reading after the fieldwork.
- Allocate more time to this phase, e.g., two weeks.
- For teams to send in a draft report while they are still together.
- More time
- Need time to prepare for fieldwork – perhaps 1 ½ weeks.
- More time for teams to do 1<sup>st</sup> draft together – stay two days after fieldwork
- Additional 3 days to draft the report before team departs field site
- Perhaps more vetting of the projects selected for evaluation.
- Perhaps more guidance regarding the advisability of sticking together as a team to write the first draft.
- Encourage planning for adequate time for data analysis and report writing.
- Have teams formed early enough and have documentation early enough before field work.
- The phase needs more than one week.
- Adequate time needs to be given for the fieldwork.
- Extend the number of days for data collection.
- Participants need to be freed from Mission work over the period of Phase II to be able to coordinate our data collection and report writing.
- There should be enough time for the team to write up the report together in one place.

#### D. Phase III: Classroom Work

		Very important	Important	Marginally Important	Not at all
20	How important to your overall experience was the task of making a presentation on your evaluation?	20	2		
21	How important for you was the discussion among all teams of their field assignment experiences?	20	2		
22	How important was the feedback session for your team with the course instructors?	19	3		
23	How important was your participation in an effort to look across the project evaluations and develop general findings about the whole group of projects, i.e., the cross-project analysis?	14	6	2	
24	How useful were the additional training sessions presented during this classroom phase (see list below)				
25	Data Quality	16	6		
26	Program, Cross-Site and Meta-Evaluation Approaches	13	12	1	
27	Evaluation Standards	12	14		

28. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase III of this course?

- More time should be allotted for teams to work on their final reports.
- Some of the additional training sessions would have been better done in Phase I.
- Instructors should float with the teams during individual team time set aside to finish reports to help that process.
- Give more time to train evaluators to integrate other participants/instructors comments into their draft reports
- Give more time to finalize reports and support to the structure of the reports.
- Too much time was given to revise reports. It's good for teams to meet and sort out the changes that need to be made and how they will make them, but actually doing the rewrite should not take up valuable class time.
- More time for teams to edit their reports after feedback.
- Build in more time for re-drafting/finalizing the report
- Enforce time limits for team presentations so we get through them more quickly.
- More time on cross-project analysis, information utilization and Mission plans.
- I feel Phase III was well coordinated.
- More time should be devoted to practical work, i.e., data analysis and report writing.

## E. Final Thoughts

29. Please mark the statements which best describe the overall assessment of the impact of this course on your knowledge and skills. (Put a mark in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column for as many statements as many as apply)

a	The course was interesting but it is not likely that I will be able to use much in my future work.	1
b	I did not find much in this course that was relevant or useful for my work at USAID.	
c	I may not be able to participate in many evaluations in the future, but I now have a good understanding of how to use evaluations to learn more and improve my mission's programs	15
d	The course gave me enough experience that with some technical assistance, I am now confident that I am able to develop evaluation scopes of work that will result in evaluations my mission finds informative and useful.	18
e	Because of what I learned in this course, I am now able to participate on an evaluation expert member of an evaluation team.	18
f	I now feel sufficiently confident of my evaluation skills that I could be a team leader and principle author of a project evaluation for USAID or any other international donor organization.	16
g	By funding my participation in this three-week off-site course, my mission is unlikely to fund my participation in other key USAID courses such as CTO training or the Planning, Achieving and Learning (PAL) Course on ADS 2000.	1
h	Because I am a part time Evaluation Officer in addition to other duties, this course was too long	

- Commenting on (c) above, one participant wrote that doing more work on evaluations, which falls with the participant's job description, really depends on the supervisor's understanding of the importance of this work.

30. Is there any information you learned in this course – or skills you developed – that you have already applied in your mission? If you have already found ways to apply what you have learned to your work in your mission, please briefly describe those applications.

- Never did this before, or looked at it in a serious way, because there is no evaluation culture exists in the mission.
- Revision of PMP indicators with relevant SOs was done after Phase I.
- Developed the M&E Mission Order (revised the old one)
- Having a mission-wide evaluation plan.
- Work in multi-sectoral teams and understand technical aspects of difficult sectors can be transferred to the mission level and establish a coordinating body for evaluations.
- Participatory approach to designing evaluation SOWs.
- Sharing findings and recommendations of evaluations with stakeholders concerned
- Following up on the implementation of recommendations.
- I have been asked by the Program Officer if I would like to take the lead on the evaluation of a Washington-funded education activity in S.A. The answer was "yes".
- Writing skills – writing up an evaluation plan for the mission.
- Linking evaluations to the PMP
- Data quality assessment
- PMP and DQA skills
- Reviewing and applying follow-up recommendations from evaluations

- Reviewed an evaluation SOW from another SO soon after I returned from Phase I.
- Developing an appropriate SOW for evaluations.
- Not accepting a SOW written by evaluators themselves.
- Phase I helped me evaluate/review a mid-term evaluation proposal that had been submitted by a cooperating sponsor.
- Writing SOWs for evaluations
- Reviewing and accepting evaluation reports
- I have not yet started but will apply them fully.

31. Reflecting on what you have learned in this course, how would you compare it to other USAID training courses you have take – considering both the length of the course and its cost to your mission?

Much less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Somewhat less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	About the same as other USAID training courses	Somewhat more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Much more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken
		2	2	16

- One participant wrote: I have also taken PAL and they were both very useful.
- One participant who marked "much more useful" added: Without a doubt.

32. Reflecting on what you have learned through this course, can you suggest any other type of training course or experience that would have provided you with the same level of knowledge and skills – but at a lower cost, in terms your mission's investment of time, travel and other costs your mission bore directly to provide you with this training?

- It is difficult to tell
- Same training course, but mission-wide for specific missions
- Introduce the practical part of topic. This facilitates the understanding and stress applicability
- I thought the value of Phase III was somewhat questionable. I found presenting reports and getting feedback to be very useful but too much time was made available for rewriting reports. It would have been better to (a) spend more time on presentations and feedback or (b) covering other issues in a format similar to Phase I.
- Project design
- Participation in evaluation missions
- No. Cost was definitely worth it. USAID needs to make more investments in training its key personnel, and I believe that the funds can be found if there is the will.
- Maybe more courses held at individual missions could help lower the cost but need to look at the increase in trainer costs (MSI or other).
- Performance management course.
- Any generic courses, other than AID specific

33. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with this course?

- The virtue of teamwork is an excellent exercise. It taught me how important it is to work with others to achieve maximum results. Also, differences can be changed into a positive to deliver a solid end product.
- The whole course was a challenge to me and also to missions and the way they conduct business.

- One of the few courses that has a good amount of theory and practice.
- Great learning experience, lesson in how to work with teams in various settings and under various conditions.
- You are great trainers. Keep on doing your work and try to identify follow-up courses for new evaluation officers you trained – particularly for sampling and data analysis.
- It was thought provoking in that it demonstrated that evaluation should be given more consideration if we want to do a good job.
- The facilitators did not enforce discipline on course participants that were regularly late to class. The result was a lot of time wasted, I think.
- This is definitely the best course I've taken during my professional career both within and outside of USAID. The combination of course work and "real life" field work, peer review and critique by course facilitators has provided the inputs and training whereby I now feel confident to go out and do it on my own.
- Learned a lot. Thanks. The hands on field work was essential. Any course on evaluations that does not include field work would be a waste of time and money.
- This course is very useful.
- Very good. Practical training. Instant results and feedback. This course should be replicated in other regions and cover more mission staff.
- Combing fieldwork and theory was most useful. The three phases are validly justified.
- Providing training away from normal work area/office is very useful.
- It was a good experience to work as mixed teams from several countries.
- Thoroughly enjoyed it. Instructors are great. Interest level is always kept very high, much due to the instructors themselves.
- I have a thoughtful and audit trail process for implementing evaluations that I can use in the mission.
- The most well designed course!
- This was a very useful course compared to all the other courses I've taken from USAID. It was unique mainly because of the fieldwork aspect of it. However, it can be improved especially on logistics. We needed to have CDs for the entire course, manuals are too heavy to carry and bags should have been provided.
- To be actively involved in mission evaluations.
- Network established with other participants and knowledge exchanged.
- Best practices of other missions in M&E filtered in.
- Strengths and weaknesses highlighted in missions give insights into taking up more M&E challenges.
- It has given me in-depth insight into a very important component of project management.

USAID, The Africa Bureau  
 MSI Certificate Course in Evaluation – Phase I  
 Final Phase III Participant Assessment  
 Accra, Ghana

**A. Purposes of the Certificate Program**

The Certificate Program in Evaluation had six objectives:

19. Understand the role of evaluation in the program and activity management cycle.
20. Improve skills needed to prepare high quality, utilization-focused evaluation Scopes of Work.
21. Understand the importance of ethics in evaluation.
22. Develop the capacity to carry out an evaluation that will produce the kinds of information needed to answer evaluation questions.
23. Learn how to review and critique evaluation plans and draft evaluation reports – with an eye to improving them.
24. Improve understanding of how to utilize evaluation findings to inform management decisions.

**Overall Achievement of Course Objectives**

Keeping in mind these objectives, please give us your honest assessment of this course:

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	No
1	Did the course achieve Objective 1?	22	2		
2	Did the course achieve Objective 2?	19	5		
3	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	18	6		
4	Did the course achieve Objective 4?	15	7	2	
5	Did the course achieve Objective 5?	19	5		
6	Did the course achieve Objective 3?	18	5	1	

## B. Phase I: Classroom Training

Thinking back to Phase I of this course, please answer the following questions

		Too Much	Right Amount	Not Quite Enough	Not at all
7	Did the classroom experience in Phase I provide you with sufficient theory on the purposes, ethics and evolution of evaluation?		24		
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on evaluation design to develop a valid and efficient approach to your field evaluation assignment?	2	18	4	
6	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on methods of collecting data for you to select and apply appropriate data collection methods to your field assignment?	1	15	8	
7	Did the classroom experience give you enough information on data analysis techniques for you to organize, summarize, interpret and display the data you collected?	2	10	12	
8	Did the classroom experience give you enough insight into good project design for you to identify project design weaknesses in the projects you evaluated as part of your field assignment?	1	17	6	
9	Did the classroom experience give you enough information to write a professional report on the evaluation you carried out during your field assignment?	2	15	5	

- One participant wrote next to these questions: You might want to know respondent's prior knowledge and experience with M&E before asking these questions, e.g., if they have graduate school course work.
- One participant wrote with respect to (8), when marking not quite enough: For participants with minimal evaluation experience.

10. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase I of this course?

- More practical experience on data collection methods
- Some more practical exercises would enhance this.
- Less intensive, less reading, save for Phase III
- Include some data analysis material
- Give 2 weeks for Phase I.
- To make the course an M&E training
- More time should be devoted to data analysis techniques since some participants don't have the math techniques and skill to use the analysis tools provided.
- This course was very intensive, as time was limited.
- A bit more emphasis on data analysis
- Participant be informed in advance to start preparing case studies before embarking on this course.
- Develop a full module on data analysis methods

- During the selection of the projects to be evaluated, you might make sure you have enough information about the project ahead of time.
- Extending time, it is short for this training
- Pretty good – perhaps a bit more time for sampling design.
- The course may explore ways to build our team building skills
- The guidelines for group work should be clear.
- Project teams should be from the same Mission/country to enable group work to be done.
- Please provide all materials electronically on a CD Rom so they can be shared with colleagues who did not attend.

### C. Phase II: On-Site Evaluation

Thinking back to the evaluation you carried out as part of a team, please answer the following questions. If you did not participate in the fieldwork portion of this course, please skip to Section D of this questionnaire.

		Fully	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
11	Was your "team" able to function effectively as a "team" in the manner that the course had suggested is appropriate for evaluation work?	12	8	3	1
12	Looking back, do you feel that your team developed an adequate plan for its fieldwork?	12	10	2	
13	Looking back, do you feel that you collected the data that you needed to prepare your evaluation report?	5	12	2	
14	Looking back, do you feel that you adequately analyzed the data you collected?	7	8	4	
15	Looking back, do you feel that you had enough time to complete your field assignment?		10	8	6

16. If you did not have enough time, what aspect of your evaluation suffered from insufficient time?

- Interviewing and report writing
- Data collection
- Quality of data collected and analyzed – difficult to balance importance of process learning with outputs/products.
- The five-member team did not have the opportunity to meet as an entire team after data collection was completed and it affected the report writing.
- Interviews took longer than team planned. Not enough entry of data as they are collected
- Interviewing some stakeholders; development of questionnaire and pre-testing of questionnaires.
- Analysis and reporting
- Distance between sites was main constraint and we were not able to meet all the stakeholders. Time should have been given to teams that needed it.
- Data collection, analysis and report writing.
- The actual fieldwork we did not have time to visit communities that the project was not in so we could not compare the impact, if any.

- Fieldwork was not done by entire team. We had to divide into 3 groups, making it difficult to compare results and discuss findings as a team.
- Field preparation – indecisiveness on the project to evaluate. Time for fieldwork is too short, not leaving time for analysis.
- The field work
- The analysis part suffered
- Preparation time for field work
- Questionnaire development, modification and data analysis
- Quality aspects
- The team was scattered and had to do field work at different times, could not come together to do analysis and findings together.
- Data collection and report writing did not have enough time.
- The interview process – lack of focus group; lack of individual respondents – due to time limitations
- Change in composition and understanding of evaluation techniques after reading, so information was continuously stated, repeated
- Lost time with late arrivals of team members, they were not able to complete assignments due to regular duties and unexpected requests from Missions.

17. Was the choice of evaluating community development projects a good idea?

- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, it was
- Yes
- Yes, it was
- Very good idea, it allowed us to evaluate people level impact
- Yes
- Yes, it helped us realize the flaws in our program design and the kind of data available.
- Great idea
- Yes, but challenging
- Yes, because this is where we can really make impacts.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- It was, but some projects did not follow the pattern
- Excellent idea
- Excellent

18. Did the Phase II on-site evaluation research and report writing phase of this course justify the expense and effort involved?

\_14\_ Fully    \_7\_ Partially    \_\_\_ Marginally    \_\_\_ Not at all

19. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase II of this course?

- Ask missions to give priority to evaluation work in the mission (when participants return to their missions).

- Set out a realistic task for a one week period of time (prep, fieldwork, analysis and writing) or be more realistic up front with Missions and participants about time needed to do the work (2-2.5 weeks)
- For field work, teams should be encouraged to work in/near their own countries (recognizing that in the Ghana course, some are from East Africa, for example)
- Team members need better coordination of their schedules so that there is time.
- Instructors should give feedback on feasibility/realism of time for fieldwork
- Difficulty doing USAID job as well as this course.
- More time.
- Systematic sampling of the site and target population
- For the fieldwork, staff should be given seven working days instead of five so staff in countries where fieldwork is taking place can stay in the field to do analysis and report writing.
- More time is needed for Phase II. MSI should be given enough time to review and give feedback to the participants on how to improve the reports before Phase III.
- Need to let people from within a mission work together, as long as members are from different SOs.
- More time studying the project and doing the actual fieldwork is required.
- Participants should go out for two weeks of fieldwork. One-week data collection and 2<sup>nd</sup> week analysis and report writing.
- Include more time for Phase II.
- More intense planning regarding Phase II.
- Fewer evaluation questions should be addressed.
- More time for submitting draft reports
- Project teams should be from the same mission or the same vicinity
- Long distance locations for study should either be avoided or more time allocated for reasonable distribution of interviews to obtain quantitative measures from the data.
- Ensure that field teams are visiting sites and conducting research that they understand.
- Ensure that at least two team members are based in the same mission to facilitate field research and report writing.

#### D. Phase III: Classroom Work

		Very important	Important	Marginally Important	Not at all
20	How important to your overall experience was the task of making a presentation on your evaluation?	17	6	1	
21	How important for you was the discussion among all teams of their field assignment experiences?	16	7	1	
22	How important was the feedback session for your team with the course instructors?	18	5		
23	How important was your participation in an effort to look across the project evaluations and develop general findings about the whole group of projects, i.e., the cross-project analysis?	10	10	2	1
24	How useful were the additional training sessions presented during this classroom phase (see list below)				
25	Data Quality	13	6	3	
26	Program, Cross-Site and Meta-Evaluation Approaches	11	6	5	1
27	Evaluation Standards	9	10	2	

- One participant wrote, with reference to (23): Please drop this exercise and have an overview only.
- One participant wrote, with reference to (22): Though team members in some cases were unable to use information unless text was written verbatim.

28. What suggestions do you have to make about improving Phase III of this course?

- Give lectures before presentations.
- Both Phase I and Phase II – put the course book on CD for the ease of the traveler and use back in the Mission.
- Different hotel
- Double sided photocopies
- More practical, instructor involvement in the reports
- More time allocated for understanding cost-effectiveness in evaluations and meta-evaluation
- Including PMP design and development
- Please drop the long session on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday.
- Give more exercises from the field work and more time for ethics
- We need to have reports in advance. Evaluations done and incorporated into reports before presentation. Day 1 and 2 spent on presentation; Days 3-5 on actually teaching.
- More refined schedule is required
- The training sessions covered on Friday should come earlier, on Wednesday perhaps
- There should be feedback sessions conducted for each team by the instructors after formal presentations
- More time could have been set aside for evaluation team group revision work
- Data quality should be done in more detail and make reference to the Agency's own
- Give team's time to finalize report
- Rather than the whole document, extracts on specific aspects should be given to teams to evaluate. Portion will shift attention away from the "project" and reduce the defensive positions. Many did not read the project materials fully and spoke from residual knowledge rather than the facts on the project. Small portion of projects for evaluation can therefore be effective for analysis.

## E. Final Thoughts

29. Please mark the statements which best describe the overall assessment of the impact of this course on your knowledge and skills. (Put a mark in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column for as many statements as many as apply)

a	The course was interesting but it is not likely that I will be able to use much in my future work.	
b	I did not find much in this course that was relevant or useful for my work at USAID.	
c	I may not be able to participate in many evaluations in the future, but I now have a good understanding of how to use evaluations to learn more and improve my mission's programs	15
d	The course gave me enough experience that with some technical assistance, I am now confident that I am able to develop evaluation scopes of work that will result in evaluations my mission finds informative and useful.	19
e	Because of what I learned in this course, I am now able to participate on an evaluation expert member of an evaluation team.	19
f	I now feel sufficiently confident of my evaluation skills that I could be a team leader and principle author of a project evaluation for USAID or any other international donor organization.	12
g	By funding my participation in this three week off-site course, my mission is unlikely to fund my participation in other key USAID courses such as CTO training or the Planning, Achieving and Learning (PAL) Course on ADS 2000.	2
h	Because I am a part time Evaluation Officer in addition to other duties, this course was too long	1

- One participant wrote, with reference to (h): Not because I am a part time evaluation officer, just missed too much time from work.

30. Is there any information you learned in this course – or skills you developed – that you have already applied in your mission? If you have already found ways to apply what you have learned to your work in your mission, please briefly describe those applications.

- Identifying the need for a similar course to meet mission's monitoring needs.
- Clear idea of how to write an SOW, set up review committees, etc., for an evaluation that I've been putting off for 2 years because of the complexity of writing a good SOW for it.
- Mostly applying Results Framework and PMP development for FY 2005. Analytical skills are valuable, reminded me of graduate courses in M&E.
- Preparing a SOW for an evaluation
- Reviewing evaluations; developing SOWs
- Being CTO for an evaluation
- Data quality
- Writing a SOW
- Monitoring a project
- Writing an evaluation report
- Data analysis
- Not yet, but it will be very useful, initially in implementing our PMP, but eventually as we move toward developing an evaluation plan.
- I'm now in a position to offer in-house TOT for colleagues.
- Share this information with the Program M&E staff and the mission generally and emphasize the importance of conducting evaluations

- Am already putting together an evaluation schedule for all REDSO/ICT activities for FY05.
- Not yet, but in the future
- Thinking about complementing monitoring data collection process with the development of an evaluation schedule
- Think about how to transmit practically some of the skills acquired to other colleagues.
- Monitoring follow-on evaluation recommendations
- Evaluation plans
- I have already sent notice for quarterly reports that will provide measurable data for analysis and reporting responding to DQA learned here.

31. Reflecting on what you have learned in this course, how would you compare it to other USAID training courses you have take – considering both the length of the course and its cost to your mission?

Much less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Somewhat less useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	About the same as other USAID training courses	Somewhat more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken	Much more useful than other USAID training courses I have taken
		2	8	10

- One participant wrote, when marking "somewhat": Because the field exercises offered a more detailed, focused and relevant information about a sector that is emerging.

32. Reflecting on what you have learned through this course, can you suggest any other type of training course or experience that would have provided you with the same level of knowledge and skills – but at a lower cost, in terms your mission's investment of time, travel and other costs your mission bore directly to provide you with this training?

- A course that is mission-based using our own activities with field work (2-3 days) and course work (4-6 days), total, with practical tasks that help the mission understand how to systematically monitor programs and make the best use of fieldwork
- More because there was no travel cost in this case.
- Perhaps this approach would not have been as effective without the hands on "real life" field experience
- Data analysis training
- There are elements of the course that could be placed in a different format at a lower cost but the design of the course is unique and should probably be preserved but adapted to target individual countries and a more limited scope.
- Evaluation of evaluation training
- Government project evaluation

33. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with this course?

- You all are absolutely, hands-down, the BEST! I was very lucky to have been able to take the course. Thanks.
- Overall quite useful, although cumbersome in both materials and time. Coordination and team-work much more stressful than expected but in hindsight this probably added value. Good balance of "real" audience (AID and mission folks) and class participants/instructors.

- Due to the intensive nature of this course, it should have been planned for a less busy time of year.
- I enjoyed the course. The participants fully participate in the discussion and it was great sharing experiences among us. The fieldwork and practical learning was very useful.
- Create an alumni association for all participants to this course to share knowledge and be in touch.
- If the course is spread to other organizations/institutions, it can make a difference in development planning.
- Its been useful and might want to consider merging it with the PMP workshop.
- This is a huge commitment of time, not sure how it could be changed, however, last phase (III) could be shortened to 3.5-4 days (if meta-evaluation/cross-project analysis were dropped)
- We could have managed better some of the time and topics, and it could have been more focused in some cases.
- It was BY FAR the best training I've had in my 20 years of experience with USAID. The only flaw (but not the course's or trainer's fault) was that my team was essentially dysfunctional.
- It was a good learning experience and a worthwhile investment. The time and resources were very cost-effective.
- Suggest to continue providing this training, including to Implementing Partners, with the support of USAID if possible.
- I have acquired a lot of skills and been exposed to looking at evaluations at a higher level.
- Just to say it was fantastic. I've just been promoted as a project management assistant for my team and M&E is part of my job. This course is really going to help me. Before I had problems understanding evaluation reports. Last night I compared our field work with an old evaluation report done by my team and I've started seeing things differently – in a positive way. Thank you all.
- I feel on a par with older members of USAID through the practical nature of one try and the example used to learn evaluation. Thank you.

## Annex F: Program Level or Meta-Evaluation Questions Addressed by Participant Teams

### Tanzania Meta-Analysis Questions

#### Group 1

- Using evidence provided in these studies, explain why cattle raiding and violence are occurring in East Africa. Does the evidence provided in the evaluations show the cause of these two phenomenon to be the same or different?
- The projects that were evaluated included a wide range of interventions aimed at reducing conflict. Which specific interventions do the evaluations identify as being the most effective and what evidence proves this?
- None of these evaluations provide encouraging evidence about project sustainability. What is the implication for USAID of these findings?

#### Group 2

- The proposition that women play an important role in conflict and, potentially, in conflict reduction in East Africa was embedded in several of the projects that were evaluated. To what extent does the evidence provided in these evaluations prove or disprove either or both aspects of this proposition?
- Based on the evidence provided by these evaluations, what is the likelihood that relatively small USAID projects funded through NGOs, of the type examined in these evaluations, will, taken together, change centuries' old practices in East Africa?
- What common conclusions reached in two or more of these evaluations must USAID take seriously and act upon if it intends its investments in conflict prevention and mitigation to have a significant impact?

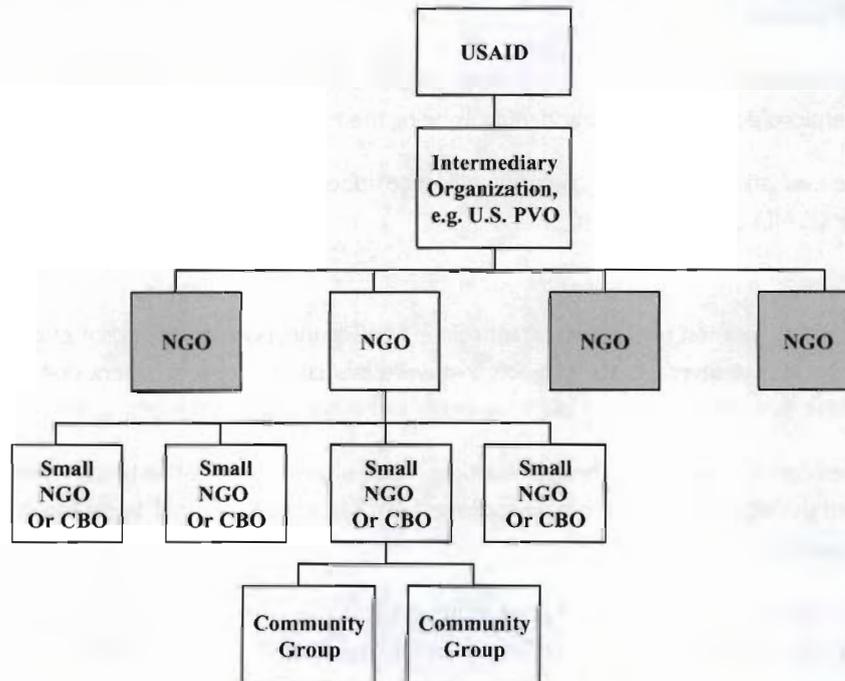
#### Group 3

- Several of these projects sought to develop NGOs as sources of "early warning" information about conflicts, or to provide NGOs with "early warning" information. Based on evidence presented in these evaluations, what should USAID conclude about the operational value or impact of ensuring that NGOs are aware that conflict is immanent?
- The majority of these evaluations report that conflict has been reduced to some degree. Each of these reports claims that the project played a role in reducing conflict. How credible is this?
- What recommendations presented in two or more of these evaluations must USAID take seriously and act upon if it intends its investments in conflict prevention and mitigation to have a significant impact?

## South Africa Meta-Evaluation Questions

### Group 1: Institutional Capacity Change

- Evaluations examined NGO projects that received assistance from USAID from an intermediary organization, e.g., U.S. PVO. That assistance most often took the form of grant funds plus some type of organizational capacity improvement assistance. What kinds of organizational capacity improvement assistance were these NGOs given? Using the diagram, indicate how far down the organizational capacity assistance provided by USAID's intermediary organization reached.



- What kinds of organizational capacity changes actually occurred in these NGOs? How believably did evaluations prove whether organizational capacity changes occurred?

### Group 2 Service Delivery Improvements

- Did services to people improve in the projects that were examined? How believably did evaluations prove whether changes in services did or did not occur?
- Did the evaluations establish whether there was a linkage between organizational capacity development and the improvements in services? How believably did evaluations prove whether changes in services did or did not occur?

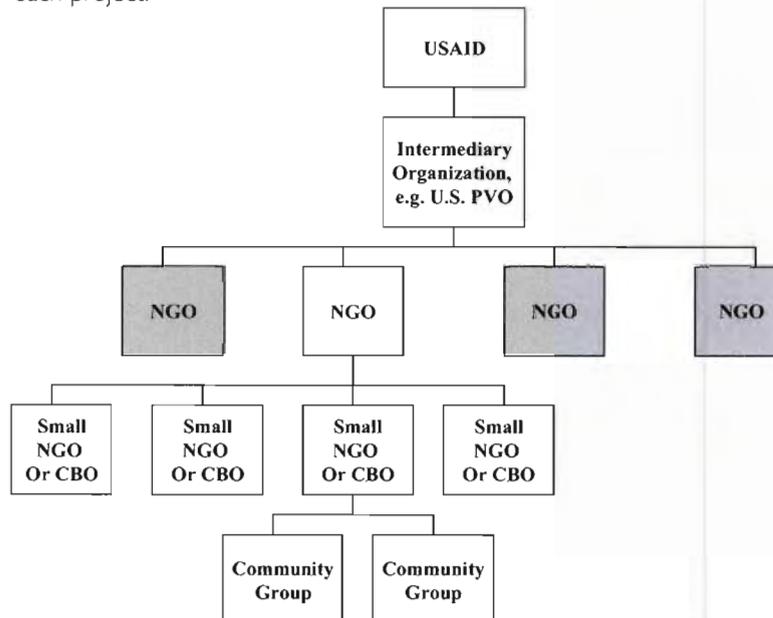
### Group 3 Beneficiary Impacts

- Did the evaluations prove whether there was any impact on beneficiaries or communities? How believably did evaluations prove whether changes in services did or did not occur?
- To what extent are the impacts the evaluations reported on attributable to the USAID projects that were examined?

## Meta-Evaluation Questions – Ghana

### Group 1: Institutional Capacity Change

- Evaluations examined NGO projects that received assistance from USAID from an intermediary organization, e.g., U.S. PVO. That assistance most often took the form of grant funds plus some type of organizational capacity improvement assistance. What kinds of organizational capacity improvement assistance were these NGOs given by the PVO? For each project briefly identify the types of capacity building assistance the NGO was given. 2. Rate the extent of assistance provided by the PVO, i.e. a lot or a little for each project.



- What kinds of organizational capacity change actually occurred in these NGOs? For each project provide a clear statement of what type of change was evident at the time the evaluation was conducted. Then rate the amount of organizational capacity change that occurred, i.e., a lot or a little.

### Group 2. Service Delivery Improvements

- What NGO services improved in the projects that were examined? For each project, briefly identify the service(s) that improved and the nature of the improvement. Then rate each project on the degree of improvement in services, i.e., a lot or a little.
- Did the evaluations establish whether there was a linkage between organizational capacity development and the improvements in services? For each project briefly state what proof of the linkage between capacity building and improvements in services exists. Also rate each project on the extent of evidence of this linkage, i.e., a lot or a little.

### Group 3. Beneficiary Impacts

- What impact on beneficiaries or communities resulted from the services provided by the NGO? For each project, briefly state what were the benefits communities or people realized as a function of the services the NGO provided? Also rate each project on the extent of benefits, i.e., a lot or a little.
- To what extent are the impacts the evaluations reported on attributable to the USAID projects that were examined? For each project, briefly state what evidence proves that the project impacts are linked to USAID. Also rate each project on extent of evidence for this attribution, i.e., a lot or a little.

# **Annex G: Conflict Management Projects In East Africa**

A Synthesis of Findings From Five Participant Evaluations

Additional Paper for the Certificate Program in Evaluation for the Africa Bureau

January 12, 2005

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# CONTENTS

I.	BACKGROUND.....	105
II.	KEY POINTS COMMON TO EAST AFRICA MSI EVALUATION CERTIFICATE CLASS EVALUATIONS OF USAID CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROJECTS. ....	106
A.	Main Findings and Conclusions .....	106
B.	Issues, Constraints and Concerns about USAID- Funded Projects.....	108
C.	A Caution and A Recommendation .....	109

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## I. Background

This report was prepared at the request of Janet Kerley, at the time the USAID Bureau for Africa Bureau Monitoring and Evaluation Officer responsible for evaluation training in the Bureau.

The report reviews five evaluations that were conducted in late summer 2004. Each evaluation was undertaken by a three-person team of USAID staff from USAID/REDSO and USAID Missions in Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda. They were joined by three professionals from two of USAID's implementing partners<sup>10</sup> in that region. All were trainees in an Evaluation Certificate Course taught by MSI Inc. of Washington, DC. The proprietary training was commissioned by the Bureau for Africa and USAID/REDSO.

The training, held in Dar Es Salaam, was comprised of three phases:

- Phase I consisted of five days of intensive practical classroom work, during which teams were formed and charged with going through all the steps of preparing a scope of work, deciding on a research design and methodology, and developing a management plan for the conduct of a 'real world' evaluation.
- Phase II was the field work phase, in which each team spent one week together conducting data collection followed by report preparation.
- Phase III brought the trainees together for an additional week of class room work, during which they practiced reporting findings, giving and receiving constructive criticism, and revisiting weak points in evaluation practice as experienced by the teams. Additionally a "meta-analysis" exercise compared results of all of the team's findings on three predetermined issues.<sup>11</sup>

The USAID funded projects evaluated were selected by the Africa Bureau in cooperation with REDSO and Missions. These are:

1. POKATUSA - Western Kenya Pastoralists
2. Northern Kenya Conflict Resolution Initiative – Turkana Pastoralists
3. FEWSNET – Karamoja - Regional Early Warning Network
4. NCCK Peace Building and Development Project – North Rift and west Kenya
5. PINGO – Tanzania Pastoralists – Primarily northern border but throughout Tanzania.

Most were relatively small projects that could be evaluated in a one-week field trip; in practice some of the projects were part of a larger and more substantial activity.<sup>12</sup> All of the projects focused to a greater or lesser extent on conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution. One was located in Tanzania, two were exclusively in west Kenya, and two involved collaboration between Uganda and Kenya. All involved some form of strengthening of conflict management capacity and the promotion of active involvement of local communities through existing or newly organized NGOs (Nongovernmental Organizations and CBOs (Community Based Organizations)). Major U.S. partners

<sup>10</sup> COMESA and FEWSNET

<sup>11</sup> For a full description of the course, course evaluations, and the substantive conclusions of the meta-analysis exercise, see the MSI report to USAID written by Molly Hageboeck under contract #623N-00-99-00294-00

<sup>12</sup> Several projects were from USAID/REDSO's Conflict program.

were engaged to provide training and capacity building inputs in four of the five activities. These were the International Technology Development Group (ITDG [Turkana]), Chemonics (FEWSNET), World Vision (POKATUSA), and PACT (PINGO). The Kenyan National Council of Churches (NCCK) did not have an international partner.

After all the reports were prepared, Dr. Kerley asked one of the MSI team to undertake a rapid review of the key issues, findings, conclusions, and recommendations from each teams and present them in a single summary report. The purpose was to be identify the commonality of the results of the programs, in response to higher-level interest in the effectiveness of USAID's conflict mitigation programs, as well as to enlighten senior staff as to the value of objective, field based evaluations.

It is important to note that the evaluations reviewed here were conducted as training exercises as part of the MSI Evaluation Certificate Course sponsored by the Africa Bureau. Only one week was allowed for field data collection. The projects were not randomly selected, and may not be representative of the body of USAID's efforts in this area. Moreover, as trainees, the evaluators were not expert in evaluation methodology.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations made by the teams nevertheless have considerable validity, and are worth considering for the following reasons:

- None of these projects had previously been evaluated by an independent team;
- The evaluation teams were made up of experienced USAID officers;
- The one week in the field was intensively used and efficiently managed for the most part. In the normal three weeks in the field permitted by most USAID evaluations, much time is taken up with courtesy calls, logistics, and preliminary report preparation, so that actual data collection time may be no more than 10-11 days, compared to the 5-6 days used by the trainee teams;
- The evaluation teams were exceptionally knowledgeable about local conditions and culture, in that most of them were East African nationals. Of the five, the PINGO team was the single "all U.S." team;
- The team's reports were prepared with considerably more expert guidance and feedback than would be enjoyed by most evaluation teams.

Although faithful to the final reports' findings, recommendations and conclusions, this report does not attempt an exhaustive summary of each, but rather strives to identify some of the key features that cut across several or all of the reports, as well as put forward some additional thoughts based on the meta-analysis requested by Dr. Kerley.

## II. Key Points Common to East Africa MSI Evaluation Certificate Class Evaluations of USAID Conflict Management Projects.

### A. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- I. The details of conflict patterns can be complex, but may be reduced to one of three types for comparison purposes:
  - a. Within a state: usually inter-ethnic or tribal, but limited to organized banditry and raids on property and resources;

- b. Cross-border conflict similar to above, but with the added dimension of two governments, and with somewhat greater scale than within state conflict over property;
  - c. Political conflict over control of 'the state.' often involving cross border movements and persistent high level violence.
2. All of the conflict situations involved in the East Africa evaluations were of type a or b.
3. Within these types of conflict, causes are multiple and complex including:
  - Traditional enmity between warrior cultures with semi-ritualized behavior for raiding and for reconstituting balance through some form of justice and compensation;
  - Pressure on natural resources and competition for them (water/forage);
  - Economic incentives such as rising demand for beef in urban areas;
  - Low levels of development including transport and communications infrastructure;
  - Low levels of formal schooling and literacy, especially for young men in herding cultures.
4. The scale, intensity, and frequency of conflicts are aggravated or accelerated by other factors:
  - Easy availability of modern weaponry;
  - Tensions arising from large scale refugee movements;
  - Manipulation of local conflicts by outside persons in position of economic and/or political power.
5. USAID funded projects contained several common elements:
  - Capacity building for local CBOs through various types of trainings provided by the implementing partner;
  - Focus on a variety of 'joint events' bringing conflicted groups together in common experiences (peace rallies, cultural events, sports and games);
  - Emphasis on better communications, especially between groups and between local people and authorities;
  - Shifting power and responsibility to local groups as much as possible so that both problem and solutions are locally owned;

- Efforts to reformulate local culture supporting warrior behavior toward more peaceful forms of male expression (changing songs sung by young women praising returning warriors, for example).
6. Most projects had completed planned activities and had achieved output level objectives in the near term.
  7. Most projects were found to be useful to a greater or lesser degree in mitigating conflicts.

## **B. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND CONCERNS ABOUT USAID-FUNDED PROJECTS**

1. The project activities, while having merit, did not seem to be linked to a consistent peace building strategy. In west Kenya especially, there seemed to be considerable overlap in the activities of different groups funded by USAID and other donors.
2. Solutions to conflict have to be holistic and multi-faceted if they are to deal with structural causes of persistent conflict.
3. Conflict mitigation without links to active development programs is of limited impact and is palliative in nature; it does not build Peace.
4. Activity goals and objectives seem extraordinarily ambitious, given very limited funding and durations, giving the appearance of ad hoc “we need to do something” character.
5. Funded activities do not seem to be based on solid assessments of causal factors underlying patterns of violence; they appear somewhat like “We have a hammer, let’s find a nail.”
6. Single dimension projects such as early warning systems, work only when closely linked to other activities.
7. Early warning systems have to be timely in projecting possible impending conflict if they are to be useful; current efforts, while having other benefits, are not performing the “early warning” function.
8. Government has to be part of the conflict prevention and mitigation process. NGOs do not have the kind of authority necessary for dealing with the immediacy of conflict situations.
9. There is evidence that local authorities do not trust NGOs and CBOs, seeing them as competitors for power, or are otherwise dismissive of their efforts. Authorities have been slow to respond to intelligence about looming raids in some cases.
10. Sustainability of the local level efforts is a key component of long-term impact, but all reports questioned whether most of the local CBOs organized by the projects would survive and remain functional.
11. One report suggested that Peace, the other side of Conflict, had been neglected, and more needed to be done to engage in Peace Building efforts. Other activities (i.e. those found in the ITDG and NCKK projects) attempted to address Peace Building, but with limited resources and results. This may be more than a semantic difference, as a Peace Building Strategy might engage in a much broader array of programs usually found in the USAID portfolio.

12. Cross border conflict is difficult to deal with, especially when one side lacks capacity and/or commitment.
13. Some evidence suggests that the frequency of raids and related incidents is declining in eastern Africa, but the data are partial and do not permit direct attribution to the USAID funded activities as a primary cause of this decline.

### **C. A CAUTION AND A RECOMMENDATION**

Again, it needs to be said clearly that these observations are based on a very limited set of field evaluations of, for the most part, relatively small activities. They may not hold up if a more comprehensive assessment of USAID's overall conflict prevention and mitigation program in East Africa were to be conducted.

However, given the consistency of these reports on the issues raised, there is enough here to recommend that USAID undertake such an assessment, hopefully one by which the questions raised above and many others could be more satisfactorily addressed. Given the interplay between conflict and development, such an assessment might point toward a more comprehensive strategy for dealing with both.

# Annex H: A General Guide to the Construction of an Evaluation Report

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August 7, 2004-08-08  
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This guide was developed for the USAID East Africa Certificate Program in Evaluation, offered in three phases between June and August, 2004.

One of the central problems in preparing a report is deciding what material goes where, so that the reader is able to follow the logical thread of the report. The following annotated outline is designed to assist in this process. Experienced writers will recognize that constructing a narrative thread is a matter of judgment and skill. Still, like playing a composition by Mozart or Beethoven, one can interpret but not change the basic musical structure of the work.

Evaluations are about human efforts to intervene in a situation to "make it better" in some way. They ask, what was the problem and why, what did people try to do to address the problem and why, what were the results, both intended and unintended and why? And often they ask, "Are the results desirable, affordable, replicable, and sustainable?" Evaluation reports are a combination of accurate description, presentation of new information (data), analysis and interpretation of the facts, and reaching general conclusions about the value of the intervention. To make evaluations useful, evaluators are usually charged with the task of making recommendations, and, sometimes, stepping back to say, what more general lessons do we learn from this experience?

Evaluation reports do have a basic structure.

I. Acknowledgements

This is where you thank all the people who provided support and answered your questions.

II. Executive Summary

This section is an abbreviated version of the most important parts of the report. The busy executive reader should come away with an understanding of what the project was about, how well it was implemented, whether it achieved its objectives, and what the major conclusions and recommendations are. Nothing should be in the executive summary that is not based directly on what is in the report.

III. Introduction

The introduction should inform the reader about the context in which the intervention took place. This would include a summary statement of the relevant history, demography, socio-economic status and basic political conditions relevant to the country/region.

#### IV. The Problem

Sometimes it makes sense to put this section with the Introduction; at other times a separate section is better. Much depends on how complicated and well articulated the problem is in the original project papers. Often the problem is not well stated, so you have to reconstruct it.

Describe in as much detail as possible the nature, scope, and history of the problem that the intervention has tried to address. Every effort should be made to construct a pre-intervention base line that tells the reader, this is the situation that was unacceptable. If the problem is theft and violence, a credible quantitative baseline should give the reader a fairly precise statement of how much theft, and how much and what kind of violence prevailed prior to the intervention.

The problem statement should also describe the plausible theories, propositions and hypotheses that experts, scholars, other wise people can advance to explain WHY the problem exists.

The problem statement should be derived from the project proposal. If this is weak or non-existent, then the evaluation team has to reconstruct the baseline problem as best they can from available data.

#### V. The Theory of the Intervention

Ideally, the design of an intervention follows an analysis of the problem. Such analysis will look at the context, assess the information available about the unacceptable situation, prioritize the various explanations, extract the main causal factors, and develop the main hypotheses about what are the most important factors to change and/or manipulate in order to bring about a better outcome.

This process creates the underlying program theory of the intervention.

The theory of the Intervention (Program Theory) can usually be deduced from the project proposal that lays out the design of the project. This is sometimes modified in the process of awarding a grant or contract.

At this point, the process of intervention design begins. As the intervention takes shape, it may become a project, or an activity.

#### VI. The Design of the Project

The reader now knows all that is necessary about the context, the problem, and the "theory" which underlies the project. Now the reader wants to know, "OK, so what were these people going to do about this, and, did it make sense?"

The evaluator must give the reader a picture of

- a. what the project was going to do;
- b. what the objectives were;
- c. how it was to be done;
- d. who was going to do it; and
- e. at what cost.

This part of the report gives the reader a clear picture of what the designers of the intervention wanted to accomplish and how they were going to go about doing it.

## VII. Purpose and Methodology

This section sets out the main questions that the evaluation will attempt to answer, as derived from the Scope of Work. It will summarize the basic elements of the evaluation design, including the unit of analysis, selection of samples, data collection instruments, types of data collected, analytic techniques used, who did it and when it was done. This must be summarized, and all the back up material placed in an annex.

## VIII. What did the project achieve?

This section is where you put your findings about implementation, achievement of objectives, and results. This is where the program hypotheses are tested. These findings can be presented in two subparts:

- A. Findings about the management and implementation of the program:
  - Were the right people in place,
  - Were the inputs well organized and timely,
  - Were reports and evaluations done and used,
  - Did the implementation process interfere with or advance the achievement of stated objectives.

In many projects, how the project is implemented may be as important as whether the objectives were achieved. Findings about management should cover issues from bottom to the top

The extent to which the evaluation pays detailed attention to management issues is a function of the Scope of Work and whether the evaluation is mid term or final.

- B. Findings about the project's achievements. Here it is very important to have independently verifiable indicators of achievements. Ideally, if it is a USAID project, these should be found in the project design, but if not, the evaluator will have to come up with acceptable indicators. This is a difficult part of the job.
- C. Findings are generally organized in terms of 3 main questions.
  1. Did the project realize its predicted outputs and objectives? If not, to what extent? What factors explain either full or partial achievement?
  2. Did the project achieve its intermediate and, if appropriate, final results?
  3. Did the project have unintended consequences? Were these positive, negative or both? Why did they occur?

D. Some SOWs will ask the evaluator to address additional issues

Examples are: To what extent will the results be sustained, and if requiring continued organized effort by beneficiaries and participants, what is the likelihood that this activity will be sustained?

To what extent were there synergistic outcomes from the project's interaction with other programs or forces?

Is the project cost effective; are the benefits in monetary terms reasonable in terms of the costs?

What unintended consequences resulted from the activity?

## IX. Analysis

In the analysis section, the job is to interpret and give meaning to the facts as presented above. The analysis section is the bridge between findings and conclusions. If you found, for example, that the project achieved all of its objectives, and that there were positive changes of the type expected, you must explain why or why there was not a CAUSAL linkage between the objectives (strengthening of institutional capacity) and the result (reduced level of violence in the target area.).

Sometimes, analysis goes better immediately following findings. For example, a project may have three objectives: capacity building of local CBOs; sustained interaction of different peoples on common projects, and the establishment of active early warning networks advising authorities of rising tensions in a community. Let's say that the capacity building objective was achieved. So what? An intermediate analysis may be presented on capacity building, for example, demonstrating that increased organizational capacity of a CBO has led to more participation from potentially hostile groups in joint resource management activities, such as water hole restoration and maintenance. A sub-conclusion can then be reached that the objective contributed to an important intermediate result; building trust and cooperation while reducing scarcity through better resource management.

When you present the final analysis and conclusions, you can re-visit this and integrate it into the more general analysis of the impact of the project. It may turn out that while cooperative efforts in resource management did take place, a murder of one of the cooperators by someone from another tribe led to a withdrawal of support and participation in the joint enterprise.

Or, one can lay out the analysis of findings about all the objectives in one place. In some cases, all three objectives may be achieved, and the level of theft and violence still goes up. A more holistic or system analytical framework may be needed to determine why the project failed to achieve the desired result.

### **Back to the beginning**

This is where you return to underlying "theory of the project" and examine whether the causal factors that the project design put forward as most important were indeed the right ones. It may be that another factor turned out to be far more important but was not addressed. For example, it may be that young males and females were left out of the activities, but these are the age groups producing most of the theft and violence...or, it may be that

early warning information is ignored by local authorities, who either are not prepared, don't care, or are corrupt and in collusion with thieves.

This is where you advance **alternative explanations**. In one report about theft and violence connected with cattle stealing among nomadic tribes in Kenya, it was noted that cattle raids would occur shortly after an intertribal peace meeting organized by the project. It was learned that these meetings were the occasion for thieves from one side to check out the resources and security of the other tribe, and shortly thereafter, take advantage of the relaxed attitude following the peace meeting to mount a cattle raid on the other group.

#### X. Conclusions

Conclusions are where you sum up for the reader the findings and analysis. The job here is to set forth your judgments about the utility and value of the project in terms of the problem it was supposed to address.

Some reports set out "Positive" and "Negative" conclusions. Most projects accomplish something, but there are almost always failures. Both need to be stated in the conclusions.

Conclusions must link up with the findings and analysis presented in previous sections, but they also go beyond that to establish whether benefits of the intervention were sufficient to warrant the effort, and whether those benefits will be temporary or long lasting. Conclusions about unintended consequences may be that while the project did not achieve its objectives, it may have produced other effects which had very great value.

This section is often the place where the evaluator's judgment calls are most apparent. It is good idea to make that clear, especially when the findings are ambiguous about the projects achievements. It may that objectives were only partially met, but that the objectives were set too high, and the project still accomplished much of value.

#### XI. Recommendations

This section is where you get a chance to say what changes need to be made. If the project was a complete success, you may want to recommend simply continuation, or even replication in other areas with similar problems.

More likely you will want to make recommendations that will improve the project. These can apply to everything from recommending a different design to restating the objectives and expected results. The key to good recommendations is:

- 1) that they follow directly from the findings and the conclusions, and
- 2) they are "actionable"...the changes can be made by the project authorities.

#### XII. Lessons Learned

Not all clients are interested in this, nor are efforts to derive Lessons Learned always appropriate. Usually, end of project or ex post impact studies are better for lessons learned, as the project experience is longer and more mature than would be found in a mid-term evaluation.