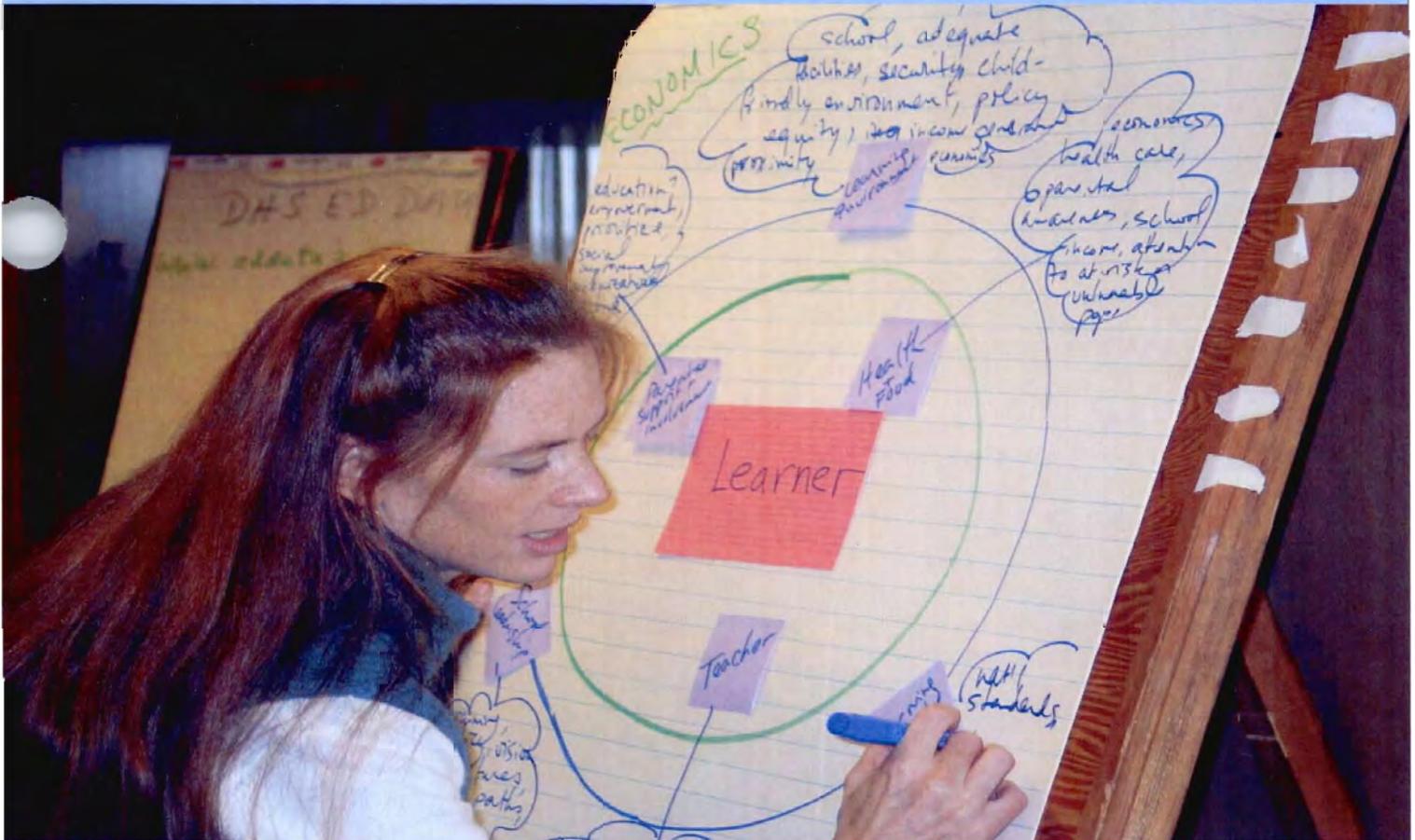




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# PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR USAID EDUCATION STAFF



January 2006

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Natasha DeMarcken, USAID/Mali

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

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<sup>1</sup> In early May, 2005 we sent out invitations to all known USAID education contractors (180 in total) inviting them to review a draft of the Education Skills & Knowledge list and either provide their feedback to us in writing or attend a half day meeting held at USAID on May 19. A first draft of this strategy was sent in July to the same list of 18+ USAID education partners for their review and comment with an invitation for comments in writing or to attend a feedback meeting on the strategy held on August 8, 2005, at the EGAT/ED conference.

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## **I. SUMMARY**

### **A. Background**

USAID's education sector is at a cross-roads. Staffing the sector with individuals who have the qualifications to design and oversee the implementation of what are becoming increasingly complex portfolios has not kept pace with funding for education which has doubled in recent years. A number of large and politically visible education programs are currently under the leadership either of USDH officers who lack background and expertise in education or recently hired USDH education officers with minimal experience in USAID. There are concerns within and outside of USAID about the capability of Agency education staff to effectively manage their education portfolios.

Recognizing the need to do something to address this situation, EGAT/ED, in close collaboration with education staff from regional bureaus, commissioned the development of a professional development strategy for education staff in USAID. The strategy, summarized below and expanded upon in this document, is based on a list of skills and knowledge that all education staff in USAID should have if they are to be effective education portfolio managers. The main portion of the text of this document outlines mechanisms for delivering the skills and knowledge contained in this list. The document closes by considering what will need to be done to institutionalize this strategy. Next steps are recommended for FY 2006.

### **B. Education Skills/Knowledge List**

The strategy for professional development outlined in this document uses as its point of departure a comprehensive list of skills and knowledge that provides staff entering the Agency to work in education with one place they can access to see the full range of skills and knowledge that they will need to be effective in their jobs. Categories I and II, respectively, situate the education officer in a strategic context (within the USG & USAID, as well as internationally). Category III focuses on the technical skills and knowledge needed in order to function in education. Category IV addresses the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies, programs, projects, and activities – from both a generic perspective (common to technical officers in all sectors who are responsible for designing, implementing and evaluation programs and projects) and one that is specific to USAID staff working in education. Category V addresses the leadership and communication skills that all USAID officers require to function in USAID.

The updated list, included as Appendix A to this document, incorporates the excellent suggestions of 69 individuals (26 USAID staff from USAID/W and the field, 2 retired USAID education officers, and 41 USAID Education Partners).

### **C. Strategy for Providing Education Skills/Knowledge**

We proceed from the assumption that no two individuals working in USAID in the education sector enter USAID with the same set of knowledge and skills, and that no two individuals while in USAID will have the exact same experiences. We therefore propose that USAID education staff who are interested in upgrading their skills and knowledge first carry out a self assessment using this skills/knowledge list as a

base. With this self-assessment in hand, they can review the array of mechanisms available to acquire these skills and knowledge and select the mechanism or mechanisms that are most appropriate to their needs.

The discussion of mechanisms for acquiring needed knowledge and skills starts with a review of fundamental principles that we believe should serve as the basis for all structured learning opportunities. They include: (1) both participants and presenters are learners and teachers, as such they are co-responsible for the process (and the success of) the training; (2) encouraging participants to think/question and motivating them to want to learn more about a given topic; (3) providing for those motivated to learn access to where they can obtain further information, as they need it; (4) giving precedence to applying proven adult learning methodologies; (5) to the extent possible, using real life situations that education staff encounter as a basis for designing simulations/interactive exercises to assist participants to apply what they are learning; (6) maximizing opportunities for cross-learning/networking among participants; (7) establishing a learning environment where participants will work hard while at the same time have fun; (8) modeling, through the way the facilitators interact with one another and with the participants and the way the participants with one another, behaviors that should be applied in the participants' work environments..

Based on an extensive review of the strategies that other technical sectors in USAID (Global Health, Democracy and Governance, Economic Growth) have adopted for providing professional development for their staff, we recommend that the education sector start out by focusing on three fundamental areas:

- (1) Developing an orientation program for new education entrants to the Agency: Using as a point of departure best practices and lessons learned in Global Health and Democracy & Governance (both of which have developed extensive programs to orient their new technical staff), and in close consultation with NEPS recently posted to the field, we highly recommend that EGAT/ED, in close consultation with regional education staff, develop an orientation program in education for new education hires.
- (2) Developing technical training courses for education officers who are already working in USAID. This includes: (a) an education overview course targeted at providing staff who have been in the Agency for a minimum of a year with an opportunity to, incorporating relevant up to date state of the art information in relevant areas of education, make better decisions as they design and implement their education portfolios; (b) in-depth courses designed to provide more experienced field staff with opportunities to delve into topics in education in a more comprehensive fashion than they can at an overview course. An education overview course -- piloted between October 2 and 14, 2005 -- provides a number of best practices and lessons learned that will be of use to USAID when it again offers the Education Overview Course.
- (3) Taking advantage of ongoing advances in internet technology, establishing a central website that education staff working in USAID can access to obtain information on lessons learned and best practices in key skills/knowledge areas. This website -- to be built around the Global Learning Portal or another comparable platform -- would provide up-to-date lessons learned and best practices in key skills/knowledge areas. It would also make it possible for Agency education staff to: develop virtual discussion groups around topics of mutual interest, seek out advice on substance and implementation issues from colleagues around the world, and easily access other websites should they want more in-depth information. In addition, this central website would make it possible for inexperienced staff in the field, who lack a mentor in their mission, to access "virtual" mentors who can assist them with issues and problems that arise as they carry out their day to day tasks in the education sector.

Other mechanisms include: (4) providing training to education officers to assist them to be effective managers of their portfolios; (5) providing Agency education staff with information on and access to relevant education courses offered outside of USAID; (6) recommendations for how to generate on-the-job training and mentoring opportunities in one's USAID mission; (7) ready access to USAID non-education courses that all staff working in education will need to take during their career in USAID.

We also recommend the development of a methodology that will make it possible, following training, to assess whether what the participants have learned: (a) is actually being applied on the job, and (b) leads to concrete results. A start was made at defining elements of this methodology in the October Education Overview Pilot. We recommend that a second pilot of the Education Overview Course, ideally to take place in FY 2006, incorporate post-course evaluation and follow-up that focus on the extent to which participants are applying what they learned and, in so doing, will be able to demonstrate concrete results.

#### ***D. Institutionalizing Professional Development for USAID Education Staff***

Moving the initiative described in this document to its next step—converting what is now a proposal into an ongoing professional development program for Agency education staff—will only be possible if the support and commitment that have been demonstrated to date are formalized and sustained over a multi-year time span. Recommended next steps in FY 2006 include: (1) education leadership in USAID (the Education Sector Council with the full support of the incoming EGAT/ED Director) make professional development a priority for all education staff in the Agency; (b) the formation of a Steering Committee on Professional Development charged with overseeing the implementation of this program; (3) identifying and hiring a qualified person whose sole responsibility will be moving the institutionalization agenda forward.

The remainder of FY 2006 would be devoted to:

- Fleshing out a medium and long term plan for institutionalizing the professional development program for education staff.<sup>2</sup>
- Overseeing the design and implementation of a second pilot which will have as its objective settling on a design for the Education Overview Course that can be offered on a regular basis in coming years.
- Initiating the design of an orientation program in education for new hires in education.
- If time and resources allow, piloting an in-depth education course that responds to field demand.

The question on the table is not whether or not to develop and implement a professional development program for Agency education staff. Rather the questions should be: What priority should be given to institutionalizing a professional development program for education staff? What can be done to assure that the activities delivered under this program are relevant to the needs of education staff and are of the highest quality? How quickly should this institutionalization take place? What level of resources (both staffing and financial) should be committed to this effort? If institutionalizing a professional development program is not made a priority, what price will the education sector pay?

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<sup>2</sup> This medium/long term plan would include: (1) a knowledge/skills bank available to all Agency education staff; (2) distance learning advanced degree programs in education that would be appropriate for Agency education staff; (3) fleshing out and putting into place a strategy for providing follow-up for Agency education staff that participate in staff development offerings and to evaluate the impact of these programs on their effectiveness once back on the job.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Over the years education USAID staff have been able to access periodic opportunities to update their knowledge and skills in the sector through regional and central education workshops, an occasional training course offered by a regional bureau, and training opportunities available outside of USAID. However, the opportunity has not arisen until recently to approach the professional development of Agency education staff from a comprehensive perspective.

This opportunity presented itself in 2004 when New Entry Professional (NEP) Wick Powers, while assigned to USAID's central Education Office (EGAT/ED), began facilitating a process designed to accomplish this objective. Working closely with a cadre of USAID education staff in EGAT/ED and the regional Bureaus as well as personnel from USAID's Human Resources (HR) office, Wick and his team were able to assemble a first draft of a set of skills and knowledge that USAID education officers should acquire in order to be effective in their roles in the field. They also developed an outline of an overview training course to begin to address some of these skills and knowledge.

Upon Wick Powers' departure for his assignment to South Africa in March of 2005, and taking advantage of Operating Expense (OE) funding made available by HR to EGAT/ED to bring this process to fruition, EGAT/ED hired Aguirre International/JBS under a task order with GEM. The objective of this task order was to "Facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy for providing necessary skills and knowledge to USAID staff responsible for designing and managing the implementation of education/human resource development programs." In late February, 2005, just before Wick Powers was due to be transferred to South Africa, retired USAID Human Resources Development Officer Marcia Bernbaum was hired to lead this effort. In late May Aguirre Intl./JBS brought in Meghan Donahue, a training specialist with extensive background in education, to assist with the design and implementation of an education overview course which is one of the deliverables under this task order.

The scope of work called for six deliverables:

1. Developing a profile of USAID staff responsible for designing and implementing education/human resource development programs in the field and in USAID/W.
2. An agreed upon set of skills and knowledge required by USAID officers to design and implement education/human resource development programs in USAID.
3. A strategy for developing a comprehensive professional development program that will assist USAID staff to achieve these skills and knowledge.
4. Designing an initial education overview course that will form part of this strategy.
5. Piloting and evaluating the education overview course.
6. Providing input for institutionalizing the proposed professional development program.

## **III. CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document, along with appendices, contains the following:

- Insights on the education staffing situation in USAID (Section IV)
- Relevant insights from technical training program provided by other USAID technical sectors (Section V).
- The updated knowledge/skills list upon which this comprehensive strategy is based (Section VI)
- The proposed comprehensive professional development strategy (Section VII).

- Recommendations for incorporating post-training evaluation and follow on, two elements that are fundamental to the ongoing “health” of a professional development program (Section VIII).
- Reflections on what will be required to institutionalize this strategy (Section IX).
- Closing comments (Section X).

Reflections from the Education Overview Course – which was designed, piloted and evaluated between the months of July and November, 2005 (items 4 and 5 in the deliverables under the Aguirre contracted) - may be found in Appendix C.

#### **IV. INSIGHTS ON USAID EDUCATION STAFF**

Some observations on the recent history of education sector staffing in USAID, available below, yield several insights that have been of great value in designing the professional development strategy for education officers that forms the focus of this document.

##### **A. Agency Education Staffing Situation in 1998**

Ron Bonner, a retired Foreign Service Education Officer with USAID and Jeffrey Harrison-Burns were asked in 1998 by the Africa Bureau to conduct a staffing study designed to identify “Where direct hire education staff (Human Resource Development Officers – HRDOs) are most needed and effective in terms of enabling USAID to achieve results.” Their report, issued in January of 1999, painted a picture of a sector that:

- Had by far the lowest proportion of USDH to non-USDH: in 1998 for every USDH in education there were 7.6 non-USDH. By way of contrast, environment had a ratio of 1 to 5; global health had a ratio 1 of 3.7, agriculture 1 to 2.8 and democracy 1 to 2.5.
- Had a very high percentage of non-education USDH overseeing the implementation of education programs. Of the figure cited above, only half of the education USDH were USDH BS-60 education/human resource development officers. This is particularly significant because it means that a relatively high proportion of USDH who do not have education backgrounds were involved in delicate negotiations, within and outside of their missions, focusing on complex issues in the education sector about which they were likely to have minimal proficiency.
- Operated in an environment where the task of those charged with designing and overseeing the implementation of education programs in the field (be they USDH BS-60, USDH from other sectors, FSNs, or contractors) is becoming increasingly complex.

Expanding on this last point, in Ron’s Bonner’s and Jeffrey Harrison-Burns’ words:<sup>3</sup>

*“Among international education development specialists there is fair agreement that the education sector must be viewed as a system (usually national but sometimes regional). This system is complex with many intra- and inter-sectoral interactions that determine its state and performance. This view*

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<sup>3</sup> Bonner, Cameron and Jeffrey Harrison-Burns. *USAID education program staffing: a review of the data and experience*, AED and MSI, 1999, pgs. 7 and 8.

*suggests that assistance efforts must start from an analysis of these linkages as a basis for identification of sector improvement opportunities. This contrasts with past approaches which judged education gains to be largely the result of improvements in the stream of sector inputs (e.g., schools, books, curriculum, and teachers). Not much attention was accorded to broad economic factors, efficiency and equity of sector investments, or stakeholder interests.*

*There is remarkable agreement among respondents on the list of functions that are best or only performed by a USDH HRDO in education program development and support. Surprisingly, these functions bear only moderate resemblance to those a typical HRDO would have faced prior to 1990. Functions which would not likely to have appeared ten years ago or would have been less prominent are: policy dialogue, negotiation of reforms, sector/trend analysis, represent the USG in high-level meetings, donor coordination and partner collaboration. Other functions which are not new but still seen by most as important to the USDH HRDO role include: technical direction and advice (within and outside the Mission), program design and management, contract management and procurement, and program reporting and accounting.*

*The implications for USAID is that education programs will generally follow this orientation, resulting in larger, more complex efforts that are often national in scope and heavily imbued with social and financial policy reform elements. The staff that design and manage these programs need to be skilled and comfortable functioning in this environment. They will have to be adept at using policy dialogue as a programming intervention, engaging the conversation with an analytic mind and credible voice. Teacher training experts, curriculum development specialists and other trained educators will have the requisite knowledge of education techniques to function well at the sub-sector level – the comfortable domain of past education officers – but may lack the tools and understanding to be effective in extra-sectoral matters. The welding of both knowledge sets will make the effective manager of USAID education programs in the future.*

*The effective USAID education manager will also need to be expert at using the full range of resources available. S/he will need to work in the Strategic Objective Team and with other partners in pursuing program results. Managing for results means the ability to understand sector and program developments from a technical perspective, to know alternate courses of action when problems or opportunities arise, and to be adept and willing to change course as conditions dictate. This posture is quite different from the rigidities log-frame anchored projects imposed on past HRDOs. Today's HRDO's will need to see change as commonplace and expected.*

*Finally, the modern HRDO needs to be a collaborator and consensus builder among partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders (communities, parents), including other donor groups. Collaboration and cooperation have long been buzz words for USAID officers, but in today's development environment they have taken on new meaning with real implications for program performance potentials."*

## **B. Reflections on Agency Education Staffing Situation in 2005**

While it was not possible to obtain a detailed profile of all education staff when this consultancy was carried out, the following update on the Agency education staffing situation in FY 2005 corroborates what Ron Bonner and Jeffrey Harrison-Burns had to say in early FY 1999. If anything, it points out that in FY 2005 the education-staffing situation in USAID has become even more vulnerable:

- Between FY 1999 and FY 2005 the Agency education account increased by over 250% (from \$172 million to \$445 million) and missions with education programs nearly tripled (from 18 to 49). Yet the number of qualified USDH education officers assigned to oversee education programs in field missions increased by only 44% (from 9 to 13). This means that in FY 2005 only 1 in every 4 overseas USAID missions had a USDH education officer backstopping their education portfolios<sup>4</sup>; the remaining 3 out of 4 overseas USAID missions had a USDH with minimal or no education background managing their education portfolios. This is in marked contrast with Global Health that does not permit an overseas mission to initiate a health program unless there is a qualified USDH health officer in charge of the program.
- The vast majority (11 out of 13) of the USDH education officers that are currently posted in overseas missions have come on board since 2000.<sup>5</sup> This means that, where slots are made available in overseas missions for USDH BS-60 personnel, they are more than likely to be filled with an education officer who is relatively new to the Agency.
- Designing and implementing programs in the education sector, if anything, has become more complex since 1999 when the staffing report appeared. Education programs, especially in the ANE region (but also other regions as well), are coming under increased political imperatives that, added to the already increasingly complex situation, make designing and implementing education programs all the more challenging.

The ANE Bureau provides perhaps the starkest example of the increasing vulnerability that the Agency is currently facing *vis a vis* staffing in the education sector. Prior to 9/11 there were 2 ANE missions with education programs. By FY 2005 ANE missions with education programs had grown to 17. These 17 missions collectively are responsible for managing nearly 50% of the Agency's education funding.

Only three of these 17 missions (nearly 1 in 6) currently are staffed with USDH education officers. All three of these officers have been in the Agency less than five years, two of the three less than two years. This means that large and complex education programs, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia -- which in prior years would have been filled only with seasoned USDH education officers with at least 10-15 years experience in the Agency -- either do not have a USDH education officer overseeing their program (the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan) or they have a USDH education officer at the helm (Pakistan and Indonesia) who is relatively new to the Agency.

### **C. Profile of Education Staff who Applied for the Education Overview Course**

When we went out to the field in July with an announcement of the pilot of the Education Overview Course we made a deliberate attempt to attract a wide variety of education staff (USDH, FSN, contractors) from all regions of the world. The following profile emerges of the 35 who registered (a total of 26 were ultimately selected). While not a random sample of education staff, this profile provides some useful insights on what we know to be a very diverse group of individuals who manage education portfolios in USAID:

- Hiring status: 19% were USDH BS-60, 59% were FSNs, and 25% were USPSCs or TAACs.
- Years in USAID: nearly a third (31%) had a year or less in USAID; 20% had between 1.5 and 3 years in USAID; 17% had 4 to 5 years in USAID; and 26% six years or more.

<sup>4</sup> In FY 1999 the comparable figure was 1 in 2.

<sup>5</sup> The remaining two have 14 years in USAID.

- Experience in education prior to entering USAID (with a focus on individuals who have been with USAID working in education for 4 years or less): 41% had no prior experience working in education when they entered USAID; 24% had between 1 and 4 years working in education prior to joining USAID; 35% had 10 years or more experience working in education prior to joining USAID.

## **V. RELEVANT INSIGHTS FROM TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY OTHER USAID TECHNICAL SECTORS**

Over the course of numerous meetings and an extensive review of documents it has been possible to gain familiarity with what three other technical sectors in USAID – Global Health, Democracy & Governance, and Economic Growth – have done and are currently doing to provide professional development opportunities for their technical staff. Each has its own unique context and history that guides the approach it has taken.

- The oldest is Global Health which nearly 20 years ago began offering State of the Art (SOTA) courses for health officers. GH continues offering SOTAs as well as a variety of innovative new learning offerings for Agency health staff.
- Democracy & Governance (DCHA/DG), starting 10 years ago, began offering a training program in conjunction with its annual conference for DG officers and partners. This training program – carried out primarily in-house by USAID/W DG staff – has evolved into an annual one week fundamentals course, primarily targeted at FSNs. This one week course is complemented by a three day in-depth training course that is carried out directly following DG's annual two day conference in Washington.
- Economic Growth (EG), which is now into its fifth year of providing training for EG staff, offers two one week overview courses a year along with six 2 ½ day in-depth courses that follow up on the modules presented in the overview course. A one week refresher course for individuals who have taken the overview course is under development and about to be piloted as is a one-day executive seminar in Economic Growth for senior managers in USAID.

Newer initiatives include:

- DCHA which, in April of 2005, and in conjunction with a recent initiative to create a new backstop that focuses on crisis management, piloted a two week overview course designed to provide field personnel with practical guidelines on how to operate in crisis situations. DCHA is in the process of designing a follow-on pilot of this two week course.
- EGAT/Agriculture and Natural Resources Management which -- in August of 2005 and patterning its incipient professional development program on what EGAT/EG has done -- piloted a one week overview course and four 2 day in-depth courses.

Listed in the text box below are several insights from what the more “experienced” technical sectors (GH, DCHA/DG, and EGAT/EG) have been doing to provide learning opportunities for their staff that we believe are valuable for USAID’s education sector to take into consideration as it prepares to design and deliver a comprehensive staff development program for its staff.

**RELEVANT INSIGHTS FROM TRAINING/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY OTHER USAID TECHNICAL SECTORS**

- Each has high level support. In most cases, a senior official within the sector (usually the office director) has seen the need for developing and institutionalizing a professional development program for staff in the sector. This individual has taken the necessary steps (including allocating program funding and staff time to design and in several cases implement the training) to make this happen.
- Each of has evolved over time, both in terms of fine-tuning the content and delivery mode of training courses, and in terms of the modalities used to provide learning opportunities for technical staff.
- All, regardless of how they started (some were quite didactic at the beginning), have become convinced of the importance of experiential/interactive learning.
- All, in different ways, approach training as a multiple stage process: DG and EG each have an overview course followed by in-depth course. GH -- in addition to its State of the Art (SOTA) courses offered every other year in every region -- hosts annual leadership retreats, and provides one-on-one technical and managerial mentoring for field staff. In the works are traveling SOTAS, offering a university certificate program in the field, and an advanced CTO course focusing on specific needs in the health area.
- GH and DCHA/DG have designed specialized New Entry Orientation programs tailored to their sectors. In the case of both, this orientation is done primarily by staff in the central bureau with participation of regional bureau staff. GH is in the process of updating and expanding its technical training program for new entry staff.
- In terms of use of internet/E-learning, GH is designing stand alone E-learning modules that can be used by officers in the field. EGAT/EG is designing E-learning modules which will be required as a pre-requisite for staff taking the fundamentals course<sup>6</sup>
- All, with varying levels of success, have made attempts to develop core competencies. Some are used as a basis for designing training programs, others less so.
- EGAT/ED and GH are moving toward some type of certification. However, this has not yet happened and it is something that is evolving over time.
- EGAT/EG has incorporated into its new training contract the task of designing pre and post testing for its fundamentals/overview workshop. GH is incorporating a pretest and a posttest in each of its E-learning modules.
- All vary in terms of their approach to designing and delivering training. DCHA/DG continues to design and deliver most of its training using USAID staff in Washington with a contractor responsible for logistical support. GH uses a combination of in-house staff and two contractors who attend to the logistics and substance of its training programs. EGAT/EG channels all of the training design and implementation through one contractor that works closely with EGAT/EG.

<sup>6</sup> The Training Division in HR also requires that USAID personnel complete E-learning modules before they take some of their course offerings. USAID staff who go to the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville to take the Emerging Leaders program, for example, are required to take two E-learning modules located on the OPM Skills Soft platform: (1) Achieving success with the help of a mentor; and (2) What is emotional intelligence?

- For DCHA/DG, staff development (which it calls “cadre development”) is so important that --alongside “field support” and “technical leadership” -- it figures in as one of the office’s three overarching priorities. These priorities become, as the officer director observed in a recent interview, the “mantra” that guides the day to day activities of the staff in his office.
- Finally, EGAT/EG has a retired Foreign Service officer who works closely with the contractor and serves as liaison with relevant offices in USAID. This person also plays a major role in hiring new entry staff. GH has one staff member, who is dedicated full-time to designing and overseeing the implementation of staff development programs; a second staff member dedicates 70% of her time to assisting GH staff to integrate professional development into their career planning. Both are contactors who work in the GH office.

## VI. EDUCATION SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE LIST

Appendix A of this document contains an education skills/knowledge list which reflects the comments of 69 individuals (26 from within USAID, 2 retired USAID HRDOs, and 41 USAID Education Partners). This list, which was formally approved by EGAT/ED Director John Grayzell on July 15, 2005, incorporates a wide array of excellent suggestions that have come out of this process.

This skills/knowledge list has been drafted to provide staff entering the Agency to work in education with one place they can access to see the full range of skills and knowledge that USAID believes they will need to operate effectively in their jobs. Categories I and II, respectively, situate the education officer in a strategic context (within the USG, USAID, and internationally). Category III focuses on the technical skills and knowledge that education staff need in order to effectively function in the education sector. Category IV focuses on what education officers must do in order to design, implement and evaluate strategies, programs, projects, and activities – from both a generic perspective<sup>7</sup> and one specific to USAID staff working in education. Category V addresses the generic leadership and communication skills that all USAID officers require to function effectively in USAID.

A summary of the education skills/knowledge list may be found in the text box below<sup>8</sup>:

**SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY USAID STAFF WORKING IN EDUCATION  
AS THEY RELATE TO THE BROADER DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

- I. **U.S. Government Foreign Policy and Initiatives: How they impact on USAID in general and programming in the education sector in particular.**
  1. Can describe the role that U.S foreign policy actors play in relationship to education overseas in general/USAID education programs in particular.
  2. Can situate education within the USAID structure.
  3. Can describe USAID education program in country of assignment within the context of key USG initiatives.

<sup>7</sup> Common to technical officers in all sectors who are responsible for designing, implementing and evaluation programs and projects

<sup>8</sup> This list represents views in May, 2005 of the skills and knowledge required by USAID staff working in education. Giving changing requirements within USAID along with challenges in international educational development, the ideal would be to periodically update this list.

4. Can describe how relevant education-related Presidential and Agency Initiatives apply to USAID education program in country of assignment.
- II. International actors: *Understanding their relationship to USAID activities in education/human resources development***
1. Can summarize how USAID's global partners as well partner initiatives impact USAID's activities in education/human resources development.
  2. Can describe how the new drivers and trends in economic and social development relate to activities carried out by USAID in education/human resources development.
- III. Technical Knowledge and Skills: *Basis for areas of involvement in education/human resources development***
1. Can summarize and critique USAID's new Education Strategy and indicate how it relates to the USAID program in assigned country.
  2. Understands broad sectoral issues in education, best practices with regards to these sectoral issues, and knows where to go to access further technical information as needed.
    - A. Sector reform:
    - B. Basic education
    - C. Youth and workforce development:
    - D. Higher education
    - E. Participant training
    - F. Education economics
    - G. Education finance
    - H. Donor coordination
    - I. Gender integration
    - J. Applications of information and communication technology
    - K. Special issues
    - L. Historical context
  3. Can effectively incorporate best practices in education/human resources development in policy and other dialogue with other donors, high level government (including Ministry of Education) officials, and representatives from host country private sectors (NGOs, private enterprise).
  4. Can clearly articulate to USAID staff in other technical sectors (e.g. health and population, economic growth, democracy/crisis mitigation) linkages between their sectors and education/human resources development.
- IV. Technical leadership: *What we do and how we do it***
1. Participates, in collaboration with host country actors and other donors, in the design and implementation of an education strategic assessment for country of assignment.
  2. Can effectively develop an education strategy within the context of the overall USAID mission strategy and host country priorities.
  3. Can effectively oversee the implementation of the USAID mission's education program.
  4. Knows how to access and use the key USAID Education Field Support Instruments in designing and implementing programs in USAID's strategic areas of emphasis.
  5. Can effectively track the performance of the USAID mission education program and make appropriate use of data for decision making.
  6. Can prepare required USAID documentation.
  7. Effectively represents USAID at presentations and meetings.
- V. Teamwork and Leadership: *How do I relate to and work with others***
1. Uses effective teamwork and interpersonal skills.
  2. Is an effective leader and supervisor.
  3. Maintains a constant focus on customers.
  4. Effectively manages USAID's human resources (for USDH staff only).
  5. Is able to effectively negotiate and use diplomacy skills.
  6. Effectively communicates at all levels.

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## VII. COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING USAID EDUCATION STAFF WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THEY REQUIRE TO PERFORM EFFECTIVELY IN THE FIELD

### A. *Vision*

The proposal for the comprehensive professional development program for USAID education staff that forms the focus of this section takes advantage of a wide variety of mechanisms for acquiring the skills and knowledge listed above. These mechanisms include: (1) new entry orientation tailored to the needs of incoming education officers, (2) an education overview course focused on assisting USAID staff to update their technical skills; (3) opportunities (either in modularized form or in longer courses) for USAID education staff to address common problems they are experiencing in managing their portfolios, (4) demand-driven in-depth courses that will cover in more detail the themes addressed in the education skills & knowledge list, (5) access to technical training opportunities outside of USAID, (6) regional and central education workshops, (7) maximizing information and communications technology for E-learning, cross-learning, keeping people up to date on the latest developments in the field; (8) on-the-job training; (9) existing USAID training programs that are made available for officers in all sectors. Given the varied nature of the items on the skills/knowledge list, some learning mechanisms will be specific to the education sector while others will be broader to encompass a number of basic skills and knowledge (for example: Cognizant Technical Officer, Program and Project Management, Evaluation, Leadership) that all USAID staff should acquire.

To avoid “reinventing the wheel”, we have drawn on the lessons learned/best practices derived from professional development programs provided by other technical offices (EG, DG, GH, DCHA); education-specific training courses offered in recent years (Africa Bureau 2000; ANE Bureau, 2004) that have been designed specifically for education officers; as well as regional and central workshops geared for education staff.

Building on the above, and taking a long-term “visionary” approach, we envision a comprehensive professional development program for USAID education officers that, over time:

- Is dynamic and demand driven, subject to modification as there are: (1) changes in the global context; (2) changes in USAID priorities/ways of doing work; (3) changes in the composition/needs of the USAID education workforce.
- As appropriate, incorporates participants from outside of USAID. Perhaps with the exception of the education overview course and new entry orientation, we see USAID (over time and as appropriate) opening course offerings so that host country counterparts, partners, other donors can attend.
- Maximizes appropriate use of internet and video-conferencing technology. These two fields are developing at such a rapid rate, that we believe USAID would be remiss not to keep current with advances internet/video-conferencing technology and the opportunities that these advances provide for creative individual and group learning, cross-learning, mentoring, evaluation and follow-up.

**B. Guiding Principles for any Training for Education Officers Provided by or through USAID**

Having an agreed-upon set of principles for guiding the delivery of a learning event is intrinsic to the design of any good training program.

Listed in the text box below are the principles that we believe should be the foundation of any training/learning experiences that USAID designs to assist its education staff to acquire needed skills and knowledge in education.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ADULT LEARNING THROUGH TRAINING**

1. We are all learners; we are all teachers and as such are co-responsible for the training process and its success.
2. A primary focus is encouraging participants to think/question and motivating them to want to learn more about a given topic. In that context participants will not be expected to leave a training/learning experience as "experts" in a given discipline; rather they should leave with a basic set of skills and knowledge, motivated to learn more, and knowing where to go to obtain further information as they need it.
3. Give precedence to applying lessons learned from adult learning: start from the participant's own knowledge/experience to introduce new knowledge/skills; conduct interactive exercise(s) designed to provide an individual with the opportunity to apply the new knowledge/skill and in so doing integrate this within his/her personal construct.
4. An emphasis, where possible, on the application of new knowledge/skills as opposed to just focusing on learning what they are.
5. To the extent possible, use real life situations that education staffs encounter as a basis for designing simulations/interactive exercises to assist participants to apply what they are learning. The majority of these simulations/interactive exercises will be centered on a problem that participants will be asked to solve.
6. Participants will learn from each other by maximizing opportunities for cross-learning/networking.
7. While participants will be asked to work hard, every effort will be made to create a learning environment where participants will have fun.
8. How the facilitators interact with one another and with the participants and how the participants interact with one another will serve as a model for the participants to use in their different working environments.

**C. Introducing the Comprehensive Training Strategy**

It is tempting, in developing a comprehensive strategy of this nature, to adopt a cookie cutter approach: e.g. insist that anyone who enters USAID take X training courses over his/her career in Y order. However, to adopt an approach of this nature assumes that everyone who comes into the Agency enters with the same set of skills and knowledge. This is clearly not the case.

The proposed approach proceeds from two assumptions: (1) individuals who work in education enter the Agency with a variety of skills and knowledge sets and that no two are the same; (2) once in the Agency (and due in large part to on-the-job and mentoring opportunities that spontaneously arise) individuals will acquire needed skills and knowledge at different paces and in different ways.

Accordingly, it is recommended that USAID staff working in education periodically set time aside to assess their skills and knowledge against those included in the updated knowledge/skills list (or any future iterations). Based on the result of that self-assessment<sup>9</sup> they can decide where their learning needs lie and what action(s) they need to take to fill in gaps in skills and knowledge.

To assist USAID education staff in this process, we have used the updated skills/knowledge list to develop a matrix which is attached to this document as Appendix B. The left vertical column of the matrix lists the skills and knowledge by category and sub-category. Aligned horizontally across the matrix are the various ways of acquiring needed skills and knowledge. They include: (1) new entry orientation for education officers; (2) an education overview course; (3) in-depth training courses in education (both offered by USAID as well as outside the Agency); (4) education portfolio management; (5) using internet technology for knowledge acquisition and learning in education; (6) on-the-job training/mentoring; and (7) non-education training courses provided by USAID.

As can be seen by the matrix (Appendix B), some columns are filled in, others are not filled in, and some are filled in as "tentative" with more information required.

- In the case of New Entry Orientation for education officers, it is possible to identify topics from the skills/knowledge list that might be addressed in that orientation. However, an exact determination of specific topics to be addressed cannot be made until this program is designed.
- Similarly, it is premature to be specific on exactly what can be done through internet and E-learning as this also will require a more in-depth review of the state of the art in the sector, along with costing out the options to see what USAID is willing/able to pay. Similarly, skills and knowledge to be acquired on-the-job and through mentoring will vary greatly from individual to individual and assignment to assignment.
- By way of contrast, for the Education Overview Course that was piloted between October 2 and 14, 2003, a USAID working group -- composed of representatives from EGAT/ED, the regional bureaus and HR -- identified a set topics from the education knowledge/skills list that were used as the basis for designing the pilot.

#### ***D. Proposed Professional Development Mechanisms***

Under the process we envision, two types of mechanisms would be "givens": (1) all new Agency staff (NEPS, IDIs, contractors) working in education would be required while assigned to USAID/W to go through a special New Entry Orientation that focuses on education; (2) all Agency personnel working in

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<sup>9</sup> A self-assessment form was designed and piloted as part of the pilot of the Education Overview Course carried out between October 2 and 14, 2005. All participants were asked to fill in the self-assessment form prior to the course. At the end of the course 6 participants volunteered to again fill in the self-assessment form. An analysis of data from this exercise suggested that this form, or a variation thereof, could serve as a useful tool for pre- and post-course assessment.

education in the field would be strongly encouraged, within their first three years in USAID, to take the Education Overview Course.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, priority would be given to creating a centralized skills/knowledge “bank” on education (see text box in section D.6. below which describes some of the services this “bank” might provide).

Opportunities for individualized learning would be accessed on an as-needed basis. They include: E-learning, on-the-job training and mentoring, as well as other structured courses (in-depth education courses offered both within and outside USAID focusing on specific topics of interest; non-education USAID courses such as CTO training, PAL training, leadership training).

Finally, we envision that – to the maximum extent possible – USAID education staff will continue to attend USAID-sponsored central and regional education conferences and workshops as well as other education conference/workshop opportunities as they arise. These offer unique opportunities for: networking and cross-learning, being exposed to cutting edge developments in the field, as well as addressing specific skills and knowledge included in the skills/knowledge list as they relate to specific regional/sub-regional contexts.

USAID’s Global Health Bureau annually posts a calendar of training/information-sharing events, within and outside of USAID, that are relevant for health staff. We recommend that EGAT/ED do the same for USAID education staff.

We also recommend that the education sector consider adopting an approach to staff training that has been instituted by the Global Health Bureau. All of GH’s partners have built into their agreements with USAID a provision that they stand ready, as needed, to provide technical expertise for designing and implementing GH training/learning events. Given that these partners collectively represent an important reservoir of technical knowledge in the health sector, it is quite appropriate that they be tapped upon to share the technical expertise that they can readily identify and make available to support new staff training/learning events as they are designed.

## **1. New Entry Orientation for Education Officers**

- *Using what the Global Health Bureau and the DCHA/Democracy & Governance office are doing as a point of departure, and in consultation with education NEPs who have recently gone to the field, design a New Entry Orientation program for education officers that would take place while they are assigned to USAID/Washington.*

In the opinion of the drafters of this document, designing and initiating a new entry orientation program geared toward education NEPS and IDIs (to take place following general new entry orientation offered by HR) is a must. It should be given high priority as one of the first tasks to be undertaken should the Agency decide to develop and institutionalize a professional development program for education staff. Rotations during their USAID/W stay, which education NEPs and IDI’s participate in, are an excellent way of acquiring several elements of the education skills/knowledge list. However, they are not sufficient

<sup>10</sup> It is possible that, in the future, the Agency may want to make this a requirement. We, however, recommend against doing that until the course has been piloted, adjusted as necessary and has established a stand-alone reputation as a course worth attending.

There is something to be said for the approach that DCHA/DG took four years ago to institute its annual training program for NEPs and IDIs entering the agency as DG officers. In the words of DCH/DG Director, Gerald Hyman who was responsible for initiating this program when he was in charge of strategic planning: *“This is the training we take most seriously. This is where we say who we are as a cadre. This is our language. This our common experience. If you’re the DG officer in Ghana and want to talk to the mission officer in the Congo here is the language we want you to talk. Accordingly we have invested a lot of time and effort into designing our orientation program for new DG officers”*

In order to design a New Entry Orientation program for education officers, we suggest that EGAT/ED, in close collaboration with education staff from the regional bureaus, adopt a two-prong strategy: (1) study in more depth what DG and GH have done to design and institute new entry orientation programs for their staffs, with a focus on best practices/lessons learned, (2) consult with education NEPS and IDIs who have passed through USAID/W during the last couple of years to find out (in hindsight) what they would have wanted had they had the opportunity to go through a New Entry Orientation program for education officers before going out to their first field assignment.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF DCHA/DG'S AND GH'S NEW ENTRY ORIENTATION PROGRAMS**

DCHA/DG: Offered once a year, and coinciding with the entry of IDIs and NEPs to the Agency, this training involves rotations to each of DG's five SO teams. In addition, each of DCHA/DG's five SO teams leads a series of sessions to orient new hire DG personnel to information they believe they need that is relevant to their SO. The sessions last 2-3 hours each and include a combination of lecture and discussion groups, with some readings. The Rule of Law SO team provides 8 two to three hour sessions to DG new hires; the Elections SO team 5 sessions; the Strategy SO team 8 sessions, the Civil Society SO team 6 sessions; and the Governance SO team 7 sessions.

GH: The Global Health Bureau's New Entry Orientation includes a welcome book (which provides information on logistics of navigating the Agency, background on GH, a section on professional development, a checklist of recommended training the first 6 months and the first year). New entrants also receive an on-line calendar listing training opportunities, which they can tap into at any point – be it through the Agency, through Cooperating Partners, as well as other health sector related training offered outside of USAID. During a week-long orientation: SO team leaders and GH office directors orient new Agency staff on their roles and the strategies for each SO. Four brown-bag lunch events precede the week-long orientation. GH is in the process of updating and expanding their new entry orientation program for health officers.

What precisely will be contained in a new entry orientation program tailored to the needs of new education staff will depend on the time that EGAT/ED and regional bureau education staff are able to carve out to design and implement the program (the strategy being used by GH and DCHA/DG).

## 2. Education Overview Course

- *Building on the session designs, materials, best practices and lessons learned from the pilot of the Education Overview Course, carried out between October 2 and 14, 2005, undertake another pilot before introducing the Education Overview Course as a standard course offering.*
- *A ten day course is optimal if the objective is to introduce participants to a wide array of topics relevant to carrying out their jobs in such a way that they are encouraged to think, question, and find opportunities to apply what they are learning to their daily work when they return to post.*
- *A strength of the Education Overview Pilot was the rich diversity of education staff that attended. Future offerings of the Education Overview Course should capitalize on this rich diversity.*

One of the deliverables under the GEM contract was to design, deliver, and evaluate a pilot of an education overview course. The pilot – which took place in Hagerstown, Maryland between October 2 and 13, 2005 – was attended by 26 participants from all geographic regions and representing the various education staffing categories<sup>11</sup>. The topics addressed at the Education Overview Pilot were selected by USAID/W members of the TEST Advisory Group from the list of education skills and knowledge approved in mid July 2005. Other key factors that guided the design of the pilot included: (1) a list of overall course results; (2) the guiding principles for adult learning through training listed in Section VII.B. above; (3) an understanding that session presenters would, at a minimum, attend the session preceding the one he/she was responsible for delivering and that the presenter would stay on after the session (ideally until the next day) to provide time for course participants to interact one on one with session presenters. The course design also included a cross-cutting education strategy exercise designed to assist participants to apply the lessons learned and best practices they had been exposed to during the pilot. Participants were also asked, prior to attending the course, to meet with colleagues and superiors in their missions to prepare a list of burning issues that they would like to see addressed at the course.

Given that this was the first time this course was being held, a great deal of effort went into evaluating the course and using feedback from the evaluations to make adjustments to the course as it evolved. In addition to daily evaluations filled out by USAID/W members of the Advisory Group, an evaluation committee composed of 10 course participants assumed responsibility for designing, administering to all course participants, and reporting on: (1) daily evaluations, (2) a mid-term evaluation conducted at the end of the first week and (3) a final evaluation that began the day before the course ended and which took up the last morning of the course.

Participants were also asked at the end of the course to assess what they might apply from the course upon return to mission and whether the issues they had brought with them to the course were

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<sup>11</sup> In terms of geographic distribution: 9 participants were from Africa field missions; 6 from ANE field missions; 5 from E&E, 3 from LAC, and 4 from USAID/W. Seven were USDH, 6 were U.S. contractors, and 13 were FSNs. Seven of the course participants (3 from USAID/W and 4 from the field) were TEST Advisory Group members. Eight USAID/W TEST Advisory Group members attended part-time as observers.

satisfactorily addressed at the course. In addition, they were asked on a voluntary basis to repeat the self-assessment of education knowledge skills that they filled in prior to the course.

Among the key conclusions from the pilot: (1) 10 days seemed to be an appropriate length; (2) with a few exceptions the topics selected for the pilot were also appropriate; (3) the rich diversity of participants was a real plus, especially where session presenters capitalized on this diversity in designing their presentations; (4) most participants left with several new insights that they planned to apply upon returning to their posts; (5) the sessions that were best received by participants were those that made effective use of adult learning methodologies; (6) the rich lessons learned from the pilot (both in terms of what went right and what needs to be fine-tuned/improved) should be used as a base for designing and conducting another pilot before introducing this as a standard course offering.

### **3. Effective Education Portfolio Management**

- *Consider designing a training program to assist education staff to address the challenges and problems they encounter in implementing their portfolios; this program would complement the more generic training that they receive under the CTO, PAL, and PPM courses.*
- *GH has undertaken several initiatives to assist HPN officers with the challenges of portfolio management in their sector which are worth reviewing.*

During the Education Overview Pilot several participants indicated that, in addition to receiving training that provides up to date technical knowledge and information on USAID priorities in education, they needed guidance on how to more effectively manage challenges that arise in the course of implementing their education portfolios. While the approach(es) would need to be worked out, several ongoing GH initiatives may serve as useful sources of guidance/inspiration.

One initiative of the Global Health Bureau, called the “CTO/TA Performance Support System”, has involved developing short (1/2-2 day) “how to” modules that address the most frequent and pressing problems that GH staff encounter on the job. To date four modules have been developed and piloted: (1) guiding CTO/TA’s in managing multiple requests for information skillfully and efficiently; (2) assisting CTO/TA’s to manage their CA’s without micro-managing them; (3) learning how to speak concisely to different audiences about one’s project, its objectives, status and their results; (4) guidelines for how to evaluate budget proposals. Under development are two additional modules: (5) helping CTO/TAs to establish effective relationships with CAs to which they have just been assigned; (6) preparing CTO/TAs for the greater detail and cycles of negotiation and revision that characterize developing effective work plans.

Of particular interest is the methodology used by GH to develop and implement these modules. One or more “exemplars” (USAID health personnel who are seen to operate particularly effectively) are identified for portfolio management topics that GH staff consider to be problematic. Working closely with the exemplar(s), the Population Leadership Program (GH’s contractor) develops one or more case studies in which the problem is laid out and the exemplar’s approach to resolving the problem is described. Module delivery consists of presenting the problems to participants and having participants in facilitated groups (with an Exemplar present as a resource) work through how they would address problems

presented in the case. Once the group arrives at its strategy for addressing the problem, they are introduced to how the exemplar actually addressed the problem posed in the case.

Complementary to these “how to” modules are two GH initiatives designed to provide one on one assistance to GH staff in health portfolio management. One, managed by the Population Leadership Program, makes available a professionally trained “coach” to HPN officers seeking assistance (via e-mail, telephone conversations) in solving a given problem or set of problems. More recently GH named two staff members (one man and one woman) who volunteered to serve as technical mentors. Selected by their peers for their recognized technical expertise and leadership, these mentors are available to GH staff in USAID/W and the field who have technical issues/challenges for which they would like advice.

#### **4. In-Depth Training in Education**

- *Design/deliver 3-5 day in-depth courses on topics that respond to field demand.*
- *Over time, and as appropriate, open in-depth courses to relevant participants from outside of USAID.*
- *Prepare and maintain an updated inventory of education courses offered outside of the Agency that USAID education staff can attend.*

We have two proposals for in-depth training: (1) courses designed and delivered by USAID that last between 3 and 5 days that have as their principal objective providing more in-depth treatment of topics addressed in the overview course (as well as others not included in the course); (2) maintain an updated listing of training opportunities available outside of the Agency (World Bank, universities, UNICEF, etc.)

With regard to item (1), in-depth training sponsored by USAID, we suggest as a cost savings measure that priority be given to attaching these to another education event (bi-annual EGAT/ED workshop, bi-annual regional education conferences, fundamentals/overview course). While some will be relevant for worldwide USAID attendance; others might best be tailored for regional interests/needs and best delivered at a regional level.

While we have made an attempt to identify several topics for in-depth courses below, we believe that to be relevant this endeavor should be demand driven. We recommend that at the beginning of every year EGAT/ED – in close consultation with education staff in regional Bureaus and field missions -- identify priority topics and then design the in-depth training course(s) to be offered that year around the specific interests of course participants. These in-depth courses would follow the agreed upon principals for course design and delivery listed in Section VII.B. above.

While initially the pool of participants may be exclusively from USAID, we encourage giving consideration over time (and where appropriate) to inviting a wider range of individuals as participants: host country counterparts; education partners (grantees, contractors, cooperative agreements); other donors.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For some in-depth course topics, for example, sector reform (which is done in close collaboration with other donors, partners, host country counterparts) including individuals from outside of the Agency would only serve to strengthen the quality of course delivery

A list of illustrative topics for 3 – 5 day in-depth training courses (with the understanding that the specific topics and sequencing of the training will respond to field demand) follow:

**POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES**

- Designing and implementing education programs in fragile states
- Maximizing USAID's role as a partner in sector reform
- Designing a workforce strategy
- Supporting education for out of school youth and adults
- HIV/AIDS and education: role of education in controlling HIV/AIDS, impact of HIV/AIDS on education sectors.
- Considerations for designing appropriate education programs for special populations.
- Integrating gender into education
- Improving learning at the classroom level: role of parents, teachers, communities.
- Economics of education and educational reform.
- Decentralization, finance and community participation in education
- Working cross-sectorally as an education officer in a USAID field mission.

**5. Regional/Central Education Workshops**

- *Regional and central education workshops offer many benefits: opportunities to introduce new cutting edge approaches to education; opportunities for cross-learning and networking; in the case of regional workshops the opportunity to explore topics within a regional/sub-regional context.*
- *GH's approach to designing and implementing its State of the Art Courses offer an interesting approach to applying adult learning methodologies in a regional workshop setting.*

EGAT/ED offers education workshops in Washington every two years. These workshops receive broad attendance from USAID staff in the field, USAID staff in Washington, USAID education partners, host country counterparts, and other donors. As was the case with the EGAT/ED workshop that took place in Washington D.C. from August 8-12, 2005, they provide an opportunity to share cutting edge information/developments in the sector as well as updates on new initiatives. They also provide valuable opportunities for networking.

Education workshops that take place in the field, sponsored by regional Bureaus, provide a special opportunity for sharing and problem solving at a regional level, interpreting the applicability of Presidential and USAID/W initiatives to the field, cross-learning and networking

Workshops have tended to vary in the methodology they have used for workshop delivery – from formats that focus on stand up presentation with minimal opportunities for interactive exercises to formats that are highly interactive.

An interesting model of a regional workshop format that is designed around principles of adult learning<sup>13</sup> is GH's regional State of the Art (SOTA) courses. As is the case with regional education workshops carried out to date, each regional SOTA is designed with a dual objective: (1) address what field missions would like to know, and (2) what the regional bureau sponsoring the SOTA believes field missions need to be aware of.

Primary responsibility for designing and implementing each SOTA rests with USAID/W health staff. In order to assure quality control and to enhance effective application of adult learning methodologies, responsibility for logistics and technical support rests with two contractors. Through an archive of SOTAs carried out in recent years that the contractors maintain on a website<sup>14</sup> it is possible to obtain: (1) background on how Open Space technology is supposed to work, (2) a Mini-Universities users guide, (3) guidelines for preparing an abstract for a presentation to be given at a SOTA; (4) guidelines for preparing poster sessions; (5) guidance on how to prepare a presentation that focuses on results.<sup>15</sup> In addition, GH has prepared a SOTA best-practices manual.<sup>16</sup>

## 6. Internet and E-learning in Education

- *Harvest/filter the vast array of opportunities for learning through the internet that are becoming available daily to develop an affordable strategy that will permit USAID to take advantage of these opportunities for learning in education.*
- *Consider establishing a central website devoted to professional development for USAID education staff.*
- *Explore the possibility of tapping into universities and other organizations that offer distance learning opportunities leading to advanced degrees/certificates in areas of interest in education.*

The internet, and through it the new mechanisms for learning/cross-learning that are emerging almost daily, provide a dizzying array of conduits for staff learning in an Agency such as USAID where staff are assigned to positions in countries around the world. The challenge here is to "harvest" or "filter" this vast array of opportunities into a set of options that: (a) "work" (e.g. are appropriate and user friendly), and (b) are cost effective. To ignore the multiple options for learning becoming available through the internet would be folly.

In our search through the vast array of possibilities we came upon a variety of internet learning opportunities. They include:

<sup>13</sup> "Mini-universities" – one hour sessions run concurrently in which attendees can opt to pick and choose the sessions they want to attend – are offered by field mission HPN officers; prior to attending the SOTA individuals offering sessions receive coaching at a distance in how to present for results. Under "open space" participants are offered blocked periods of times where they can organize informal gatherings to discuss topics of interest.

<sup>14</sup> [www.phnsota.com](http://www.phnsota.com)

<sup>15</sup> For an example go to <http://www.phnsota.com/lac2005/guidelines.html>

<sup>16</sup> The 13-page document is, entitled: "SOTA best practices: Recommendations for PHN Sector State-of-the-Art planners, implementers, presenters and participants"

- (1) E-learning modules that can be taken as pre-cursors (requirements) for taking certain education courses (as EGAT/EG is planning to do);
- (2) Stand-alone E-learning modules (USAID-specific or available outside of USAID) that are available to any USAID officer at any time (GH is currently developing E-learning modules specifically targeted for USAID health officers in the field);<sup>17</sup>
- (3) Establishing agreements with one or more universities/entities that provide distance learning programs leading to graduate degrees or certificates in areas of interest to USAID related to education (GH is in the process exploring distance learning opportunities leading to graduate degrees/credits in areas of interest in health).
- (4) Conducting distance education courses using the internet/video-conferencing as an interactive medium (as the World Bank is doing):
- (5) Establishing on the internet an "information bank (for each education related skills/knowledge area that is included in the education officers skills/knowledge list) that includes summaries of best practices and lessons learned, plus additional readings that USAID officers can access in order to acquire specific skills and knowledge as needed;
- (6) Mechanisms that will permit USAID officers in the field to easily problem solve/learn from one another based on hands-on experience;
- (7) Mechanisms for post course evaluation and follow-up.

In this regard, the Global Learning Portal, sponsored by EGAT/ED, holds promise as a platform that can be used as a conduit to accomplish many of the activities described above.

The matrix, included as Appendix B to this document, lists areas where we believe internet and E-learning might be appropriate for acquiring/strengthening specific education-related skills and knowledge. However, we highly encourage EGAT/ED to develop a more detailed strategy that explores the feasibility along with cost-options for each intervention proposed. Once a decision is made (and the level of resources the Agency is willing to invest in this option has been determined) it will be possible to develop and test several of the options on a pilot basis.

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<sup>17</sup> EGAT/ED is currently supporting an initiative of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics to develop on line for course practitioners. This initiative has as its principal objective building capacity to access data and use these data for decision making. Once developed and on line, this course could be valuable for USAID education staff as well.

**ENVISIONING A CENTRAL EDUCATION SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE BANK ACCESSIBLE TO ALL EDUCATION STAFF IN USAID**

Given the pace of advances in internet technology it is not difficult to envision a time in the near future when USAID education and other staff wanting to know more about a given topic related to the education skills/knowledge list can access a website or internet platform that will enable them to, among others:

- Obtain, in summary form, lessons learned and best practices in all of the skills/knowledge areas directly relating to education that are on the education skills/knowledge list.
- Have access to what is considered key reading related to the skills/knowledge areas.
- Access links to references that interested readers can go to in order to obtain more in depth information on a given topic of interest.
- Be linked with platforms outside of USAID that have similar objectives.
- Connect with others in the field that have similar interests in order to share experiences, problem solve, obtain access to expertise that can help them address a given issue at hand.
- Be directly connected to experts in the field who are able, at a distance, to provide advice on specific issues/topics.
- Develop, via internet, a mentor relationship with someone with extensive education experience (preferably related to USAID) who can be accessed, as needed, for guidance and to help with problem solving.
- Obtain access to documentary type videos that permit a visual view of exemplary programs.
- Identify training/learning opportunities available within and outside of the Agency.

**7. On-the-job Training/Mentoring for Education Staff**

- *Negotiate with your supervisor to build staff development into your work plan.*
- *Seek opportunities, in your day to day work, to turn job challenges into opportunities for on-the-job learning.*
- *Where the opportunity exists, identify one or more individuals within your mission (ideally a person with education experience) who can serve as a mentor.*
- *Where the opportunity does not exist, make a conscious effort to identify one or more individuals, either within or outside of the Agency, who can serve as mentors. Where possible, offer to be a mentor yourself.*

For those of us who joined the Agency in the 1960s and 1970s (before e-mail and before internet) on-the-job training and mentoring was the way we acquired the skills and knowledge that we needed to perform effectively as education officers. Many of us were fortunate enough in our early years, to be assigned to a USAID mission where we reported to a more senior USDH education officer who took the time out to train us, mentor us, and to lead by example.

While this type of guided on-the-job training still is available in USAID, it can only happen today in a limited number of overseas posts given that: (a) there are currently very few overseas posts in USAID that

have two USDH education officers<sup>18</sup> and (b) until NEPS and IDIs gain more experience and move up into positions of higher seniority, there are relatively few highly experienced USDH education officers in the field.

Unless an education staff member in a mission is lucky enough to have a supervisor who takes on-the-job training and mentoring seriously (and in so doing, creates an environment that supports learning and mentoring) the onus will be on the staff member to take the initiative to make sure that this happens.

Steps that an education staff member can take include:

- Bringing to the attention of his/her supervisor the approved list of education skills and knowledge that all USAID education officers should have; undergo (perhaps even with the involvement of the supervisor) a self-assessment to see where he/she stands in terms of having acquired the skills/knowledge on this list.<sup>19</sup> With the approval and support of the supervisor, build in one or more objectives into his/her annual work plan that outline a realistic set of expectations for achieving needed skills and knowledge.
- Seeking, within his/her other work objectives, interesting challenges or “stretch” assignments that will permit this individual to consciously convert what he/she is doing into an on-the-job learning experience.
- Seeking, either within the USAID mission, or outside of the mission<sup>20</sup>, one of more mentors to both serve as role models and that can be available to assist the staff member when he/she needs advice.

## 8. Other (Non-education) USAID Training

- *A wide array of training courses in project and program management as well as leadership and communication skills (addressing most of the skills/knowledge listed in Categories IV and V of the skills/knowledge list) are available through USAID's Training Division.*
- *There are also opportunities for USAID training in other areas, for example: program evaluation, working in a crisis environments, etc.*
- *Finally all USAID staff now have access to Skills Soft, an OPM platform that contains 2,000 E-learning courses-- in such areas as management, visioning, supervision, computer knowledge—that staff can take on their own time from their offices or at home.*

<sup>18</sup> A number don't even have one USDH education officer. Instead education staff are supervised by a USDH who is a health officer, a democracy/governance officer, or an economist.

<sup>19</sup> The supervisor, to be effective in his/her support role, may also want to fill in this list.

<sup>20</sup> Mentors can include: (1) one's supervisor (who may or may not have education background); (2) other staff in the mission not in education who the staff person admires and would like to learn from; (3) a contractor or partner with extensive experience in the education sector from whom the individual believe s/he has a lot to learn; (4) one or more individuals at a distance (an education staff person in USAID/W or another field mission, a retired USAID education officer) that the individual admires and who is willing to set aside the time necessary to be an effective mentor.

Categories I through III of the education skills/knowledge list focus exclusively on those skills and knowledge that USAID education staff need to know in order to operate effectively in education. Categories IV and V of the education skill/knowledge list also include a set of generic skills that education staff working in USAID need to possess in order to be effective in the Agency. USAID's Training Division, located within the USAID's Office of Human Resources, offers a wide array of training opportunities that open to all USAID officers that make it possible for USAID staff, as needed, for acquire these sets of knowledge and skills. Other USAID offices also provide training opportunities that USAID education staff may want to take advantage of.

- The one week PAL (Planning, Achieving, and Learning) course, two one week CTO (Cognizant Technical Officer) courses which are required for all CTOs; a two week Program Project Management (PPM) course that is in the process of being piloted and addresses in more depth the skills and knowledge listed in Category IV on the education officer knowledge/skills list (*Technical Leadership: what we do and how we do it*)
- The Supervision Skills, Emerging Leader, Leadership Development, and Senior Executive Seminar courses address the skills and knowledge listed in Category V (*Teamwork and Communications*)
- In addition, an array of some 2,000 E-learning courses that address a wide variety of knowledge and skills in the leadership, communications, computer areas and others are available through USAID's Skill Soft platform.
- Finally, there are other more specialized training courses (evaluation, financial management for non financial management specialists, application of the Global Development Authority, working in crisis countries) offered by PPC,FM, GDA, and DCHA, respectively.

USAID employees can obtain more information on these training opportunities through the USAID intranet at: <http://inside.usaid.gov/M/HR/lsd/>.

## **VIII. Enhancing Cost-Effectiveness by Integrating Post-Course Evaluation and Follow-Up**

Experience, within and outside of USAID, has shown time and time again that training offered in a vacuum, without a "support" system designed to assure that the training provided actually leads to the on-the-job results desired, can be a poor investment both in financial resources and the time invested by the participants who attend the training. An only too typical scenario in current USAID training has the participant returning to post after taking a training course full of ideas of how he/she can apply what he/she has learned, only to encounter a working environment that is not conducive to this taking place: (a) there is no "time" set aside for the participant to consciously apply what he/she learned at the course; (b) the participant's supervisor and colleagues are too busy with their own priorities and challenges to explore with the participant what he/she learned and how what the participant learned at the training could be put to use to benefit the office.

When it comes to evaluating training programs, most evaluations focus on participants "reactions" to the course: what they liked, what they didn't like, what they think should be changed in the future to make

the course more relevant/applicable. Sometimes there is an attempt (through pre- and post-tests) to identify new knowledge and skills that participants “learned” as a result of the training program. Very seldom is there an attempt to evaluate what happens after the participant returns to post: (1) Did the returned course participant “apply” what was learned in the course back at post? If not, why not? (2) If so, what were the “results”, in terms of one or more improvements in the participant’s capability to be an technical leader and manager in education?<sup>21</sup>

The same applies for follow-up. Very seldom are resources set aside to find ways to follow up with participants once they return to post to make sure they are able to apply what they have learned and, if they are having difficulties, to provide them with guidance/coaching on how to address problems encountered.

There are a multitude of lessons learned and best practices from the literature on evaluating and providing follow-up to training programs. The challenge, which goes beyond the scope of this document, is to select from these lessons learned and best practices those approaches that are cost-effective and relevant to the USAID context.

The text box below provides some suggested approaches for providing post course evaluation and follow-up. We highly recommend, as part of the second pilot of the Education Overview Course, that one or more of these approaches (or others) be built in and assessed.

**SUGGESTED APPROACHES FOR COMBINING EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP IN A POST-COURSE SETTING**

***Participant, supervisor/colleagues in education team, and individual responsible for organizing course collaborate in identifying ways that lessons learned and best practices participant is exposed to during the training can be effectively applied upon participant’s return to post.***

- When the participant signs up to attend the course, the participant and her/his supervisor (and/or members of education team of which participant is a member) sign a letter that goes to the person responsible for organizing the course in which they commit to applying key elements learned at the course once the participant is back on the job.
- Participant and supervisor/education team, based on a detailed description of expected course objectives and results, agree on a series of topics relevant to the participant’s work that the participant will focus on while at the course; participant sends these agreed upon topics to the course organizer in advance for review and comment.
- Course organizer reviews topics to make sure that expectations are realistic and gets back to participant, as appropriate, with comments/suggestions along with guidance on how to seek the information desired during the course.
- At the end of the course the participant (in collaboration with colleagues and the course facilitator) develops a plan of action for applying what he/she has learned at the course,

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<sup>21</sup> In the case of the Education Overview Pilot carried out in October 2003, a great deal of time and effort was put into evaluating participants’ “reactions” to the course. An attempt was also made to assess what was “learned”, by asking participants to fill in a pre- and post-course self-assessment of their knowledge and skills (based on the approved skills/knowledge list for education officers). Finally, an attempt was made to set the stage for addressing “application” by asking participants before coming to the course to meet with their supervisors/education team members to come up with burning questions/issues that they would like to see addressed at the course and asking them the last day of the course to comment on the extent to which these issues were addressed during the course..

focusing in particular on areas of specific interest identified prior to the course by the participant and his/her supervisor.

- Returned participant and supervisor/education team set aside a time frame and agree on the specific steps that will be taken to apply what the participant learned at the course.
- Course organizer, with support of appropriate USAID/W education personnel, is available to assist the participant upon his/her return to post (via e-mail, telephone calls) to address challenges in applying course learnings.
- Participant and supervisor/education team report back, within a given time period, to course organizer, on what they have accomplished, concrete results achieved (if any) and difficulties encountered along the way.
- Course organizer compiles report on application experiences, results achieved, and integrates this information back into the design of future training programs.

***Using the Global Learning Portal as a supplementary vehicle for evaluation and follow-on***

The Global Learning Portal (discussed in Section VII.7 of this report) provides multiple opportunities for facilitating post-course evaluation and follow-on. Well designed, and staffed, an effective Global Learning Portal can::

- Be a useful site that participants can access to obtain further materials on topics addressed at the course as they need them for purposes of application.
- Serve as a vehicle for organizing and running discussion groups around topics of interest to course participants after they return to post; depending on how they are configured these discussion course could be either facilitated or not facilitated.
- Be used to periodically send out post-evaluation forms to participants designed to assess both post-course application and results achieved on the job.

## **IX. Institutionalizing the Professional Development Strategy**

### **A. Accomplishments to Date**

An important first step has been taken in laying the base for the institutionalization of a professional development strategy for education staff: A list of the skills and knowledge that education staff need in order to operate effectively in their jobs (Appendix A to this document) has been widely vetted, adjusted, and approved. A professional development strategy directed toward helping USAID education staff achieve the skills and knowledge included in this list (the focus of this document) has been prepared. Finally an Education Overview Course, that used the skills/knowledge list as a point of departure, was piloted in October 2005 (see Appendix C for a report of the pilot).

This first step would not have happened had the following elements not come into place:

- The first, and perhaps key, element was an enthusiastic and committed NEP with extensive experience as a Peace Corps trainer prior to joining USAID who served as the catalyst. Upon completing the generic training provided to all NEPS and moving to his first rotation in education in USAID/W, Wick Powers detected the need for a professional development program for education staff and took the initiative to do something about it.
- The next key element came in the form of the leadership of EGAT/ED Director John Grayzel who, when approached by Powers, eagerly accepted Powers' offer to start identifying ways of making such a program a reality. Grayzel, however, did not stop there. As it became apparent that additional financial resources were needed he took the actions necessary to make this support available.
- Another key element was the support of EGAT senior management. When it became apparent that there were Operating Expense Funds available to support staff training, AA/EGAT Emmy Simmons strongly endorsed obtaining a portion of these funds to further this initiative. After Emmy Simmons left her position and when EGAT/ED needed help in recruiting education staff from the field to attend a pilot of an Education Overview Course, Acting AA/EGAT, Jay Smith sent out an e-mail to Mission Directors and their Deputies encouraging education staff in the field to attend this course.
- Finally, and absolutely key, was the support of a committed group of education staff in USAID/W and the field who, recognizing the importance of this initiative, squeezed out time from other pressing responsibilities to lend the help necessary to pilot the Education Overview Course and bring this proposal for a professional development strategy to fruition.

### **B. What it will Take to Institutionalize a Professional Development Program for USAID Education Staff**

Moving this initiative to its next step – converting what is now a proposal and an initial start at implementing this proposal into an ongoing professional development program for Agency education staff (including coming up with the staff and financial resources required to make this program a reality) – will only be possible if the support and commitment that have been demonstrated to date are formalized

and sustained over a multi-year time span. Specifically, the following ingredients must be in place if the institutionalization of a professional development strategy for education staff in USAID is to become a reality:

- The first ingredient is having the support and commitment to bring this program to fruition from the Education Sector Counsel and the new EGAT/ED Director. Taking the lead from DCHA/DG which has included “cadre development” – alongside “field support” and “technical leadership” – as one of its three top priorities, EGAT/ED along with regional education offices may also want to consider introducing supporting professional development of education sector staff as one of their priorities.
- The second is leading by example: EGAT/ED leadership, along with education leadership in the regional Bureaus, should encourage their staff to include a professional development objective in their annual work plans.
- The third critical ingredient is establishing incentives (including special staff awards, letters of commendation put into staff file, recognition in performance evaluations) for USAID/W staff who continue to contribute to the institutionalization of this strategy. We use the word “continue” because the commitment and support of a core group of staff in EGAT/ED and the regional bureaus has been essential to the development of this strategy.
- The fourth and equally critical ingredient is agreeing to establish a full-time position in EGAT/ED that is devoted to further developing and institutionalizing this strategy and hiring a qualified person to fill this position.
- Finally, it will be necessary to secure the needed financial resources -- most probably a combination of OE and program funds -- to implement this strategy over the coming years.

With regard to the last bullet (securing financial resources), the amount of additional funding required to implement the proposed professional development program for education staff will depend on a series of strategic decisions to be taken by a recently established core decision-making group of the Education Sector Counsel.

- If the objective is to maintain additional funding at low levels it will be necessary to design a program that depends primarily on in-house staff to both design and implement professional development activities. This is the route that DCHA/DG has taken. The small amount of OE funding that DCHA/DG receives annually for staff development (usually between \$100,000 and \$150,000) is used primarily for logistical support for training events with some targeted technical assistance that is used for such things as coaching in house staff in delivering their presentations..
- If there are fewer constraints on additional funding (i.e., the decision is taken to complement limited amounts of available OE funding available annually from HR with program funding) then other options become available. They range from hiring one contractor to design and deliver most of the training offered (the route EGAT/EG has chosen to take at a cost of approximately \$1,000,000/year in OE and program funds) to splitting responsibilities for designing and delivering training between a contractor and USAID technical staff (the route taken by GH at an annual cost of approximately \$700,000 year in OE and program funds)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> GH has other a number of other training initiatives that have been carried out under the auspices of staff in different offices that are not reflected in this \$700,000 figure.

**C. Recommended Plan of Action for FY 2006**

Institutionalizing a professional development program as far-reaching as that recommended in Chapter VII of this document will take time. A plan of action for FY 2006 that moves the agenda forward the next step toward an eventual institutionalization of professional development program for Agency education staff would ideally include the following:

**1. Formalizing the Existence of an Education Professional Development Steering Committee.**

This Committee would to be composed of USAID/W and field staff, ideally incorporating members of the TEST Advisory Group that have moved the agenda to where it is now as well as others who express an interest. Members of this group would be tasked with:

- (a) Recommending a plan of action for institutionalizing a professional development program that includes activities to be taken over the medium and long term.
- (b) Providing oversight to the design/implementation of these activities, be they training courses, putting in place a central website, conducting additional studies, etc.
- (b) Making recommendations regarding the resources (e.g. USAID staffing, funding to contract with partners) that will be needed to implement these activities.
- (c) Reporting to the EGAT/ED director and the Education Sector Counsel and other appropriate entities on progress in carrying out these activities.

**2. Reach Agreement on a Realistic Set of Actions that can be Undertaken during 2006**

Assuming availability of adequate funding (the assumption here is that \$500,000 in combined OE and program funding can be made available in FY 2006) and continued commitment among Agency education staff to assuring that these funds are appropriately used, the following would appear to be realistic targets for 2006:

- (a) Select and hire a qualified individual who will be responsible for the day to day work associated with institutionalizing a professional development program for Agency education staff.
- (b) Using the lessons learned and best practices from the October Education Overview Pilot as a point of departure, conduct a second pilot which will have as its objective settling on a design for the Education Overview Course that can be offered on a regular basis over the coming years.
- (c) Using as a point of departure lessons learned and best practices from DCHA/DG and GH, initiate the design of an in-house program – to be provided primarily by USAID/W education staff – for preparing new education entrants to the Agency for the responsibilities that they will be expected to take on when they move to their field assignments.
- (d) Develop a medium and long term plan for institutionalizing a professional development program for education staff.
- (e) If time and resources allow, pilot an in-depth education course that responds to field demand.

Each of these recommended actions is fleshed out below:

**3. Select and Hire a Qualified Individual who will be Responsible for the Day-to-day Work Associated with Institutionalizing a Professional Development Program for Agency Education Staff.**

An important first responsibility of this Steering Committee will be to select a qualified individual who will be responsible for the day to day work associated with overseeing the design and guiding the implementation of future training programs as well as institutionalizing the professional development strategy. This person should possess: appropriate knowledge of USAID's education programs and of the education sector in general, background and experience in adult learning methodologies, familiarity with the USAID structure, and the ability to effectively navigate within the USAID structure. While this person ideally would be a USDH, it may be more realistic to look toward hiring a qualified person on a contractual basis, with the caveat that whoever is selected have an office in EGAT/ED.

**4. Identify an Appropriate Interim Mechanism(s) for Providing the Support that will be Needed During 2006**

We use the term "interim" mechanism because, once a long-range plan is developed for designing and implementing a long-term professional development strategy – one of the tasks to be undertaken in 2006 – it will not be possible to determine what the most appropriate mechanism(s) will be.

Three options are currently available for securing outside support needed during 2006:

- (a) One contractor with total responsibility for providing the assistance that will be necessary (the route taken by EGAT/EG to design and implement its professional development strategy).
- (b) Existing partners (who have built into their scope of work that they will support USAID staff training) who design and implement future courses under the oversight of USAID (what GH does and the model used with a few adjustments to design and implement the Education Overview pilot);
- (c) USAID/W staff (EGAT/ED and the regional Bureaus) assume primary responsibility for designing and implementing key activities with assistance from a contractor/partner that is primarily responsible for logistical support (what DCHA/DG currently does).

**5. Conduct a Second Pilot of the Education Overview Course**

A key recommendation from the first pilot was that, in designing the second pilot, USAID assemble a small group of individuals from USAID and its partner(s) to oversee the design and implementation of the second pilot. This group, under the guidance of the full-time person hired to oversee the implementation of a professional development strategy, would be responsible for:

- (a) Reviewing the contents of sessions (lessons plans, materials, etc.) delivered at the Education Overview Pilot held in October, 2005 in order to identify the materials, methodologies, best practices and lessons learned that would be useful to take into consideration in designing a second pilot<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> An additional deliverable, under the Aguirre/JBS contract to develop this strategy, is a CD that provides all the relevant documentation required to undertake this review– from the design of the October 2005 Education Overview pilot, to its delivery and its evaluation.

- (b) Identifying, for a second pilot, a list of specific results/competencies that are achievable over a 10 day period.
- (c) Designing course sessions that will collectively achieve these results; building where relevant on materials and lessons learned from the October 2005 pilot.
- (d) Ensuring in the design of the sessions, that appropriate attention is given to USAID-related priorities.
- (e) Ensuring that post-course evaluation and follow on once participants return to their posts is built into the program design.
- (f) Providing necessary oversight/quality control (for example, dry runs, practice sessions) to assure that desired results are achieved during course delivery.

## **6. Prepare New Education Entrants for Expected Responsibilities in their Field Assignments**

Design a program to assure that new entrants to the Agency are prepared, when they go to the field, to assume their responsibilities. This will require: (1) in-house commitment to dedicate the time and thought necessary to design, deliver and evaluate such a program; and (2) clarity on the objectives of this program and what can realistically be achieved with available staff time and resources.

Both DCHA/DG and GH have invested a great deal of time and effort into designing programs to orient their new hires before they go to the field. It is highly recommended that the individual hired to focus full-time on training for education staff, along with members of the Steering Committee, meet with individuals in each office who have been responsible for designing and implementing these programs in order to identify: the steps each went through in designing their programs, the successes and challenges they have faced in implementing their programs; staff time and commitment required to get these programs up and running.

It would also be worthwhile to interview NEPS who have now been in the field anywhere from 1 to 3 years to find out, in retrospect, what kind of USAID/W orientation they would have benefited from before going out to their field assignments.

## **7. Move the Institutionalization Agenda Further**

Chapter VII identified a number of activities that should ideally appear in an institutionalized professional development strategy for education staff in USAID. Several require further information prior to making a determination regarding whether and how they should be adopted.

An idea that holds great promise but needs to further exploration before being adopted is designing and developing a skills and knowledge bank located on the internet (Chapter VII.7) that all education staff can access. This bank would be a place where Agency education staff can access information on lessons learned and best practices in a given area, access opportunities for e-learning, hold discussion groups around topics of interest. It could also serve as a mechanism for post-course evaluation and follow-up as well as a mechanism for one on one mentoring. In this regard, the Global Learning Portal – designed under EGAT/ED leadership -- would appear to be the ideal route to follow.

Another idea that will require further research before coming up with a concrete proposal is providing Agency education staff with the opportunity to acquire advanced degrees in areas of interest through distance learning. Many universities offer advanced degrees in education and related fields. The

appropriate next step would be to identify among available offerings: which are relevant, the per person costs associated with signing up for a course, and the time commitments involved on the part of those who sign up for courses.

If the Agency is serious about institutionalizing a professional development strategy for its education staff, more information needs to be obtained on exactly who these staff are. Section IV – drawing on an education staffing study done by Ron Bonner and Jeffrey Harrison-Burns in 1998, updated information on budgets and overall staffing, and information obtained from individuals who applied for the October 2005 pilot – provides some useful insights on education staff. However, to do justice to preparing a long-term plan for institutionalizing a professional development strategy, more needs to be known about existing staff in the field who are responsible for designing and implementing education programs and what they need in order to be effective in carrying out their jobs.

Finally, it will be important to flesh out a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of activities included under the rubric of professional development for education staff as well as look toward, where possible, making post-course follow-on an integral part of all training provided.

To the extent that time permits, the Steering Committee and the person hired to focus full-time on professional development should incorporate the above into their FY 2006 work plan. If time does not permit, then priority should be given to continuing in FY 2007.

## **8. Pilot an In-depth Education Course that Responds to Field Demand**

As part of the final evaluation of the October 2005 Education Overview pilot, participants were asked – should in-depth education courses become available – what topics they would like to see addressed in the first courses offered. Education reform and education finance came out at the top followed by the education policy/strategic context and using data for decision making. Other possible topics for in-depth courses are listed in Section VI.4. of this report.

Should time and resources allow, we recommend that steps be taken to pilot one three-day in-depth course for Agency education staff by the end of 2006, if not at the beginning of 2007. We envision the topic for this first pilot being selected based on a survey of field demand. Similar to the approach recommended for the second pilot of the Education Overview Course, we recommend assembling a small group of qualified USAID staff and partners who would identify realistic and achievable results for the three day pilot. This team would develop a design that reflects relevant state of the art information that reflects the USAID context. The team would also oversee the preparation of specific sessions along with the delivery of the first in-depth pilot.

## **X. IN CLOSING**

With the actions that have been taken over the course of the past year, the education sector in USAID is off to an excellent start in laying the groundwork for a professional development program for its staff. There has been commitment at all levels, resources (staffing, financial) have been made available, and there are initial results in the form of an Education Overview Pilot. If the experience of other technical sectors that have developed and institutionalized professional development programs for their staff can serve as a guide, this investment in staff time and in financial resources must be sustained over an extended time period.

\$500,000 set side in FY 2006 seems to be a reasonable amount for taking the institutionalization one step further. However, the price tag could easily grow to \$1 million or more/year. While \$1 million may seem like a lot of money, on the grand scale \$1 million out of a total annual Agency education budget of \$500,000 + million is approximately 1/5 of one percent. This is a paltry sum when one makes comparisons with what the U.S. military and the private sector invests in staff training.<sup>24</sup>

Education has the weakest and by far the most diverse staffing situation in the Agency. Funding for education funding in USAID is growing. There are concerns about the capability of Agency education staff to effectively absorb and manage this increased funding. In the opinion of the drafters of this document, the question is not whether or not to develop and implement a professional development program for Agency education staff. Rather the questions are:

- What priority should be given to institutionalizing a professional development program for education staff?
- How quickly should this institutionalization take place?
- What can be done to assure that the activities delivered under this program are relevant to the needs of education staff and are of the highest quality?
- What level of resources (both staffing and financial) is to be committed to this effort?
- If institutionalizing a professional development program is not made a priority, what price will the education sector pay?

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<sup>24</sup> The U.S. military invests between 5 and 10% of its funds annually in staff training. Successful large companies often invest between 3 and 5 %.

## **Appendix A**

# **Skills and Knowledge Required by USAID Staff Working in Education**

### **Introductory note:**

*This list was developed in June of 2005 based on extensive consultation with staff within USAID as well as USAID's education partners. It has been developed to provide staff entering the Agency to work in education with one place they can access to see the full range of skills and knowledge that USAID believes they will need to operate effectively in their jobs, assess their own skills and knowledge against this list, and based on this self-assessment select the mechanism(s) they need to seek assistance in acquiring/strengthening needed skills and knowledge. This list was approved on July 15, 2005 by EGAT/ED Director, John Grayzel as an attachment to an Action Memo cleared by HR and education staff in the four Regional Bureaus.*

*The list is divided into five categories. Categories I and II, respectively, situate the education officer in a strategic context (within the USG and USAID, and internationally). Category III focuses on the technical skills and knowledge that those contributing to the formulation of the skills/knowledge list believe they need in order to effectively function in the education sector. Category IV approaches the "meat" of what all technical officers do in USAID – the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies, programs, projects, and activities – from both a generic perspective (common to technical officers in all sectors who are responsible for designing, implementing and evaluation programs and projects) and one specific to USAID staff working in education. Category V addresses the generic leadership and communication skills that all USAID officers require to function effectively in USAID.*

*To be effective this list will need to be periodically updated to reflect new trends in the global context, in Agency priorities, and new developments in education. Accordingly, this means that the items in capitals included under each sub-category will periodically change.*

## **I. U.S. Government foreign policy and initiatives: *How they impact on USAID in general and programming in the education sector in particular***

- 1. Can describe the role that U.S foreign policy actors play in relationship to education overseas in general/USAID education programs in particular:**
  - A. Executive Branch: White House, National Security Council (NSC), State Department, Department of Education, Department of Labor, Military, Peace Corps.
  - B. The Congress: The legislative process as it relates to USAID, including hard/soft earmarks. How to work with the Congress (HAFCO, SAFCO), including the role of key committees and staffers
  - C. Civil Society: Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACFVA), Basic Education Coalition, universities and higher education associations, international and regional NGOs, private sector
- 2. Can situate education within the USAID structure**
  - A. Understands USAID's organizational structure, functions, budgeting process and how the activities/mandates of other Bureaus impact on USAID activities in education
  - B. Understands the synergies between education and strategic objectives in other USAID technical sectors
- 3. Can describe USAID education program in country of assignment within the context of key USG initiatives:**

- A. National Security Strategy
- B. Joint State-AID Strategy
- C. National Defense Strategy
- D. White Paper
- E. Fragile States Strategy
- F. War against Terror
- G. Global Development Alliance (GDA)
- H. Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) including links to Monterrey and G-8 Task Force report
- I. Development Credit Authority
- J. No Child Left Behind

**4. Can describe how relevant education-related Presidential and Agency Initiatives apply to USAID education program in country of assignment:**

- A. Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training
- B. Digital Freedom Initiative
- C. Faith-based Initiative
- D. Community Initiative
- E. Volunteers for Prosperity
- F. Emergency Plans for AIDS Relief (including Orphans and Vulnerable Children)
- G. Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)
- H. African Education Initiative (AEI)
- I. Leland Initiative
- J. Trafficking in Persons

**II. International actors: *Understanding their relationship to USAID activities in education/human resources development***

**3. Can summarize how USAID's global partners as well partner initiatives impact USAID's activities in education/human resources development and, in particular, those within country of assignment:**

- A. Multilateral financial institutions: WB, IMF, IDB, ADB, EU etc.
- B. Bilateral donors: Canadians, British, Germans, etc.
- C. Poverty Reduction Strategic Plans (PRSP)
- D. Millennium Development Declaration (MDD)
- E. Monterrey Financing for Development Conference (FfD)
- F. G-8 Summit Process
- G. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- H. Summit of the Americas
- I. Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)
- J. Education for All (EFA), including the role of multilaterals (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank Asian, African, Inter American Development Banks); bilateral donors; and civil society
- K. DAC Agreement on Aid Effectiveness (DAC)
- L. Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) to education and Basket Funding

**4. Can describe how the new drivers and trends in economic and social development relate to activities carried out by USAID in education/human resources development:**

- A. Expanded role of the private sector and foundations in development, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- B. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its role as an innovate tool in education and economic growth (including the pros and cons and trade offs).
- C. The economic and social impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- D. The increasing flow of remittances to developing countries
- E. Increasing importance of out of school youth and the emerging youth demographic realities.

- F. Effect of globalization on competitiveness, educational levels and local economies

### III. Technical Knowledge and Skills: *Basis for areas of involvement in education/human resources development*

3. Can summarize and critique relevant USAID education strategies and indicate how they relate to the USAID program in assigned country:

#### USAID's new Education Strategy:

- A. Promote equitable access to basic education: (1) meaning of "equitable", "quality", "flexibility beyond primary education"; (2) program approaches including "policy reform", "building institutional capacity", "improving instruction", "institutional reform", "reducing gender related barriers to education"
- B. Enhancing knowledge and skills for productivity: (1) Workforce development – "promoting policies that guide skills training"; "testing innovative arrangements to improve the delivery of workforce skills training"; "direct support for workforce skills training"; (2) Higher education
- C. Guiding principles: (1) guiding need according to country need and commitment; (2) taking a sector-wide approach; (3) efficiency; (4) sustainability; (5) collaboration; (6) innovation.
- D. Education's role in White Paper categories: (1) fragile states; (2) geo-strategic states; (3) global and transnational issues – HIV/AIDS; (4) humanitarian assistance.
- E. Participant training

4. Understands broad sectoral issues in education, best practices with regards to these sectoral issues, can apply best practices in work as education officer, and knows where to go to access further technical information as needed:

- A. Sector Reform: (1) assessing effectiveness of public and private education organizations in creating educational change; (2) identifying sub-sectors and institutions where changes to increase effectiveness/quality and efficiency are both possible and which leverage other system components (example: teacher colleges); (3) promoting civil society and private sector involvement in policy reform and in developing sector programs; (5) linkages and trade-offs between investments in different education sub-sectors; (6) applying reform strategy options (including participatory techniques, consultation, consensus building, promoting national leadership in donor coordination); (7) sequencing reforms; (8) demographic trends and how they impact on sector reform efforts.
- B. Basic education: (1) the terms "access", "equity", "quality", and "efficiency" and their trade offs in educational programming; (2) strategies involved in assessing the quality of learning and their challenges; (3) pedagogical approaches conducive to better learning at the classroom level (including curriculum and instructional materials development, parent/community participation, multi-grade education; appropriate application of distance learning) and when to apply them; (4) options for promoting effective learning environments (including infrastructure, water, and sanitation); (5) supporting teacher training and incentives; (6) promoting appropriate application of intercultural bilingual education; (7) promoting appropriate application of school autonomy (including governance, fiscal decentralization and community involvement); (8) successful strategies for strengthening of education institutions; (9) promoting alternative approaches to basic education for out of school youth and adults; (10) appropriate support for secondary education (including transition from primary to secondary, trade offs between academy and vocational-technical secondary, school-to-work strategies); (11) appropriate support for early childhood development (including differences between early childhood development and pre-school programs, relative merits of community based vs. school based approaches).
- C. Youth Development: (1) basic child and adolescent development principles; (2) developing public and private collaborations that support asset building and positive youth development among diverse youth of different talents and abilities; (3) social capital creation, strength-based approaches to development, how to consult and involve youth, family members, adult professionals and volunteers in policy and program design, implementation and evaluation; (4) NGO development, alternative and non-formal education delivery systems; (5) youth preparation and engagement strategies that contribute to employability/ self employment, environment, service, and civic engagement, health competencies, socialization and life

- skills; (6) awareness of commonalities and differences such as gender, race, age, culture, ethnicity, class, religion, disability among youth of diverse backgrounds; (7) knowledge of pro-social tolerance-building strategies, such as conflict resolution, communication, and advocacy skills.
- D. Workforce development: (1) local demand for skills and labor; (2) developing flexible programs that respond to labor market demand; (3) decentralizing decision making and building in incentives so that educational institutions can and will respond to local demand (4) engaging the private sector and community in policy and implementation; (5) skills standards and national qualifications frameworks; (6) work-based learning; (7) service learning; (8) technology assisted learning and performance support; (9) student financial aid; (10) tax incentives and other policies to promote employer investment in skill development; (11) testing innovative arrangements to improve the delivery of employability skills, entrepreneurship and technical skills training; (12) building a workforce and local economic developing focus into the mission of higher education institutions
- E. Higher Education: (1) strengthening the capacity of host country higher education institutions to contribute to Mission results; (2) developing partnerships between U.S. and host country higher education institutions; (3) developing GDA-type activities to support higher education capacity building; (4) maximizing the contribution of U.S. tertiary institutions to Agency programs (ALO).
- F. Participant training: (1) applying the Performance Improvement Approach to training design to improve the application of training and performance of the participant in the workplace; (2) skills in assessing needs and assuring relevancy of training programs to economic growth needs; (3) adhering to Homeland Security policy and procedural requirements.
- G. Education Economics: (1) applying core concepts in the economics of education to the justification of education policies and investments; (2) understanding and applying analyses of the access of the poor girls, socially excluded groups to the benefits of public and private education; (3) the difference between cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis of systems, programs and projects.
- H. Education Finance. (1) country economic and fiscal policy and strategy as a context for preparing education sector strategies.; (2) assist Ministries of Education, within the country's political context, to present the case for adequate national education budgets; (3) how to promote transparency in the education budget process and how to detect/avoid corruption; (4) how to assist Ministries of Education to identify and successfully leverage additional education resources from the NGO and private sectors and work with IFIs to create sector reform: (5) key concepts and practices in education finance; (6) sources of education finance (public, private, employer); (7) options for disbursing public education finance; (8) performance budgeting in education, (9) decentralization and fiscal federalism, (10) financial management systems and finance tracking methods for education.
- I. Donor financing of education. Able to explain benefits and risks of alternative financing models: (1) project funding tied to specific inputs and outputs; (2) sector investment financing tied to conditionalities and/or outcome indicators; (3) budget support as part of broader poverty reduction financing; (4) Sector-wide Approaches (SWAP) with pooled donor financing and variations on that theme.
- J. Applications of information and communication technology: (1) how to use internet technology to be an effective education officer (using internet to access websites, for distance learning); (2) how to use technology for development education (including mass media for teacher training, classroom learning, awareness-raising and attitude change, as a tool for teacher to access education resources and technology, for school administration, student assessment and records, understanding of what has and has not worked over the past several decades, costs and other implications).
- K. Gender Integration: (1) understands the relationship between gender integration and development outcomes; (2) is able to mainstream gender considerations into all education programming) (3) utilizes gender analysis as a tool to identify and address gender issues and dynamics that impact both men and women and boys and girls; (4) can apply the concepts of gender parity, gender equity and gender equality to educational programming; (5) identifies the gender dimensions to quality and relevance; (6) can differentiate among interventions that exploit gender inequities, accommodate gender roles or transform gender relations.
- L. Special issues: understanding relevant issues and how to apply best practices in (1) addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on education service delivery; (2) appropriate quality education for ethnic and cultural minorities, (3) appropriate quality education for children with learning and other disabilities; (4) appropriate quality education for children in conflict and post-conflict situations;(5) appropriate quality education for vulnerable children (including nomad children, HIV/AIDS and other orphans, bonded laborers, reintegrated child combatants).

- M. **Historical context:** Knows areas of emphasis and modalities in education/human resources development over the past decade or more as a context for understanding the rationale for current priorities/policies.

**3. Effectively incorporates best practices in education/human resources development in policy and other dialogue with other donors, high level government (including Ministry of Education) officials, and representatives from host country private sectors (NGOs, private enterprise)**

- A. Demonstrates knowledge of relevant policies and programs of other donors in country and is able to work in an articulated fashion with other donors to encourage host country counterparts to apply best practices.
- B. Reflects an appreciation of host country policies, strategies, structure of Ministries, roles of NGOs and other key private sector entities in assisting with the design of sectoral programs that reflect best practices.
- C. Is able to persuasively present USAID priorities in one on one dialogue with donors and host country actors.

**4. Coordinates effectively with USAID staff in other technical sectors (e.g. health and population, economic growth, democracy/crisis mitigation) and is able to demonstrate linkages between their sectors and the importance of education in helping them to achieve their own sector goals.**

- A. Is familiar with what the development literature has to say regarding these linkages
- B. Is capable, in mission strategic programming and in program design, to effectively articulate the education/human resources perspective as a member of a cross-sector team.

**IV. Technical leadership: *What we do and how we do it***

**8. Participates, in collaboration with host country actors and others, in the design and implementation of an education strategic assessment for country of assignment**

- A. In preparation for participating in carrying out an education strategic assessment acquires knowledge of country context, including ethno-linguistic and colonial history, power structure and diverse cultural traditions.
- B. With host country actors and other donors, identifies gaps in the education sector.
- C. With host country actors and other donors, designs and carries out education strategic assessment, which includes a gender analysis.
- D. With host country actors and other donors, draw conclusions about a country's education sector based on outcomes of assessment including key indicators.
- E. In collaboration with host country actors and other donors, identifies education program objectives, key issues and their implications for education programming, sequencing of reforms given available resources, analyzes likelihood of impact including how the proposed results will affect the relative status of girls and boys and men and women.
- F. Within context of outcome of education strategic assessment and taking into account participation of other donors and wishes of host country actors, identifies appropriate role for USAID support.
- G. Collaborates in ensuring the collection of suitable education data and statistics to track progress in achieving programmatic objectives resulting from the education strategic assessment.

**2. Can effectively develop an education strategy within the context of the overall USAID mission strategy and host country priorities**

- A. Participates in and/or becomes knowledgeable about the USAID project design and approval process within the context of programming policies (ADS series).
- B. Carries out consultations with stakeholders and previous implementers.
- C. Review previous projects.
- D. Reviews past evaluations or Performance Monitoring Plans.
- E. In close consultation with partners, stakeholders and customers, and using both the USAID Mission's central objectives and the education strategic assessment as points of reference, identifies Strategic Objective.

- F. Develops, for each Strategic Objective (and in compliance with the White Paper strategy and U.S. foreign policy directives): a development hypothesis, results framework, intermediate results, indicators for reporting to USAID/W and the congress, illustrative activities, illustrative budgets.
- G. Prepares instruments required to obligate and track funds at the SO or activity level.

**3. Can effectively oversee, in compliance with ADS directives, the implementation of the USAID mission's education program:**

- A. Serves as an effective member of Strategic Objective (SO) team, including – as appropriate –delineating SO team member roles and responsibilities, managing team activities, creating and maintaining SO files.
- B. Operates within and understands delegations of authority and relevant Mission Orders, mobilizes SO inputs including preparing SO procurement plan; as relevant prepares SOWS, Program Descriptions, RFAs ,RFPs, SOAGs.
- C. Can apply the ADS gender requirements throughout the project cycle.
- D. Understands the array of modalities available for programming USAID assistance funds (SOAGs, grants, cooperative agreement, contracts, task orders, program descriptions) and the circumstances under which one might be preferable to another to achieve expected outcomes.
- E. Knows how to effectively participate in a technical evaluation committee for a competitive procurement (including effectively interpret contractor budgets and cross reference the budget back to the technical proposal)
- F. Is clear, by modality (grant, cooperative agreement, contractors), of the respective roles and responsibilities of the CTO and those of the implementing partners, and supports implementing partners to achieve results.
- G. Is clear on the respective roles and responsibilities of the CTO and those of other Mission offices with whom CTO will have to collaborate closely in overseeing the implementation of the SO.
- H. Deals effectively with unanticipated changes (in assumptions, partners, policies, etc.) that affect every development effort.
- I. Monitors quality and timeliness of key inputs from implementing partners and knows what corrective steps to take in the case of inadequate performance on the part of implementing partners.
- J. Knows under what circumstances to trigger an independent evaluation and can prepare an appropriate scope of work for the evaluation.
- K. Knows when seek guidance about regulatory, legal, and ethical issues that arise in the course of implementing one's program.
- L. Prepares contractor performance reports
- M. Understands USAID Financial Management and Procurement annual cycles and their requirements.
- N. Manages USAID program resources and effectively requests funds.
- O. Performs funds control, payment, and obligation management including voucher review.
- P. Engages effectively with auditors, knows what audit issues and vulnerabilities to look for and how to properly document files for performance audits.
- Q. Closes out SOs and obligating instruments

**4. Knows how to access and use the key USAID Education Field Support Instruments in designing and implementing programs in USAID's strategic areas of emphasis:**

- A. Education Quality Improvement (EQUIP) 1 (schools, classrooms, communities)
- B. Education Quality Improvement (EQUIP) 2 (education policies, systems development, management)
- C. Education Quality Improvement (EQUIP) 3 (youth earning, learning and skill development)
- D. Global Workforce in Transition (GWIT)
- E. Achieving Equality in Education (EQUATE)
- F. Safe Schools Program
- G. Global Evaluation and Monitoring (GEM)
- H. Demographic Health Survey Education Data (DHS/Ed Data).
- I. dot – EDU
- J. Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development (ALO)
- K. United Negro College Fund Special Programs International Development Partnerships (UNCF/IDP)
- L. Strategic Technical Assistance for Results with Training (START)
- M. MOBIS
- N. Education Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs)

**5. Can effectively track, and in compliance with ADS directives, the performance of the USAID mission education program and make appropriate use of data for decision making**

- A. As a member of an SO team, considers how to assess progress toward achieving results
- B. Understands USAID data quality requirements, and ensures that education performance monitoring data meet those requirements.
- C. Understands the difference between an input, an outputs, results, and impact.
- D. Develops Performance Management Plan (PMP) including selecting appropriate performance indicators, integrating gender within these indicators.
- E. Within context of PMP decides when evaluations are appropriate and knows how to develop an appropriate evaluation scope of work.
- F. Adequately budgets for performance management
- G. Oversees design and implementation of evaluations, collection and analysis of performance indicator data.
- H. Recognizes the importance of the data collected for purposes of monitoring and evaluation, while at the same time appreciating the dangers of excessively focusing on data as a basis for assessing results.
- I. Uses performance data for resource allocation and to influence program decision making.
- J. Communicates results through Annual Reports, other mechanisms.

**6. Can prepare, in compliance with ADS directives, required USAID documentation**

- A. Memoranda on education issues
- B. Respond to Congressional inquiries related to education topics
- C. Input for Annual Reports
- D. How programming addresses gender disparities.
- E. Inputs for Congressional Presentations
- F. Develop speeches on education topics
- G. Prepare issues papers on education topics

**7. Effectively represents USAID at presentations and meetings**

- A. Prepares and deliver presentations on technical topics for USAID and non-USAID audiences
- B. Demonstrates knowledge of USAID approaches and policies relevant to the education/human resources development at internal and external meetings

**V. Teamwork and Leadership: *Who am I and how do I relate to and work with others?***

**1. Uses effective teamwork and interpersonal skills**

- A. Demonstrates a positive attitude, actions, and interactions with colleagues.
- B. Effectively interacts with other USG agencies or development partners, contractors, host country counterparts in accomplishing assigned tasks.
- C. Successfully establishes productive relationship with colleagues within and outside the USAID mission.
- D. Deals effectively and constructively with conflict and obstacles in the course of program design and implementation.
- E. Understands the value and variety of ways of working with other donor s(and non-contributing partners) in achieving education/human resources development sector objectives.
- F. Understands chain of command, roles of other mission officers, as well as delegations of authority.

**2. Is an effective leader and supervisor**

- A. Takes initiative.
- B. Acts confidently and decisively.
- C. Easily articulates vision and mission of the Agency as well as that of the education program.
- D. Energizes colleagues and team members toward goals.
- E. Provides positive feedback and areas for improvement with persons supervised.

- F. Motivates employees to do their best even under difficult conditions/situations.
- G. Effectively manages front office, embassy requests, needs from other SO teams
- H. Effectively handles staff conflicts.
- I. Is able to identify own supervisory strengths and weaknesses.

**3. Maintains a constant focus on customers**

- A. Demonstrates, through assigned tasks, understanding that a customer-service orientation is an essential element of job performance.
- B. Can identify key customers for the education and human resources backstop.

**4. Effectively manages USAID's human resources (for USDH staff)**

- A. Understands USAID employee benefits and allowances regulations; Agency performance appraisal tools, e.g. the Foreign Service performance management system, and performance appraisal tools for subordinates; and the role of HR in the assignment process.
- B. Knows how to access information on standard Agency benefits and Foreign Service allowances.
- C. Can summarize key elements of the Agency's performance management system, including the rating cycle, the forms utilized, roles and responsibilities of various individuals, and the objective and intent behind the system.
- D. Know how to navigate the USAID travel system.
- E. Knows where to go to access the Foreign Service Performance Precepts and skills matrix; can summarize the principles that govern FSO performance and promotion potential.
- F. Participates effectively in the preparation of annual work objectives and performance measures; monitoring and evaluation of progress toward meeting work objectives, providing input to supervisor for annual performance evaluation.
- G. Develops employees and mentors junior staff
- H. Interacts openly and objectively with supervisors or team leaders to obtain feedback on his/her performance and/or to provide 360-degree feedback as requested.
- I. Knows what is required to evaluate performance of subordinates across the categories of USAID staff.
- J. Is capable of effectively participating in the Foreign Service assignment process.

**5. Is able to effectively negotiate and use diplomacy skills**

- A. Demonstrates consensus-building skills in presentations, interactions with colleagues, and preparation of work products: is objective, non-confrontational and tactful, positive, and respectful toward others' positions.
- B. Demonstrates cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity in interactions with host country counterparts.
- C. Effectively manages and makes the most of visits of Ambassadors, Congressmen and their staff on program/project site visits in country of assignment to benefit education program.
- D. Can negotiate successfully with donors, host country counterparts.

**6. Effectively communicates at all levels**

- A. Understands information needs of particular USAID and non-USAID audiences and presents ideas effectively, concisely, and in a well-organized and culturally appropriate manner for these audiences.
- B. Demonstrates ability to convey concepts and communicate information succinctly and effectively through timely, high quality oral and written products.
- C. Demonstrates ability and willingness to put assigned tasks into larger framework of operating unit's mandate and his/her own training/work plan's objectives
- D. Produces written material that follows guidance provided, is factually accurate and stylistically correct: Scope(s) of Work; Congressional briefing material(s); work/training plan; strategy or concept papers; Annual Report materials; Modified Acquisition and Assistance Request Document (MAARD).
- E. Understands how to answer Congressional and other queries as well as USAID Bureau demands
- F. With appropriate clearances, deals effectively with the press
- G. Deals effectively with ineffective or unfriendly counterparts outside of USAID.
- H. Is proficient in language of country of assignment

## **Appendix B**

### **Education Skills & Knowledge Matrix**

(November 30, 2005)

**Notes:**

- *Items included under new entry orientation for education officers are illustrative. Specific topics to be selected based on review of experience to date with New Entry Orientation provided for Health and Democracy/Governance officers plus feedback from NEPS who are now in the field.*
- *X = focus*
- *C= included as cross-cutting topic*
- *S = addressed within context of course delivery*

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDA-MENTALS/ OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGE-MENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/ INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/ MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
<b>I. U.S. Government foreign policy and initiatives: <i>How they impact on USAID in general/ programming in the education sector in particular</i></b>								
1. Can describe the role that U.S foreign policy actors play in relationship to education overseas in general/USAID education programs in	Introduction	X	X		Update	X	X	

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
particular:								
2.Can situate education within the USAID structure	Introduction	X	X			X	X	
3.Can explain strategic context of country of assignment and USAID education program within country of assignment within context of key USG initiatives:	Introduction	X			Update	X	X	
4.Can describe how education-related Presidential and Agency Initiatives relate to country of assignment:	Introduction	X			Update	X	X	
<b>II. International actors: Understanding their relationship to USAID activities in education/human resources development</b>								
1.Can summarize how USAID's global partners and partner initiatives impact USAID's activities in education/human resources development:	Introduction	C			Update	X	X	

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
2. Can describe how the new drivers and trends in economic and social development relate to activities carried out by USAID in education/human resources development:	Introduction	C			Update	X	X	GDA Training
<b>III. Technical Knowledge and Skills: Basis for areas of involvement in education/human resources development</b>								
1.Can summarize and critique USAID's new Education Strategy and indicate how it relates to the USAID program in assigned country:	Introduction	X			Update	X		
2.Understands broad sectoral issues in education, best practices with regards to these sectoral issues, and knows where to go to access further technical information as needed:	To be determined for all sub-categories below...							
a. <u>Sector reform</u>		X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
b. <u>Basic education:</u>					As appropriate,			

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/ INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/ MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
improving access, equity, quality, and efficiency		X	X		specific to region	X		
c. <u>Basic education:</u> challenges and strategies for assessing the quality of learning		X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
d. <u>Basic education:</u> promoting pedagogical approaches conducive to better learning at the classroom level		X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
e. <u>Basic education:</u> promoting effective learning environments		X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
f. <u>Basic education:</u> supporting teacher training and incentives	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
g. <u>Basic education:</u> promoting appropriate application of intercultural bilingual education	Introduction		X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
h. <u>Basic education:</u> promoting appropriate application of school autonomy	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDA-MENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGE-MENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
i. <u>Basic education: successful strategies for strengthening of education institutions</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
j. <u>Basic education: appropriate support for secondary education</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
k. <u>Youth development</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
l. <u>Workforce development</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
m. <u>Higher Education</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
n. <u>Participant training</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
o. <u>Education economics</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
p. <u>Education finance</u>	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
q. <u>Donor financing of education</u>	Introduction	C	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
r. <u>Applications of information and communication technology</u>	Introduction	C	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
s. <u>Special issues:</u> HIV/AIDS, ethnic and cultural minorities; children in Islamic states; learning disabled children; children in conflict and post-conflict situations; (vulnerable children (including nomad children, orphans bonded laborers, reintegrated child combatants).	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
t. <u>Historical context</u>	Introduction	C			As appropriate, specific to region	X		
3. Can effectively incorporate best practices in education/human resources development in policy and other dialogue with other donors, high level government (including Ministry of Education) officials, and representatives from host country private sectors (NGOs, private enterprise)	Introduction	As part of country strategy development as well as self-reflection on applicability to country context	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		
4. Can clearly articulate to USAID staff in other technical sectors (e.g. health and population, economic growth,	Introduction	X	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X		

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDA-MENTALS/ OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGE-MENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/ INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/ MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
democracy/crisis mitigation) linkages between their sectors and education/human resources development.								
<b>IV. Technical leadership: What we do and how we do It</b>								
1.Participates, in collaboration with host country actors and other donors, in the design and implementation of an education strategic assessment for country of assignment		Not a key focus but may be incorporated interactive exercise(s)	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X	X	
2.Can effectively develop an education strategy within the context of the overall USAID mission strategy and host country priorities	Introduction	Key course assignment	X		As appropriate, specific to region	X	X	
3. Can effectively oversee the implementation of the USAID mission's education program:		Important theme running throughout course		X		X	X	CTO, PAL, PPM
4. Knows how to access and use the key USAID Education Field Support Instruments in	Introduction	Interwoven, as appropriate				X	X	

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/ INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/ MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
designing and implementing programs in USAID's strategic areas of emphasis:								
5.Can effectively track the performance of the USAID mission education program and make use of data for decision making	Introduction	X	X			X	X	PPC Evaluation course
6.Can prepare required USAID documentation				X			X	CTO, PAL, PPM
7. Effectively represents USAID at presentations and meetings		Addressed in interactive exercises		X			X	
<b>V. Teamwork and Leadership: <i>Who am I and how do I relate to and work with others?</i></b>								
1. Uses effective teamwork and interpersonal skills		S	S			X	X	TBI*
2. Is an effective leader and supervisor		S	S			X	X	TBI
3. Maintains a constant focus on customers		S	S			X	X	TBI
4. Effectively manages		S	S			X	X	TBI

<b>SKILL/KNOWLEGE</b>	<b>NEW ENTRY ORIENT. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION FUNDAMENTALS/OVERVIEW COURSE</b>	<b>IN DEPTH EDUCATION COURSES</b>	<b>EDUCATION PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>REG/CEN EDUCATION WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ON LINE TRAINING/INFO. IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>ON THE JOB TRAINING/MENTORING</b>	<b>NON EDUCATION USAID TRAINING</b>
USAID's human resources (for USDH staff)								
5. Is able to effectively negotiate and use diplomacy skills		S	S			X	X	TBI
6. Effectively communicates at all levels		S	S			X	X	TBI

\* TBI = to be identified

***Appendix C***  
***Education Overview Pilot October 2 – 14, 2005***  
***Reflections and Recommendations for***  
***Future Course Delivery***<sup>25</sup>

**Background**

Between October 2 and 14, 2005, the EGAT/ED office of USAID -- in close collaboration with education staff in regional bureaus and with the assistance of Aguirre International, contracted through GEM -- conducted a pilot of an Education Overview Course. The pilot is part of a process which culminated in the creation of a comprehensive professional development strategy for USAID education officers of which the Education Overview Course is one part.

The pilot, held in Hagerstown, Maryland, was attended by 26 participants selected from among 35 applicants. Nine were from USAID missions in Africa, 6 from ANE missions, 5 from E&E, 3 from LAC, and 4 from USAID/Washington (USAID/W). Seven were USDH, 6 were U.S. contractors, and 13 were FSNs. Seven of the course participants (3 from USAID/W and 4 from the field) were TEST (Training Education Sector Staff) Advisory Group members. Eight USAID/W TEST Advisory Group members attended part-time as observers (see Appendix A: Participant and Advisory Group List).

In preparation for the course, participants were asked to: (1) share information about their background in education and their current role working in USAID; (2) their number of years in USAID; (3) what other USAID courses they had taken<sup>26</sup>; (4) interest in presenting at the course and if so, on what topic; and (5) challenges that they face in designing/implementing education programs that they would like to see addressed at the course. In addition, participants were asked to assess their knowledge and skill levels against a list of education knowledge and skills upon which the comprehensive professional development strategy is based.

On Friday, October 14 – the day following the course – 9 participants from the field visited the Bernard T. Janney School, a public school located in Northwest Washington, D.C. Some participants from the field also spent Friday at the Ronald Reagan Building visiting staff in their regional bureaus.

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<sup>25</sup> This appendix includes the text of the report of the Education Overview Pilot. The full report, complete with a number of appendices, is available under separate cover.

<sup>26</sup> Most of the participants that attended the Education Overview pilot had taken the CTO course, over half had taken the PAL course.

The topics addressed at the Education Overview Pilot were selected by USAID/W members of the TEST Advisory Group from a list of knowledge and skills that USAID education staff should ideally possess<sup>27</sup>. Other key factors that guided the design of the pilot included:

- (1) A list of overall course results;
- (2) A set of guiding principles for adult learning through training (see Appendix C: Objectives and Guiding Principles);
- (3) Key elements underlying the approach to course delivery; and
- (4) An understanding that the session presenters would, at a minimum, attend the session preceding the one he/she was responsible for delivering and that the presenter would stay on after the session (ideally until the next day) to provide time for course participants to interact one on one with session presenters.

The course design also included a cross-cutting education strategy exercise designed to assist participants to apply the lessons learned and best practices they had been exposed to during the pilot.

Course design began in late July of 2005, a little over two months before the course was scheduled to begin<sup>28</sup>. Course designers, with the approval of USAID/W TEST Advisory Group members, reached out to a combination of USAID/W staff and partners (Equips 1, 2, and 3) who possessed the necessary knowledge and skills to collectively design sessions corresponding to the topic areas selected for the course. Individuals charged with designing and delivering sessions were given a generic scope of work<sup>29</sup> that they were to follow with the understanding that, as long as they adhered to the guidance provided in the generic scope of work, they were free to design their sessions as they saw fit. The Aguirre course designers made themselves available to assist USAID/W staff in designing their presentations. They also met periodically with USAID partners responsible for preparing presentations to answer any questions they might have, to encourage them to draw upon available participant information in designing their sessions, and to encourage cross-sharing in overall course design.

During the second week in September, USAID/W Advisory group members, along with Wick Powers from South Africa (who acted as a driving force for this initiative while assigned to USAID/W as a NEP), reviewed and commented on session plans and materials presented by session designers. This feedback was sent immediately to session designers for use in finalizing their session plans. After this process was completed, Aguirre design staff met with session designers to go over USAID/W feedback as well as to address other considerations in finalizing course design. A week before the course began, course designers spoke one-on-one with session designers to get a better sense of how they planned to deliver their sessions. Due to lack of time,

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<sup>27</sup> The education knowledge/skills list, formally approved by EGAT/ED Director John Grayzel on July 15, 2005, was the product of an effort that involved incorporating views from some 69 USAID education staff and partners.

<sup>28</sup> The fact that course design began so late and that the pilot came quickly on the heels of a major EGAT/ED conference held in early August were far from ideal. Two factors determined the early October start for the pilot: (1) since the course was not anticipated in USAID staff training plans, an early October start would hypothetically permit USDH staff from the field, who didn't have funds set aside for this purpose, to take advantage of end of fiscal year funds that might become available in their missions; (2) the contractors hired by Aguirre to oversee this process were not able to suspend work on the pilot and then come back to it at another more convenient time (ideally the Spring of 2006).

<sup>29</sup> This generic scope of work included the education knowledge and skill list, expected course results, principles of adult learning, and underlying principles, along with time specifications for deliverables.

it was not possible to carry out dry runs of the sessions as was anticipated in the generic scope of work.

The pilot took place at the Clarion Antietam Hotel in Hagerstown, Maryland. This facility was selected for the following reasons: (a) availability at the time it was needed;<sup>30</sup> (b) price;<sup>31</sup> (c) excellent training facilities;<sup>32</sup> (d) very good exercise facilities;<sup>33</sup> (e) adequate restaurants within walking distance; and (f) the fact that it was within easy access to an Outlet Mall.<sup>34</sup> Fourteen participants stayed over the weekend; the remainder returned to Washington and/or visited friends or family.

The course was managed and facilitated by Aguirre/JBS staff members, who were responsible for course design. Aguirre also provided a full-time person who was responsible for logistics. Four laptop computers (two with Internet access) were available at all times for participant use. Participants also had access to low-cost telephone cards that permitted them easy contact with friends and family in their countries of origin.

Given that this was the first time this course was being held, a great deal of effort went into evaluating the course and using feedback from the evaluations to make adjustments to the course as it evolved. In addition to daily evaluations filled out by USAID/W members of the Advisory Group, an evaluation committee composed of 10 course participants assumed responsibility for designing, administering to all course participants, and reporting on: (1) daily evaluations, (2) a mid-term evaluation conducted at the end of the first week and (3) a final evaluation that began the day before the course ended and which took up the last morning of the course.

Participants also were asked at the end of the course to assess what they might use/apply from the course upon returning to the mission and whether the issues they had brought with them to the course were satisfactorily addressed. In addition, they were asked on a voluntary basis to repeat the self-assessment of education knowledge skills that they filled in prior to the course; 6 volunteered.

## **Highlights of the Course Evaluations**

*Daily evaluations* made it possible for facilitators to make a number of course delivery adjustments to respond to concerns/needs of participants (e.g., not permitting the class day to go beyond 5:00 p.m.; encouraging module presenters to start by asking participants what their experience was in the topic areas in which they were presenting; asking presenters to state module objectives at the start of the session and then checking to see if objectives had been met

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<sup>30</sup> Inquiries revealed that many other facilities, which may have been more desirable were not available during the specified time frame.

<sup>31</sup> The per diem for Hagerstown, \$91/day, made a 10-day course held in Hagerstown cheaper than a 5-day course held in Washington, D.C.

<sup>32</sup> The Clarion Antietam Hotel had a training center with large self-contained areas that included a large training room, four break-out rooms and a kitchen.

<sup>33</sup> The hotel has a large indoor swimming pool and fitness center.

<sup>34</sup> This was a big plus for participants coming in from the field.

at the end of the module). Daily evaluations also provided valuable feedback on individual course presentations that will be useful for refining future course design/delivery<sup>35</sup>.

The *mid-term evaluation* affirmed that the program was on course in terms of meeting its five overall objectives, with some useful recommendations (most of which were taken into account during the second week) for fine-tuning course delivery to enhance objective achievement.

The *final evaluation* was instrumental in providing insights both into aspects of the pilot that participants particularly liked and disliked, and what they would like to see changed should this course be offered again.

- What participants liked: (1) participants very much appreciated the tremendous diversity among the course participants; (2) they enjoyed the opportunity to network among themselves, and in so doing, learn from each others' wide array of experiences; (3) they valued the open space sessions that took place at the end of each day where participants shared their experiences based on topics of interest to them; (4) while there were some logistical concerns, participants for the most part appreciated the country education strategy exercise which was built into the course to provide participants an opportunity to apply what they were learning<sup>36</sup>.
- Participant view on course content/topics: Participants for the most part liked the course topics. In particular they appreciated: the opportunity to learn more about the USG/USAID policy/strategic context as well as how to link education with other USAID technical sectors; the Out-of-School Youth module (its content along with innovative and highly interactive presentation methodology); and the two days devoted to the theme of Education Reform (the participatory methodology which forced participants to think; course content delivered by individuals who are internationally recognized experts in their respective fields). Several participants indicated that, were the course to be delivered again, they would like to see the topic of workforce development woven into the course design.
- What participants would like to see changed in the future: Key aspects of the pilot that the participants would like to see changed in the future included: (1) the location of the facility where the course was given, which they found to be too isolated; (2) limited access to computers and Internet (several said they would like to have 6-8 computers with Internet access); (3) several saw an excessive use of PowerPoint in presentations, especially during the first week of the course; (4) more time in the evenings for networking.

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<sup>35</sup> One of the documents generated from the evaluation is a summary that, by module, provides specific feedback provided both by presenters and observers.

<sup>36</sup> What participants particularly liked about the country education strategy included: good application of knowledge (4 participants), highly participatory exchange of ideas (3 participants), excellent content (2 participants), final results useful, team work a positive, valuable opportunity for technical exchange, opportunity for analysis & presentation. Many, however, did not like the fact that they were asked to work on their strategies after class hours (which was perceived as an excessive demand on their free time and conflicted with informal networking and Open Space). Several found the initial instructions confusing but seemed satisfied once these instructions were clarified and reporting requirements trimmed midway into the first week.

- **Participant views on ideal course length:** There was no consensus among the participants on the ideal length for an Education Overview Course: 44 percent of the participants agreed with the actual course length; 56 percent did not agree. There was also a wide variation in response on ideal course length: 25 percent recommended 5-6 days; 20 percent said 7-8 days; 32 percent recommended 10 days; and 27 percent suggested other lengths.

## Highlights of what Participants Learned/Took Back with them to Post

*What participants might use/apply from the pilot upon returning to post:* Most participants listed between two and four items that they might use/apply from the pilot upon return to their posts (see Appendix G: Preparing to Return to Post). While there was a wide variety of responses -- as would be expected given the rich diversity of the participants -- the following topics were mentioned with most frequency: country education strategy development (9 responses), USAID/USG strategy and policy (7 responses), linkages between education and other sectors (5 responses), education reform (4 responses), and the gender equality framework (3 responses). Illustrative comments follow:

*I plan to share with our recipients the Gender Equality framework and the roadmap to ensure that this component is appropriately addressed throughout our education activity. I will share the information on how education can support health activities within my SO team (participant from LAC).*

*I definitely will apply the broad education policy and cross sector integration in future SOWs. The gender template will be useful as will be the questions that come out of the EQUIP 2 presentation (participant from ANE).*

*I will put the education reform, gender integration, and policy/strategy context into immediate use. Other areas also will be used whenever necessary (participant from Africa).*

*I will be able to look at the upcoming mission strategy writing process through the lens of policy and strategy context and hopefully redirect or help shape more clearly the foci for the education interventions in the forthcoming strategy period (participant from E&E).*

**Ability, at the end of the pilot, to address issues they brought with them to the course:** Thirteen out of 19 participants who responded indicated that they were better prepared to address the issues that they brought with them to the course (see Appendix G: Preparing to Return to Post). Of those who indicated that they were not, most indicated that this was because the issues they brought were either not relevant to topics addressed at the course, too mission specific or too technical. Illustrative comments follow:

*Yes, to a large extent! I have a better understanding of Washington's context and how to apply it. I have a much better understanding of policy reform. Replication and sustainability of programs is still a question but the activity that the EQUIP 2 people did about replicating*

*conditions rather than activities will be very helpful in developing a better understanding and making program decisions.*

*Yes, not directly, but the opportunity to think about the issues (strategy development) from multiple perspectives, bounce ideas off a diverse set of professionals from different offices and regions and to have time to reflect on how to present and apply ideas in the mission setting has been absolutely wonderful!*

*No. I brought complicated issues to begin with. Measuring quality was discussed but I realized that each mission (region) has a different perspective on what quality is, depending on the issues they are facing. I didn't hear about operational complications from other Missions but that was not an objective of this course (more suited to address in CTO training).*

*No, but I think my issues were too technical and were not addressed directly. However, other colleagues I met here will play an important role in aiding me. I have a few colleagues that I think are key and I will be contacting them shortly.*

## **Reflections on the Pilot from Trainers, Course Designers, and GEM CTO**

On October 28 – two weeks following the course -- the course designers gathered trainers from the three partners and the GEM CTO together to undertake a joint review from a trainers' perspective of what worked and didn't work, and to discuss what should be changed or improved should this course be offered again.

- Reflections on what worked: (1) the tremendous diversity of course participants, along with having information up front about the backgrounds of each of the participants to assist session presenters in tailoring their presentations; (2) setting aside ten days for course delivery; (3) where applied, the guiding principles for adult learning ; (4) using ongoing feedback from participants (from daily evaluations, other interactions with participants) to make adjustments in course delivery; (5) the learner exercise conducted the first day of the course, which permitted participants to put themselves into the shoes of the learners who are ultimately USAID's beneficiaries; (6) having session presenters attend the session directly preceding theirs along with setting time aside before their sessions to brief them on what seemed to be working/not working with the participants ;<sup>37</sup> (7) the country education strategy exercise, with some fine tuning; (8) making it possible, through the availability of low-cost telephone cards, for participants to contact family members overseas; (9) preparing and distributing to participants on the last day of the course a CD with course materials and key references.

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<sup>37</sup> Several module presenters used this feedback to make very helpful adjustments to their presentations, which were well received.

- **Adult learning in action:** While there are a number of improvements that could be made, were this course to be offered again, participants experienced some excellent examples of adult learning in action while attending the course: (1) using as a point of departure participants' questions, experience, and concerns; (2) engaging participants in structured discussion; (3) raising thoughtful issues and, in so doing, providing participants with an opportunity to share their own experiences; (4) providing opportunities for deeper reflection and group processes; (5) letting participants, where appropriate, take over the discussions; (6) providing cognitive igniters (facilitation tools to get people thinking, such as the learner exercise) that lead to a more dynamic learning environment; (7) using symbolic reflection (e.g., toy cars) to generate new learning pathways.
- **Reflections on what didn't work:** (1) too much was crammed into both the daily course delivery and into the evenings; (2) some topics that required in-depth review were given insufficient time, leading to a sense that they were dealt with too superficially; (3) in spite of attempts made to provide linkages across sessions, there was a sense that a number of modules (for example, out-of-school youth, education in emergencies, education and HIV/AIDS) were delivered in isolation of other course topics when they could have been addressed more effectively had they been integrated into other sessions; (4) the two facilitators were, at times, overwhelmed and there was some confusion in terms of their role vis-à-vis course presenters and USAID/W Advisory Group observers; (5) too much reliance on the use of PowerPoint in presentations; (6) some sessions were not interactive enough; in these sessions, participants were either not engaged or overwhelmed with too much information; (7) insufficient opportunities built into the course for participants to apply what they were learning to their country situations (e.g., daily journaling did not take place as planned, there was insufficient time set aside for reflections on the last day as they were preparing to return to post); (8) the conceptual framework, designed to serve as an overarching theme in the course, did not develop as planned.

## **Recommendations for Future Course Design/Delivery**

The following recommendations represent the results of an iterative process that culminated on Thursday, November 3 in a meeting where the insights reflected above were shared with USAID/W Advisory Group members who, in turn, commented on and added to the list of recommendations that appear below.

### **A. Course Design<sup>38</sup>**

#### Build on:

- The specific session objectives, lessons plans, materials generated, and the lessons learned from sessions delivered at the Education Overview Pilot. The pilot has generated a great deal

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<sup>38</sup> A number of the recommendations included in this section will require careful prior consideration. Some imply significant changes in the course design, others imply trade-offs between contents that are currently in the course and new contents that, given a time limit for the course, may have to be added in at the expense of existing contents.

of excellent material that needs to be closely reviewed and, as appropriate, incorporated by those responsible for designing and delivering a future Education Overview Course.

- The excellent start made at the pilot in applying adult learning methodologies.
- Strengthen attempts to have participants bring issues with them that they and their mission colleagues would like to see addressed at the course, complemented by providing opportunities for participants to focus on ways of addressing these issues.

Revise:

- Replace general course results with a list of specific course results/competencies that are achievable within the course time frame. To ensure appropriateness to USAID needs, qualified USAID staff should take the lead in doing this.
- The course results/competencies should ideally address specific education skills and knowledge presented in the education skills/knowledge list. The results should also focus on better equipping participants to take a seat at the table in their missions with regard to the role of education in the overall mission portfolio and to make better decisions vis-à-vis their education programs.
- Design sessions based on specific results/competencies rather than having course sessions address discrete modules, as was done for the pilot. Take steps to ensure seamless achievement of these results/competencies.
- Assign qualified USAID staff to collaborate closely with those responsible for course design and delivery to ensure that: (1) results/competencies are being achieved, and (2) important USAID content/slants are addressed appropriately.
- Where possible, increase participation of field staff in designing and delivering course sessions.

**B. Course Topics**

Revise:

- While most participants liked all of the course topics,<sup>39</sup> there is reason to question whether all of these topics can be adequately addressed in a 10-day period. In redesigning the course results, consideration needs to be given as to which topics should remain. The same number of topics could remain if some topics are scheduled concurrently.
- Incorporate Workforce Development as a topic and consider GDA as a tool with potential for enhancing programming resources.

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<sup>39</sup> The final evaluation revealed that most topics offered were seen as appropriate, with some given higher marks (e.g., policy/strategy context, primary education, out-of-school youth, education reform, post-primary education, education finance, situating education within the Mission, education decentralization, and gender integration).

- Include Gender Integration as a topic; provide orientation to session presenters before the course on how to integrate gender equity into their presentations.
- Assure that the participants, on a daily basis, reflect on what they had learned that day and how might they apply what they learned to their jobs; perhaps time could be set aside, in class, every other day. Unfortunately, reflection time was only partially accomplished in this course; assuring adequate reflection time should be a key focus of future course design/delivery.
- Spend more time on program assessment: where to put resources, how to decide where to allocate resources for education programs.

### **C. Course Structure**

#### Maintain:

- The wide diversity of participants represented in the pilot, building on their diversity to enhance the course design.
- The current length of the Education Overview Course (10 days).
- The guiding principles for adult learning and key elements underlying course delivery around which the Education Overview Pilot was designed.
- The Country Education Strategy, with modifications, or alternatively select another theme that draws course material together yet still is applicable to participants' country situations.
- Open Space, with more advanced planning, yet maintaining flexibility for Open Space to evolve once the course starts.
- The practice of having session presenters attend the session prior to theirs, while at the same time receiving a briefing on what participants have liked/disliked to date; consider whether having session presenters stay on through the next day to be available to meet participants one-on-one is useful and cost-effective.
- Active involvement of participants in designing and conducting daily evaluations, mid-term and final evaluations.
- Asking participants to do a self-assessment based on the education skills/knowledge list prior to the course and again at the end, but focusing specifically on skills and knowledge that are relevant to the Education Overview Course.
- A visit to a local elementary school at end of course (or maybe even during the course if the location makes this possible).

Revise:

- Build in more time prior to course delivery for presenters to design their sessions and to assure integration into overall course design; include dry runs of sessions to ensure that they adequately meet the objectives of the course design.
- In order to free up evenings for participant networking, incorporate group work on Country Education Strategies and some of the Open Space activities into the daily course schedule.
- Taking into account that there will be participants who are jet lagged, ensure that the first day is more tightly designed; if there is to be a welcoming evening dinner with senior USAID/W officials, consider arranging for the dinner to take place a few days into the course.
- Begin each morning with a review of the day before and a preview of the coming day; end each day with a wrap-up.
- Allow more time during an average course day for announcements, evaluation, journaling, etc.
- Have session presenters prepare a data-rich summary (maximum two pages) for each session.
- Have participants meet periodically during the course in regional groupings; as appropriate, arrange to have these groups carry out activities/exercises that are appropriate to their regions.
- Fine-tune and strengthen the conceptual framework as an overarching theme running throughout the course.
- Include a visit to the Ronald Reagan Building where participants would have an opportunity to meet with relevant central and regional education staff.
- Ensure more presence/visibility of USAID/W leadership at the course.<sup>40</sup>
- Build in follow-on/evaluation after the course is completed.

***D. Course Logistics and Flow***

Maintain:

- Formation of participant committees to play an active role in guiding key aspects of course delivery.
- Daily evaluations and adjustments based on feedback from the evaluations.

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<sup>40</sup> It was unfortunate that EGAT/ED Director John Grayzel was in Paris during the course and therefore could not attend.

- Low-cost long distance telephone calling cards.

Revise:

- Add one more person to handle course logistics, allowing course facilitators to focus on facilitation.
- Have a photocopier available.
- Increase the number of computers and availability of Internet access.
- Achieve further clarity vis-à-vis the role of the course facilitators.
- Be prepared to assist participants in mailing their materials home at the end of the course by providing boxes, tape, etc.
- Assure that key observers, as well as participants, have binders.

**E. Consider**

- Making the next course a pilot. While a number of useful insights emerged from this course, there are a number of aspects that still need to be piloted, such as a more integrated course design flowing from a list of concrete, achievable results identified by USAID staff.
- The appropriate balance of course time to be devoted to USAID-specific priorities and needs versus time to be spent providing participants with up-to-date technical information on lessons learned and best practices in key areas of USAID interest in education.
- The pros and cons of inviting USAID education staff who are new to the Agency to attend the Education Overview Course versus having them wait until they have been in the Agency 6 months to a year, have taken the CTO/PAL/PPM courses, and consequently, have acquired at least some minimal knowledge of USAID.
- If elements of the course should be contracted out, weigh the pros and cons of running the course through one central contractor/partner versus working within the existing USAID education partner structure.
- The pros and cons, as well as the feasibility of designing and delivering a separate education overview course that focuses on helping education staff to operate more effectively in the USAID environment.
- In developing country education strategies, the pros and cons of working within participants' regional groups versus working in cross-regional groups on a country not necessarily in one's region.

- How best to integrate higher education and training into the Education Overview Course, given that neither topic easily meshes with other course topics.
- The pros and cons of permitting USAID/W staff, who are not full-time participants, to drop in and out of the course.
- The pros and cons of identifying a more accessible location for the course.