

Food Aid Commodity Management Workshops

Cumulative Project Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

USAID's Food for Peace office oversees more than 130 food aid programs each year which are implemented by a spectrum of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs). Some PVOs are extremely experienced, while others are relatively new to the management of food aid commodity programs. Changes in the awardees implementing food aid programs are often accompanied by a decline in staff institutional knowledge regarding FFP rules and regulations as well as a loss of hands-on experience implementing food aid programs in challenging and/or conflict environments. The result of these knowledge "gaps" is an incorrect understanding of and compliance with FFP processes and procedures.

Therefore, in December 2010, FFP engaged the Capable Partners Program (CAP) team through the award of an Associate Cooperative Agreement to conduct a series of five technical assistant workshops on food aid commodity management. The primary aim of the workshops was to improve the capacity and skill sets of personnel working in the field of food aid commodity management. These five workshops built upon a pilot workshop implemented by the CAP team for 20 commodity managers in Lusaka, Zambia, in August 2009. The curriculum developed and lessons learned from that pilot workshop became the starting point for the Food Aid Commodity Management (FACM) workshops implemented under this award.

The FACM workshops reinforced the ability of PVO personnel to successfully and efficiently manage food aid programs in compliance with USAID rules and regulations. Each workshop was designed to emphasize the primary processes – programmatic, managerial, reporting and financial – needed to effectively protect, manage and distribute food aid commodities. In addition, the workshops provided an opportunity to strengthen international and local NGO networks tied to food security and food aid programs.

Four technical workshops targeted PVO commodity management staff, three of which were held overseas and one was held in Washington, DC. One workshop, also held in Washington, DC, was tailored specifically for FFP staff. The dates and locations of the five food aid commodity management workshops are as follows:

1. Dakar, Senegal – March 14-18, 2011
2. Washington, DC – May 2-6, 2011
3. Washington, DC – August 22-25, 2011
4. Chittagong, Bangladesh – October 16-20, 2011
5. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – February 13 -17, 2012

The sections of this cumulative project report describe the research, design and development of content, the selection of speakers and participants, the agendas and modules for each workshop, changes in level of knowledge as a result of workshop participation, lessons learned and how commodity managers have integrated workshop material into their jobs. In addition, this report assesses the use of various teaching techniques to increase the knowledge level of workshop participants.

II. Workshop Research and Planning

A. Purpose

PVO headquarters staff needs different kinds of information than that needed by field staff; FFP personnel in Washington play a different role than Mission-based FFP staff. However, all stakeholders need to understand and appreciate each other's roles, responsibilities and operating environments. The five FACM workshops were designed to address the spectrum of stakeholder needs with regard to food aid commodity management. The purpose of the workshops was, therefore, to strengthen participants' understanding of the general tenets of USAID/DCHA/FFP commodity management and enhance their ability to ensure food aid commodities successfully reach their targeted beneficiaries. The workshops' learning objectives were designed so that, after participating in a workshop, participants would be able to apply the knowledge and materials discussed and operationalize best practices in food aid commodity management. To reinforce the learnings, participants were asked to develop short presentations on commodity management to train home-country program staff and local partners.

B. Key informants and advisory committee

Upon program launch, the CAP team reviewed materials from the 2009 Zambia FACM workshop and conducted a brief review of literature and documents published since 2009. The agenda, modules and activities were the starting point to refine and develop materials for this program's first workshop in Dakar, Senegal. Through discussions with the FFP AOR and other key informants from the 2009 Zambia FACM workshop, the CAP team generated a list of individuals within FFP who could serve on an advisory committee to provide guidance on the suggested content modules, complementary activities and their sequencing at the workshop. Once the agenda and specific modules were determined, the advisory committee was also tasked with reviewing the presentations to ensure accuracy of content and eliminate contradictions or redundancies. The individuals serving on the advisory committee are listed hereunder:

- Juli Majernick, AOR/USAID/Washington, DC
- Zema Semunegus, Regional Food for Peace Team Leader/USAID/Dakar, Senegal
- Dramane Mariko, Food for Peace Officer/USAID/Dakar, Senegal
- Lori Du Trieuille, Food for Peace Officer/USAID/Washington, DC
- Sylvia Moore, Operations Team Leader/USAID/Washington, DC

Following the initial meeting of the advisory committee, individual committee members were contacted by the FFP-AOR and CAP team on an as-needed basis to review materials and comment on the workshop agenda, per their area of expertise and availability

The CAP FACM staff interviewed more than 70 subject-matter experts about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of commodity management in FFP programs. The team spoke with a variety of stakeholders, including senior NGO commodity managers, FFP Officers in Washington DC and overseas, and those who work in supporting institutions like USAID/OAA Transportation and USDA. *Appendix 1* provides a list of the key informants contacted.

To facilitate the interviews with technical experts and key informants, we shared with them a draft workshop agenda with short module descriptions. Interviewees were then asked questions such as:

- What are the most important topics to cover in a workshop on commodity management? What are the least important topics?
- Do you have any feedback or reaction to the topics listed?
- Do you know of anyone who would be a particularly good speaker on any of the topics?
- Are there any training materials, internal to your organization or that you have seen at other trainings, that you have found to be accurate, relevant or valuable?
- Can you suggest other individuals we should talk with about food aid commodity management?

The key informant interviews enabled the CAP team to further refine module topics, learning objectives and content. Feedback was also solicited from the FFP AOR, advisory committee members and other subject matter experts via e-mail and telephone.

C. Selection of presenters

The CAP FACM team identified workshop speakers and presenters in a variety of ways. During the workshop planning process, USAID/Mission and USAID/Washington staff suggested NGO commodity managers and senior leaders knowledgeable in particular subject areas. Recommendations for workshop speakers were also gathered as part of the feedback from local NGOs about the workshop agenda and content. USAID/FFP staff members who were able to join us during the workshops were asked to speak to areas of their expertise.

D. Selection of participants

As noted previously, the FACM workshops were expressly designed to give relevant, practical and applicable information to personnel directly involved with some aspect of food aid commodity management and/or reporting on food aid programs to FFP. Consequently, for the PVO-oriented workshops, it was critical to invite field-based individuals. In almost all cases, country representatives, chiefs of party or program leaders were not invited to attend. Please see section *D/ Inclusion of Chiefs of Party* below for a more detailed discussion of this topic.

To begin the participant selection process, the CAP team updated the “Expression of Interest” (application) form that had been used to recruit participants for the 2009 Zambia pilot workshop. Once finalized, the application was disseminated through the FFP Food Aid Consultative Group (FACG) listserv to notify PVOs of upcoming FACM workshops and the criteria for participation. Additionally, when workshops had a regional or country focus, the appropriate FFP Officer was asked to alert the relevant PVOs. We asked each interested commodity manager to apply for the workshop. On the application (sample provided in *Appendix 2*), commodity managers were asked to describe their work roles and responsibilities, topics of interest, area of expertise and length of time in the field.

Applications were shared with USAID/FFP staff and the participant list was compiled collaboratively, based on job roles, English proficiency, and location and type of food aid program. Commodity managers from newly awarded FFP programs were given preference over staff in other job tracks or from NGOs whose staff had already received training. For workshops in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, a specified number of slots were given to each NGO operating in that region; senior managers at those organizations then decided on participants.

Because the workshops were intended to be as interactive and participatory as possible, the CAP team, in collaboration with the FFP AOR, strove to limit attendance to twenty (20) participants. In some instances, attendance was allowed to go as high as 37 because of the need for such in-depth and fundamental training.

The selection criteria which had been developed previously were used again, with the most important criterion being that a potential participant be directly involved with food aid commodity management. Other criteria used to select participants included:

- Project was ongoing for at least one (1) year after the workshop;
- English language abilities. Although the workshops were conducted in English, fluency was not required as all participants were expected to have basic proficiency in reading, writing and speaking English. Translators were hired only for the Ethiopia workshop;
- Geographic location. The overseas workshops were regional and therefore drew from PVOs implementing food aid programs throughout that particular region;
- Length of time working in the field;
- Diversity of positions in the field;
- Quality of program (i.e., was a program running smoothly? Could attendance by a program staff member help get a program back on track?)

With final guidance from the FFP AOR, invitations were sent to the most appropriate applicants, who represented the breadth and depth of personnel currently implementing food aid programs. Complete lists of workshop participants can be found in *Appendix 3*.

A further discussion of the participants attending each workshop is discussed in the section related to a particular workshop.

Participation of Sub-Awardees

In general, we invited commodity managers from among the primary PVO grantees implementing FFP programs to participate in the FACM workshops. However, for the Bangladesh workshop, commodity managers from both prime and sub-awardees were invited to participate. Prior to the workshop, the two groups had interacted only in formal settings, during field visits, warehouse inspections or visits to a distribution site. Feedback from both prime and sub-awardees indicated they were grateful for the opportunity to get to know each other in the more casual workshop environment. For many of the sub-awardees, the workshop was the first time they had met either USAID staff or staff on other food aid commodity management projects. These connections helped them put Bangladesh's food aid program imperatives into a larger context and better understand how their organization supports those imperatives.

One item we did not take sufficiently into account was the poor English-language skills of sub-awardees. Participants from the sub-awardee organization found it difficult to follow formal English-language presentations and to participate in the technical discussions. The situation was overcome with the help of many senior commodity managers and a facilitator, who were willing to translate key points and lead discussions into Bangla. Without their assistance, many participants would have missed both the key concepts and the technical discussions.

Inclusion of Chiefs of Party (COPs)

Through informal discussions with participants, we learned that one of the obstacles to finding support for improved commodity management was gaining the attention of NGO senior managers. Mid-level commodity managers in particular felt that if senior managers did not understand the importance of proper commodity management and the risks of improper management, then changing practices would not be supported. As a result of these conversations, the CAP team invited each program's chief of party (COP) to participate in the first day of the Ethiopia workshop. These sessions were: the program basics, Regional Inspector General Audits and the overview of Regulation 11.

The results of this initiative were mixed. Of the seven COPs invited, four attended the session. Because of limited time and heavy workloads, the attending COPs were unable to engage fully with the material. Significantly, it also appeared that the mid-level commodity managers were less inclined to actively participate in the sessions with their COPs present. Should there be a need in the future to disseminate information to COPs, it may be more effective to plan a separate break-out session for COPs only, or to invite COPs to one of the last days of the workshop, when participants are more relaxed.

III. Workshop locations, venues and logistics

This section describes the process for selecting the locations of the five FACM workshops. Venue and logistics for workshops 1 - 4 have each been discussed in-depth in previously submitted quarterly performance reports. Therefore, this cumulative report will summarize the logistics and procurement processes for all the workshops and give detailed coverage of the final workshop, which was held in Ethiopia from February 13 – 17, 2012.

A. Locations: Workshops 1 - 5

Locations for the five FACM workshops were determined in close collaboration with the FFP AOR. During the proposal submission stage, the FFP AOR made it known that at least one of the workshops would be held in Washington, DC, and at least three would be held overseas. Dakar, Senegal, was chosen as the site for the first workshop in order to dovetail with another FFP event, economizing on travel for USG and PVO personnel. It was decided to hold the second workshop in Washington, DC, for FFP personnel and PVO field staff from Latin and Central America in order to “pilot” test some of the workshop modules on a primarily domestic audience. Evaluations from the Washington, DC, workshop were factored into the decision to hold another DC-based workshop in late summer, 2012, for a FFP-only audience. A final decision to hold the fourth workshop in Bangladesh was made in June 2011 because of the size and scope of the FFP portfolio (the largest in Asia and 59,000+ MT in FY 2011) and because many of the PVO implementing partners were new to FFP. This gave the CAP team ample time to coordinate the logistics for the Bangladesh workshop.

Discussions were held with the FFP AOR and FFP offices overseas about whether the fifth and final workshop should be held in Nairobi or Ethiopia for an East Africa target audience. It was decided in late October, 2011, that the last workshop would be held in Ethiopia due to the size of the FFP portfolio of programs, the deep need of PVO implementers and lower costs.

B. Procurement Processes

Procurement for all the workshops implemented under this award included: finding appropriate meeting space, reserving lodging and air travel for key speakers from the PVO community and locating reputable and cost-effective catering services.

The procurement of all goods and services followed USG guidelines. As much as possible, procurement was based on open-bid solicitations from reputable vendors that were all made aware of pre-established criteria for their submissions. Acceptable facilities for overseas workshops were sometimes limited, for example Bangladesh and Ethiopia. In such situations, only two vendors that met all the criteria could be evaluated. To fulfill some needs for the Washington, DC, workshops, FHI 360 relied upon a list of approved vendors whose services had been secured by corporate central services for long-term contractual relationships through competitive bidding processes.

Participants in the August workshop were FFP staff; hence, attendees travelling from abroad coordinated their own travel and lodging per USG guidelines.

C. Ethiopia food aid commodity management workshop

Logistics

Logistic preparations for the workshop began in late October 2011. It was determined, in conjunction with the FFP AOR and the Ethiopian mission staff, that the workshop would be held from February 13 – 17, 2012.

As with each of the workshops thus far in the FACM series, CAP staff undertook simultaneous logistical activities to prepare for the workshop. These activities included: finding appropriate meeting space; reserving lodging and air travel for key speakers from the PVO community; conducting research and locating a reputable and cost-effective catering service; ensuring all catered meals and snacks were properly prepared, culturally sensitive and took into account special dietary needs; and other tasks as needed such as engaging fixer/translators and local transportation. Logistical preparations for the Ethiopia workshop also included hiring a well-qualified local consultant to support our logistics and translation service needs on site.

Similar to the two other overseas workshops held in Dakar, Senegal, and Chittagong, Bangladesh, attendees of the Ethiopian FACM were made aware that the responsibility of travel and lodging rested with them or their PVO. However, to ensure that registered participants were safe, comfortable and able to attend, the CAP team researched and provided a “Best Value Hotels” list for lodging possibilities near the workshop venue as well as negotiating a rate with the Jupiter Hotel low enough to fit within most PVO training budgets.

Due to language barriers and the challenges of holding a successful workshop in a city with limited business services, the CAP team hired a local consultant to assist with basic translation services and logistics coordination for the duration of the event. The FHI Ethiopia office was contacted by CAP Senior Program Officer, Lauren Barbour, in advance of the workshop to ask for their assistance in finding support personnel. The FHI-Ethiopia field staff recommended that we place advertisements for the consultant position. On January 26, 2012, two ads were placed in Addis-based periodicals (“The

Daily Monitor” and another local language paper) seeking CVs and requesting a daily rate; A total of 17 responses were received.

After a thorough comparison of the responses, four candidates were short-listed based on fulfillment of necessary criteria. One of these four candidates, Aynie Habtabu, was then cut from the list due to unavailability for the dates required. The remaining candidates were compared and a lowest-cost selection matrix was used to identify the chosen consultant, Yenebilh Bantayehu Zena,

Venue

By early November 2011, the CAP team found three locations with availability during the target dates for the workshop. Bids seeking a conference room able to accommodate 35 participant attendees as well as up to eight senior level/chief of party guests, two CAP staff and two to three instructors were solicited from: The Hotel Intercontinental, the Harmony Hotel, and the Jupiter International Hotel. A quote from the Sheraton Hotel was also submitted; however, because their room rate fell outside of USG per diem rates, it was not included in the final comparison.

The CAP team also spoke with colleagues from the FHI 360 FANTA-2 project, as they had held their own event at the Jupiter International Hotel in October 2011. The FANTA-2 staff reported in a memo dated September 27, 2011, that the Jupiter Hotel was best suited to host workshops because of its conference services and amenities. Furthermore, the Jupiter Hotel offered steeply discounted room rates and could accommodate all participant reservations needed for the FACM workshop. As a result, although the Jupiter Hotel was not the lowest priced hotel, the room rates still fell well within USG allowable lodging per diem, the conference center pricing did not deviate significantly from the other quotes received, and it was both close to the airport and a highly functional conference facility. It was therefore selected based on it providing the best value in fulfilling the necessary criteria to hold a successful workshop.

Workshop Materials

A total of 17 modules along with associated handouts and copies of Regulation 211 were printed and compiled in binders for a total of over 250 pages of material. Fifty binders were created for the 35 attendees, 8 guests and 7 workshop staff and speakers. All materials used during the workshop, including reference documents and other hand-outs, were distributed in electronic format on a CD data disk included in the binders.

Transportation

On the third day of the workshop, the group travelled to a food aid warehouse on the outskirts of Addis Ababa which is managed by the World Food Programme (WFP). The site was located approximately 35 km from the Jupiter Hotel. Ethio-National Transportation and Tours was the transport company selected based on a lowest-cost matrix.

IV. Curriculum Development

A. Design Methods

The CAP team believed that a holistic understanding of the supply chain and program operations would provide an overall benefit for the participants and their respective food aid programs, regardless of the role or responsibilities of workshop participants. Therefore, the workshop curriculum was designed to refresh and reinforce food aid commodity managers' abilities to implement programs in compliance with FFP rules and regulations. Workshop modules, materials and activities addressed each step in the supply chain, comprehensively covering the fundamentals of commodity management.

As noted in the introduction, the series of five FACM workshops drew heavily on the CAP team's experiences designing and implementing the pilot Food Aid Commodity Management Workshop held in Zambia in August 2009. Feedback from the Zambia workshop was incorporated as much as possible into the design of the current series of workshops. An advisory panel comprised of FFP staff, subject matter experts and the CAP team collaborated on the workshops' format and design.

1. *Workshop Length:* Participants in Zambia told CAP that the workshop should be longer to have more time for Q&A and networking with each other. As a result, the workshop was expanded from four to five days.
2. *Commodity distribution and monitoring.* Based on survey responses from the Zambia participants, modules were added that covered commodity management at the end of the supply chain, for example, during food distributions and monitoring food aid.
3. *Field Trip:* In Lusaka, participants visited a local warehouse managed by WFP where they viewed warehouse operations. Participants were enthusiastic about this portion of the workshop and suggested such hands-on experiences be offered in all future trainings.

The development of module content was an iterative process whereby the CAP team debriefed after every workshop with the FFP AOR about context, modules, goals and lessons learned for the upcoming workshops. In addition, the CAP team solicited and reviewed feedback from in-country FFP personnel about commodity management practices of the local grantees and their strengths and weaknesses. The CAP team compiled all the feedback from the FFP AOR debriefs, FFP field personnel, key informant interviews and participant evaluations to tailor the curriculum to the needs of the target audience and the workshop's local context. Participant evaluations also helped determine which sessions were most useful for commodity managers. For example, when the USAID/Bangladesh team shared concerns about NGO standard operating procedures during sudden onset emergencies, the CAP team developed a workshop module to address commodity management in emergency situations.

Overall, FACM workshop modules addressed each step in the food aid supply chain, comprehensively covering the basics of commodity management. The majority of sessions contained a formal instructional portion and a question and answer (Q&A) period. The CAP team encouraged speakers to be engaging and interactive, with a focus on the specific topics a commodity manager needs to successfully fulfill his/her role and responsibilities.

The majority of workshop modules followed to the same structure: a formal instructional presentation, followed by a Q&A/discussion period to allow for sharing of commodity management experiences. This segment was given approximately 25% of the session's total time allotment

Table 1 lists the titles of the modules covered in each Food Aid Commodity Management workshop. The specific content within each session varied depending upon the presenter, audience and workshop location.

Table 1: Food Aid Commodity Workshops Topics

	Topic	Commodity Management for NGO Staff				For FFP Staff
		Dakar, Senegal	Washington, DC	Chittagong, Bangladesh	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Washington, DC
1	Introduction to FFP and the Programming Cycle	X	X	X	X	
2	Available Commodities	X	X	X	X	X
3	Regional Inspector General Audits and Recommendations	X	X	X	X	X
4	Commodity Requests and the PREP	X	X	X	X	X
5	Commodity Losses and Mitigation	X	X	X	X	X
6	Commodity Disposal	X	X	X	X	X
7	Reporting	X	X	X	X	X
8	Receiving Commodities	X	X	X	X	X
9	Commodity Management Overview Exercise	X		X		
10	Regulation 11 Review		X	X	X	
11	Warehousing – Field Trip and Wrap Up	X		X	X	
12	Commodity Distribution	X		X	X	
13	End Use Monitoring	X		X	X	
14	Environmental Considerations and Fumigation		X	X		X
15	Food Aid Quality Study		X		X	X
16	Emergency Programs			X	X	X
17	Monetization		X			X
18	Ocean Transport – USAID/OAA perspective		X			

19	Prepo Program and Port Activities		X			
20	FANTA-2		X			
21	Gender		X			
22	Communication		X			
23	TOPS		X		X	
24	IT Inventory Systems		X	X		
25	Nutrition 101				X	X
26	Field Operations		X			
27	Freight Forwarding		X			
28	A CBOs Observations		X			

B. Specialized modules and initiatives

With each workshop, the CAP team pilot-tested different methods of presenting commodity management concepts, such as specialized topics and interactive exercises. Some sessions, like the field trips to warehouses and the Port of Baltimore, were very popular with participants and provided opportunities to discuss real-world scenarios and share best practices.

Modules for Washington, DC

A number of specialized modules were developed especially for the FFP and PVO-headquarters-based personnel attending the two Washington, DC, workshops.

USAID’s Sharmel Genthon leads the USAID effort to revise the FFP monetization manual and provided an update on the monetization project. Similarly, Washington-based staff from FFP/POD and USAID/OAA Transportation was available to present on, respectively, prepositioning and ocean transport and to share their expertise on food-aid operations. Subject matter experts in nutrition, gender and freight forwarding were also invited to make presentations specifically tailored for the FFP and PVO headquarters staff who attended the Washington, DC, workshops. A list of the speakers and their module titles is attached as *Appendices 5 and 6*.

Supply Chain Management Overview

Khawaja Adeeb, Deputy Director of Commodity Management at Save the Children, led a highly interactive and engaging exercise on supply chain management at two of the overseas workshops in Dakar, Senegal, and Chittagong, Bangladesh. In this 3-hour activity, participants were asked to plan the response to a natural disaster emergency scenario and design what would be needed for the supply chain. In small groups, participants then planned all the steps needed to set up a warehouse, ensure that the port is ready to receive food aid commodities, organize the community and distribute commodities. The lists of steps drafted by the participants were posted and on display during the week of the conference for reference. This comprehensive overview of the entire supply chain was the “kick-off” module for the Senegal and Bangladesh workshops. The supply chain was then broken down into its components, with each discussed in a separate module.

Working in small groups, the activity is highly effective and popular as it exposed attendees to the entirety of the supply chain and prompted them to think comprehensively about it. Over the course of the exercise, more experienced participants emerged as leaders and subject matter experts, guiding their less experienced colleagues through the process. The visual presentation of all the steps (on display for the conference duration) clearly demonstrated the interconnected complexity of food aid programs and how time-dependent those steps are.

Poster Session

In Bangladesh and Ethiopia, we hosted a poster session in which PVO implementing partners were asked to prepare a visual display, or poster, about commodity management in their programs and present it to the group. The only strict criterion was that posters should be approximately 1 meter x 1 meter in size. On the first day of the workshop, we hung the posters in the conference room where they remained throughout the week. On day two, we dedicated 45 minutes to walk through the "gallery", and each team had the opportunity to talk about its poster and program.

Commodity managers, who are often left out of broader programmatic discussions, were asked to take the lead to share information about their programs such as beneficiaries, goals and commodity management practices as well as to learn about the work of other organizations. Participants were then able to compare their programs and processes, and get to know each other more informally. Feedback on this session was very positive, and we recommend repeating this at future events.

Group Presentations

Building upon the CAP experience in Zambia, each attendee in Dakar, Senegal, was asked to contribute to a 10-minute presentation on commodity management. Participants selected one of five topics: port operations, warehousing, commodity distribution, end-use monitoring or preventing losses. As a small group, the participants prepared a short power point presentation, which was then delivered to the entire training group on the final day. The aim of this activity was to arm each participant with simple, accessible materials on commodity management topics of interest and value which could be shared with colleagues in their own or other programs.

This initiative was extremely successful, resulting in short, cogent presentations on basic commodity management topics. Part of the success was due to the demographics of the workshop participants, who were mid- to senior-level commodity or program managers, most of whom had managerial, oversight or training responsibilities. They were furthermore comfortable working in English.

Although successful, we did not repeat this activity at any of our other workshops. For audiences in Washington, DC, we did not feel that participants would find short commodity management lessons and materials useful in their day-to-day work. For audiences in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, we did not feel that participants would have the opportunity to share their presentation with other commodity managers who would benefit from the materials.

V. FACM WORKSHOPS

As noted previously, the CAP team organized and coordinated five food aid commodity management workshops held domestically, in Washington, DC, and internationally. The workshops in Dakar, Senegal (1), Washington, DC (2), and Chittagong, Bangladesh (1), have been covered in detail in previously submitted Quarterly Performance Reports. This section summarizes those four workshops as well as the fifth workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The logistics and implementation of the fifth workshop were previously described more fully in section 3.C.

A. Workshop #1: Dakar, Senegal

The first Food Aid Commodity Management (FACM) workshop was held in Dakar, Senegal, from Monday, March 14 to Friday, March 18, 2011, at the Radisson Blu hotel. Workshop participants came from all over the region: 10 countries and 5 different NGO programs (see *Appendix 3*).

An overview of FFP programs was the first session and set the context for the entire workshop. The presentation focused on the framework for the FFP program, office strategy and its legal and regulatory pillars. The session also included a discussion of the types of food aid programs and key programming points that commodity managers should remember. A discussion of the commodities used in Food for Peace programming and the mechanisms for purchasing commodities followed. The complete agenda for Workshop #1/Dakar, Senegal, is included in *Appendix 4*.

In conjunction with the FFP AOR, the CAP team developed a roster of expert presenters for the Senegal workshop based on key informant interviews. Special effort was placed on finding representatives from the NGO community able to speak to the particular challenges of managing commodities in the field. The speakers represented Food for Peace headquarters perspectives as well as FFP field officers and staff and PVOs involved in managing food aid. The core list of speakers, selected from USAID/FFP offices, PVOs and the CAP team, led and facilitated fourteen different modules.

Speakers at the workshop included:

	Speaker	Organization	Email
1	Keith Adams	USAID/FFP	keadams@usaid.gov
2	Khawaja Adeeb	Save the Children/US	kadeeb@savechildren.org
3	Lauren Barbour	CAP	labarbour@aed.org
4	George Bonnie	OICI	gbonnie@oici.org
5	Patience Komboni	USAID/FFP	pkomboni@usaid.gov
6	Dramane Mariko	USAID/FFP	dmariko@usaid.gov
7	Zema Semunegus	USAID/FFP	zsemunegus@usaid.gov
8	Benjamin Safari	Catholic Relief Services	benjamin.safari@crs.org
9	Lori Du Trieuille	USAID/FFP	ldutrieuille@usaid.gov

B. Workshop #2: Washington, DC

The CAP team held the second FACM workshop in Washington, DC, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, from Monday, May 2 to Friday, May 6, 2011. The primary target audience for this workshop was Washington, DC-based program and commodity managers because the majority of participants had roles and responsibilities much different from those of a field-based commodity manager. However, since this was the sole workshop hosted in the Western Hemisphere PVO staff from Latin America and the Caribbean were also invited to participate. *Appendix 3* provides a list of all workshop attendees.

While the themes and topics remained the same for this workshop as for all the others, the focus was modified to reflect the role of a HQ-based commodity manager. Due to the availability of many subject matter experts, eleven of the twenty modules were newly developed for this workshop. The remaining 9 modules were on topics covered in Senegal, but were either shortened or tailored for the headquarters-based audience. The full agenda for the May 2011 Washington, DC, workshop is included as *Appendix 5*.

Building upon the results and lessons of the Senegal workshop, the CAP team and FFP AOR identified a slate of presenters for the Washington, DC, workshop. Taking advantage of the availability of a number of key Food for Peace partners, a number of expert presenters were identified who could discuss emerging trends or specialized topics, as well as present on core commodity management subjects. For example, Mr. Steven Moody addressed the findings and potential implications of the Food Aid Quality Study, and staff from the USAID/OAA Transportation group discussed their role in arranging ocean transportation for food aid. Project staff from FFP support programs, FANTA-2 and TOPS, discussed their programs and resources. A seasoned NGO commodity manager taught a comprehensive session on field operations – warehousing, transportation, distribution and end-use monitoring. This longer session served as an overview of food aid operations and best practices for those working at headquarters. A representative from USDA Kansas City was invited but was unable to attend due to restrictions on travel and travel funding.

Speakers at the workshop included:

	Speaker	Organization	Email
1	Keith Adams	USAID/FFP	keadams@usaid.gov
2	Lauren Barbour	CAP	labarbour@fhi360.org
3	Owen Calvert	Fintrac	ocalvert@fintrac.com
4	Judy Canahuati	USAID/FFP	jcanahuati@usaid.gov
5	Kristen Cashin	FANTA	kcashin@aed.org
6	Magalie Cineus	Catholic Relief Services/ Haiti	mcineus@ht.crs.org
7	Erika Clesceri	USAID/DCHA/PPM	eclesceri@usaid.gov
8	Cate Cowan	CAP	ccowan@fhi360.org
9	Dina Esposito	USAID/FFP	desposito@usaid.gov
10	Mark Fritzler	TOPS-Save the Children	mfritzler@savechildren.org
11	Sharmel Genthon	USAID/FFP	sgenthon@usaid.gov
12	Steve Gilbert	USAID/FFP	SGilbert@usaid.gov

	Speaker	Organization	Email
13	Charles Hess	FANTA	chess@fhi360.org
14	Amy Holt	AMEX	AHolt@amexdc2.com
15	Michael Lagoon	Fettig & Donalty Inc.	mlagoon@fettigdonalty.com
16	Regina Mackenzie	USAID/FFP	rmackenzie@usaid.gov
17	Paul Majarowitz	USAID/FFP	pmajarowitz@usaid.gov
18	Juli Majernik	USAID/FFP	jmajernik@usaid.gov
19	Cleveland Marsh	USDA	cleveland.marsh@wdc.usda.gov
20	Andrea Molfetto	USAID/M/OAA/TC	amolfetto@usaid.gov
21	Stephen Moody	USAID/FFP	smoody@usaid.gov
22	Sylvia Moore	USAID/FFP	symoore@usaid.gov
23	Paula Quinlan	World Vision/Canada	Paula_Quinlan@worldvision.ca
24	Bridget Ralyea	USAID/FFP	bralyea@usaid.gov
25	Barney Singer	CAP	bsinger@fhi360.org
26	Rachel Vas	USAID/FFP	rvas@usaid.gov
27	Paul Vicinanza	USAID/M/OAA/TC	pvicinanza@usaid.gov

C. Workshop #3: for FFP Staff, Washington, DC

The third FACM workshop was also held in Washington, DC, specifically for FFP staff from Monday, August 22 to Thursday, August 25, 2011. Days one to three were “classroom-style” sessions, and day four was day-long field trip to the port of Baltimore. This workshop focused on commodity management basics and techniques from the perspective of a FFP staff member. In addition to shortening the workshop’s overall duration to four days, each day was also shorter than usual so that USAID staff could meet their ongoing work obligations.

The workshop was an opportunity to review the mechanics of food aid programs with an emphasis on the work of the FFP Officers and the most relevant aspects of commodity management. The four sessions on the Regional Inspector General audits included the roles and responsibilities of the FFP Officer in the audit process. Sessions on the PREP and commodity losses covered the mechanics of food aid programs, again with the responsibilities of the FFP Officer highlighted. A session was dedicated to the role of FFP’s Program Operations Division (POD).

This workshop was an opportunity to discuss new office initiatives, like the Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR), the latest monetization policy and guidance, and partnerships with the World Food Program. It was also an opportunity to discuss best practices and standard operating methods. Camila Chaparro from FANTA-2 talked about the basics of ration design for food aid programs, while Michelle Juarez of USAID/FFP talked about best practices during field visits. On the final day, the group traveled to the port of Baltimore to tour the port facility, observe containerized cargo, port operations and cargo off-loading. The training agenda for the Washington, DC, event is included in *Appendix 6*.

The CAP team and FFP AOR worked closely together to identify appropriate speakers. FFP headquarters staff and technical area leads presented on topics such as working with partners to improve PREP submissions and the findings of the Food Aid Quality Review report. The FFP AOR identified FFP's internal technical experts, who presented on topics of interest to FFP staff, such as FFP's relationship with the World Food Program, emergency response programming and environmental compliance.

Prior to the workshop, the FFP AOR had identified the need for additional training on nutrition. Therefore, a FANTA-2 nutrition expert was asked to develop a presentation on food aid ration design. In collaboration with USAID/OAA Transportation, the CAP team worked with staff at the Mediterranean Shipping Company to design a field trip to the port of Baltimore that included presentations to inform FFP Program Officers about port operations. Speakers included:

	Speaker	Organization	Email
1	Keith Adams	USAID/FFP	keadams@usaid.gov
2	John Brannaman	USAID/FFP	jbrannaman@usaid.gov
3	Camila Chaparro	FHI360/FANTA	cchaparro@fhi360.org
4	Erika Clesceri	USAID/DCHA/PPM	eclesceri@usaid.gov
5	Mauro Dal Bo	Mediterranean Shipping Company	mdalbo@msc.us
6	Sharmel Genthon	USAID/FFP	sgenthon@usaid.gov
7	Steve Gilbert	USAID/FFP	SGilbert@usaid.gov
8	Rebecca Goldman	USAID/FFP	rgoldman@usaid.gov
9	Rachel Grant	USAID/FFP	ragrant@usaid.gov
10	Joseph M. Greco Sr.	Maryland Port Administration	jgreco@marylandports.com
11	Bayard Hogans	Ports America Chesapeake LLC	Bayard.hogans@portsamerica.com
12	Michelle Juarez	USAID/FFP	mjuarez@usaid.gov
13	Juli Majernik	USAID/FFP	jmajernik@usaid.gov
14	Paul Majorowitz	USAID/FFP	pmajorowitz@usaid.gov
15	Stephen Moody	USAID/FFP	smoody@usaid.gov
16	Sylvia Moore	USAID/FFP	symoore@usaid.gov
17	Matthew Nims	USAID/FFP	mnims@usaid.gov
18	Michelle Snow	USAID/FFP	msnow@usaid.gov

D. Workshop #3: Chittagong, Bangladesh

The fourth commodity management training was held in Chittagong, Bangladesh, from Sunday, October 16 to Thursday, October 20, 2011. For this workshop, only NGO staff associated with the food aid programs in Bangladesh participated, and workshop sessions therefore concentrated

on operations within the context of Bangladesh. *Appendix 7* provides the full agenda and *Appendix 3* provides a complete participant list for Workshop #4 in Bangladesh.

In collaboration with FFP staff in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the CAP team and FFP AOR identified presenters to discuss the best practices and challenges of commodity management. The agenda focused not only on the basics of commodity management, but also on the challenges of managing commodities in Bangladesh. The FFP/Dhaka AOR provided detailed suggestions for speakers, and recommended the USAID/Dhaka Environment Officer and the Mission’s Engineer lead sessions on USAID/Dhaka requirements and resources. Special effort was placed on finding representatives from the FFP-grantee community able to speak to the particular challenges of managing commodities in Bangladesh. Khawaja Adeeb, Deputy Director of Commodity Management at Save the Children, assisted with agenda development and workshop facilitation. In late September, we learned that a representative from FFP/POD would not be able to join us in Bangladesh. Speakers at the workshop included:

	Speaker	Organization	Email
1	Khawaja Adeeb	Save the Children	kadeeb@savechildren.org
2	Mustapha El Hamzaoui	USAID/Bangladesh	melhamzaoui@usaid.gov
3	Alamgir Hossain	USAID/Bangladesh	ahossain@usaid.gov
4	Nazmul Kalam	Save the Children	nakalam@savechildren.org
5	Mohammed Kamaruzzaman	USAID/Bangladesh	mkamaruzzaman@usaid.gov
6	Juli Majernik	USAID/FFP	jmajernik@usaid.gov
7	Zubaidur Rahman	CARE	zubaid@bd.care.org
8	Saikat Saha	Save the Children	ssaha@savechildren.org
9	Shahnaz Zakaria	USAID/FFP	shzakaria@usaid.gov

E. Workshop #5: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The final workshop for field-based commodity managers was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the Jupiter International Hotel, from Monday, February 13 to Sunday, February 17, 2012. Like the previous workshop in Bangladesh, participants were selected from USAID/FFP grantees implementing programs locally in Ethiopia. Therefore, workshop content focused on the challenges and operating environment in Ethiopia. Because FFP funds both large emergency food aid response programs and long-term development food aid assistance programs, participants were drawn from each type of country program.

Working with USAID/Ethiopia FFP staff, the FFP AOR and the CAP team identified speakers for the final FACM workshop. Technical experts from FFP/Washington provided the headquarters perspective on commodity management, while representatives of the NGO community discussed field-based commodity management skills in food aid distribution and end use monitoring. USAID/Ethiopia staff discussed their role in ensuring commodity disposal is compliant with the FFP regulations.

Speakers for the workshop in Ethiopia included:

	Speaker	Organization	Email
1	Desta Arega	World Vision	darega@wv.org
2	Muna Bayou	USAID/Ethiopia – ALT	mbayou@usaid.org
3	B.K. De	Save the Children	bkde@savechildren.org
4	Mark Fritzler	Save the Children	mfritzler@savechildren.org
5	Juli Majernik	USAID/FFP	jmajernik@usaid.gov
6	Richard Markowski	Catholic Relief Services	rmarkowski@crs.org
7	Katie McKenna	AMEX	Kmckenna@amexdc2.com
8	Stephen Moody	USAID/FFP	smoody@usaid.gov
9	Sylvia Moore	USAID/FFP	symoore@usaid.gov
10	Bridget Ralyea	USAID/FFP	bralyea@usaid.gov
11	Saikat Saha	Save the Children	saha_saikat@hotmail.com
12	Jason Taylor	USAID/Ethiopia – ALT	jtaylor@usaid.gov
13	Luel Tesfay	REST	lltesfay@yahoo.com
14	Daniel Tilahun	FH	dtilahun@fh.org

The primary focus of the Ethiopia workshop remained the transmission of basic audit findings and appropriate responses to RIG audits. While the RIG audits were not specific to programming in Ethiopia, the audits continually identified commodity management errors that also are prevalent in programs globally and specifically in the Horn of Africa. There was concern that these messages were not being fully disseminated to NGO decision makers. To ensure that information about RIG audits and basic commodity management was accurately shared, senior managers of implementers in Ethiopia were invited to join the workshop for the first day, as discussed more fully earlier in this report.

Lastly, as in Bangladesh, participants at the Ethiopia workshop were asked to develop and bring posters to the workshop that depicted their food aid programs. The CAP staff hosted a gallery walk to view and discuss the individual programs as presented through the posters highlighting differences and interesting solution to programs working in different parts of the country.

The full agenda for the workshop in Ethiopia is included in *Appendix 8*.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to assess changes in knowledge and attitudes about food aid commodity management topics, pre- and post-tests were administered each day to the participants of every workshop. Each day began with a pre-test to determine the knowledge level of the participants and establish a baseline against which to assess the effectiveness of the workshop modules and speakers. A post-test covering the same material was given at the end of the day to gauge any change in participant knowledge vis-à-vis the topics covered. These tests assessed participants’

understanding and retention level of the material, as well as helped the CAP team evaluate the effectiveness and clarity of the facilitator. Each test had six to ten questions covering material from that day's modules.

The content of the pre- and post-tests was tailored to the material covered at each workshop. For each workshop module, the CAP team asked the presenter to suggest two or three questions related to the main topics of their session. For sessions presented at each workshop, such as the RIG Audits and Commodity Losses, we developed a set of standard questions. In some instances, where participant scores did not improve over the pre- and post-tests, we determined that questions were often confusing or poorly worded. These questions were re-written for subsequent workshop evaluations. An example of the FACM pre-tests is included in *Appendix 9*; post-tests contained the same questions, but in a modified order (correct answers are highlighted in yellow on the test).

Table 2 shows the average overall test scores for participants on the workshop pre-tests and the overall test scores on the workshop post-tests. Consistently, each workshop cohort improved their scores on the post-tests, when compared to the pretests, suggesting that their knowledge of commodity management principles increased.

Table 2: Pre and Post Test Results for FACM Workshops

	Average Overall % correct on the Pre-Test Before the Session	Average Overall % correct on the Post-Test After the Session
Dakar, Senegal	73%	79%
Washington, DC May	73%	82%
Washington, DC	62%	81%
Chittagong, Bangladesh	66%	84%
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	67%	81%

Detailed results for the Pre- and Post-Tests for the workshops in Senegal, Washington, DC and Bangladesh were included in previous quarterly reports submitted for this project. The results from the Ethiopia FACM workshop are discussed below.

A. Pre and Post Test Results from the FACM Workshop Ethiopia

The aggregated results of the pre- and post-test results from the FACM Ethiopia are presented in *Appendix 10*. Below are highlights from some of the participants.

Test 1 covered modules 1 - 4. Highlights from the data show that:

- Participant understanding of which sub-awardees are excluded from the awardee's audit responsibility increased 41%.
- Participant knowledge of FFP's mission in emergencies increased from 69% to 86%.
- Participant understanding of when the source of food aid needs to be acknowledged increased from 37% to 100%.

Test 2 covered modules 5 - 6. Highlights from the data include:

- Participant knowledge about the PREP's purpose increased 13%.

- Participant understanding of when malnutrition causes damage increased from 13% to 61%.

Test 3 covered modules 7 - 11. Highlights from the data show the following:

- Approximately 33% of the participants knew where to find information about commodity specifications before the session; that increased to 62% after the session.
- Participant understanding that products, processes and programming should be optimized per recommendations of the Food Aid Quality Review report increased from 4% to 76%.
- Participant knowledge of a cargo survey increased by 20%.

Test 4 covered modules 12 - 15. Highlights from the data include:

- Participant understanding of the major categories of losses increased by 14%, from 76% in the pre-test to 90% in the post-test.
- Participant knowledge of monitoring questions to ask beneficiaries increased by 13%.

Test 5 covered modules 16 - 17. Highlights from the data show the following:

- Participant understanding of the preferred method for commodity disposal increased by 41% and appropriate places for destruction increased 24%.
- Participant knowledge of the contents of the DMCR remained about the same, with 90% of participants knowing the report before the session and 92% able to identify it after the session.

B. Evaluations

Full discussions of the participant evaluations for the workshops in Senegal, Washington, DC and Bangladesh, were covered in previous quarterly performance reports. This section will report on the evaluations of the Ethiopia workshop. As at each of the workshops, participants in Ethiopia were asked to fill out evaluations to provide feedback about four specific categories:

- 1) Depth and breadth of the topics covered during the workshop;
- 2) Interest level and relevance of each module and associated activity;
- 3) Applicability and interest of the information conveyed (specific pieces of information versus a complete module); and
- 4) Recommendations to help improve future workshops.

The CAP team received evaluations from 18 of the 26 participants in Ethiopia. Participants were first asked to rank each of the seventeen modules on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, in regard to the module's usefulness of content and clarity of presentation.

Analysis indicated that all the modules and presenters scored an average of 4.6 points for usefulness and clarity. The lowest rating for any module was 4.3 for clarity and 4.2 for usefulness; the highest rating was 4.9 for both clarity and usefulness of presentation. *Appendix 11* details the quantitative evaluation findings.

The full qualitative evaluation of responses is included in *Appendix 12*. Highlights of the qualitative evaluation from the Ethiopia FACM show the following:

- All respondents indicated that the FACM workshop either met or exceeded their expectations;
- The three modules deemed most useful were: commodity disposal, Regulation 11 overview and activity, and food quality and the FAQR;
- Participants provided the following reasons for why these modules were most useful:
 - Regulation 11 is the blueprint for managing commodities per donor requirements and thus this information is absolutely needed by commodity managers;
 - The topics are most directly linked to area(s) of work;
 - The modules/topics detailed specific events and encounters; and
 - For new or less experienced participants, particularly as relates to the Reg 11 module, the instruction provided a much needed basis for commodity management.
- The two modules that were rated as least useful to the participants were: Commodity Requests and the PREP and FFP Programs Worldwide. It should be noted that most respondents actually stated that "all were useful" and that while these modules were listed the most frequently as the least useful, the number of individuals listing these as such was only three respondents each.
- When asked if they could add a subject area or module, the respondents noted:
 - Financial accounting practices for commodity managers;
 - Commodity planning and targeting of commodities; and
 - Safety and Security in commodity management.

C. Dissemination of Workshop Knowledge

The primary goal of the workshops was to strengthen the commodity management skills of participants, thereby enabling them to grow professionally and manage food aid programs more effectively and in compliance with USAID rules and regulations. One of the conditions of attendance at a FACM workshop was a commitment to share the knowledge and resources gained with peers and colleagues in the commodity management field.

In order to determine if participants have been integrating new skills and knowledge acquired at the workshop and best practices into their day-to-day responsibilities, the CAP team emailed a short survey to participants who attended three workshops: Zambia, August 2009; Senegal, March 2011; and Washington, DC, May 2011. As we were interested in long-term integration of new commodity management skills and the transfer of that knowledge, the team did not survey FFP internal training participants (workshop #3), or participants from the Bangladesh and Ethiopia workshops, as less than six months had passed since those trainings. The survey asked participants how they used the knowledge and materials in their own work and how they shared it with others. The survey is included as *Appendix 13*.

C.1 Zambia Workshop 2009

Of the 20 participants who attended the Zambia workshop in August 2009, five returned the survey in December 2011. After more than two years, four people are with the same organization and one was promoted. The fifth respondent changed his job and organization.

All participants who answered the survey had shared our workshop materials with other colleagues. Some shared it with just their organizational colleagues, while others shared it more broadly. One participant wrote that at a MYAP consortium meeting, “I made a presentation of what I learned in Zambia and shared copies of the CD that I received from the workshop there.” Another “shared my group presentation and the other materials from the workshop with all the staff of MYAP and with staff of logistic department.”

Participants also described how they personally have been applying the lessons and materials from the workshop:

“I have filled in as MYAP Coordinator for two periods while we have replaced a departing Commodity Manager. The training assisted me in logistics planning, understanding of Reg 11, and contracting of transporters.”

“I still use the knowledge I gained from Zambia workshop to help our food distribution team. We are currently a partner of WFP in food distribution to IDPs and returnees in the West Ivory Coast.”

“In July 2010, we had spoiled Corn Soy Blend in our Food for Education USDA Program. Knowledge from the workshop helped us in addressing the issue. Documents from the training were used as guideline... We made also an improvement of our Commodity Manual by using the document received at the workshop as guideline.”

C.2 Senegal, March 2011

Out of the 31 participants in the Senegal workshop in March 2011, fourteen returned our survey. After nine months, twelve participants were in the same position, while two had been promoted to other positions within the same organization.

Almost all respondents (12 of 14) reported that they had shared the information learned at the workshop at a variety of different levels and venues. One participant shared the materials with staff at her headquarters office, while another shared materials with other NGO staff at a quarterly field meeting. Three participants shared materials with their logistics staff and end use checkers.

“I have shared the workshop materials with our other MYAP staff involved in commodity management (Warehouse Manager, End Use Checker). These materials have enabled them to solve the difficulties they used to face in their respective duties.”

Participants explained how they have been integrating workshop learnings and materials:

“This workshop enhanced my knowledge in the management of commodity such as the warehouse field trip, the commodity distribution, the reporting, the losses and the End Use Monitoring. These topics help me in the organization of the commodity management training I conducted.”

“The different materials have been contributed a lot in my daily commodity management. For example, USAID locally staff recently visited the CRS/BF

warehouse and the exchanges we had with the team were positive. The two commodity management training I conducted at the PM2A partner's level was based on the workshop materials."

One participant said he now "refer(s) to regulation 11 all the time." Three other participants remarked that they appreciated networking with colleagues and meeting FFP staff:

"It has been easy to call Patience, Mariko, Joe Hoover and others to get on spot advice and assistance since we had already met with these colleagues," and "I have reached out to several FFP personnel for assistance when I needed guidance on various commodities issues. They were all very helpful."

C.3 Washington, DC, May 2011

Eight of the 28 participants in the first Washington, DC, workshop returned the survey. It had been seven months since the workshop and all of the participants were still working for the same organization, and one had been promoted to Logistics Officer.

The majority of the participants reported that they were using the information they learned at the workshop. One reported that he "did not learn anything new".

"RIG/Audit findings presentation is constantly used as a reference to improve the scope and efficiency of the monitoring and control procedures."

"We have been networking with other agencies to consolidate cargoes to reduce the overall cost per MT of freight to the US government. Cargo for our [Title II] program was combined with prepo commodity going to Mombasa as was a USDA wheat sale this December. We are coordinating sales in Liberia so there is no flooding of the market or competition among NGOs for similar commodities going to the same market."

Several of the participants have used the materials produced at the workshop. Two participants mentioned that they appreciated meeting and networking with USAID and other PVO partner staff. One participant reported that the materials did not assist him in his job.

"I refer to the manual at all times, when in doubt. This has helped in my understanding and increased my knowledge."

"We have been using the commodity-pricing guide quite regularly for a sudden drop in commodity prices in Bangladesh, Madagascar and Malawi to estimate freight. We only have one [Title II] program so most of the effort is for our Food for Progress activities."

VII. LESSONS LEARNED

A. Workshop Duration

Based on feedback received after our pilot project in Zambia, the CAP team increased the workshop length to 5 days. This permitted expanded discussions on individual topics and to add supplementary sessions on commodity management topics of particular relevance to a local audience. While some participants suggested that the workshop be expanded into a longer

course, none of the participants recommended a shorter series of sessions. The CAP team feels that a five-day commodity management workshop provides enough time for a comprehensive and in-depth training on commodity management.

In our August 2011, Washington, DC, training for FFP staff, we abbreviated the training day. The shorter daily schedule allowed USAID staff to remain up to date with their work obligations while still participating fully in the workshop. The CAP team received positive feedback about this modified schedule and would recommend it for other HQ-based trainings.

B. Field Trips

A site visit was part of four of the five FACM workshops; workshop #2/Washington, DC, did not have one. In Senegal, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, workshop participants visited a local warehouse and performed a mock inspection; in Washington, DC, August 2011, the participants toured the port of Baltimore. The field trips received positive feedback in the evaluations; participants appreciated the opportunity to observe commodity management operations first-hand and share their own experiences. Participants who had programmatic responsibilities learned from the real-world experience at the field sites. During this program's period of performance, the CAP team researched a visit to a food distribution site in Ethiopia and a trip to the port facilities in Chittagong, Bangladesh, but the logistics of a visit with such a large group precluded those activities. In the future, the CAP team recommends that trainings include a hands-on component such as a visit to a warehouse, port or food distribution site.

C. Local Logistical Support

The CAP team found that in-country assistance from someone with local knowledge is extremely important to seamlessly manage the logistics of a FACM workshop. The CAP team used several approaches over the course of the project to find local support. In countries where FHI 360 maintains an office, such as Senegal, staff time was allocated to support the HQ personnel on TDY. Where FHI 360 either did not have an office or in-country staff available to support the FFP event, consultants were hired based on recommendations from implementing partners and USAID mission staff, and through open competitions. From an event management perspective, a key lesson learned was how critical it was to have someone working with the CAP team who knew places to procure general supplies (paper, staples, tape, etc.).

Additionally, the scope of work for either local consultants or FHI 360 employees always included basic translation services. This skill was of considerable value particularly when trying to communicate with bus drivers and guides as we navigated often unmarked streets en route to site visits or when trouble shooting unexpected delays with meal deliveries or malfunctioning hotel audio-visual equipment. The CAP team recommends that future commodity management trainings always budget to include a talented local consultant who can assist in logistics and event management tasks.

D. Poster Gallery Session

This session has been discussed in greater detail previously. However, in terms of lessons learned, the poster gallery gave commodity managers an opportunity to learn and network in a more casual setting. Feedback on this session was very positive, and the CAP team recommends repeating this at future events.

E. Visual Aid

In response to questions about the FFP commodity management supply chain, the CAP team worked with the FFP AOR, FFP Program Operations Division, and other subject matter experts to develop a graphic display of the supply chain (*Appendix 14*). Together, the expanded team determined the essential steps in the supply chain and created a visual representation of them as a holistic system.

F. Panel Discussions

Unlike other workshops, the Ethiopia FACM allocated additional time for panel discussions with USAID staff with various technical specialties to address participant questions. This format fostered a high level of participation and received accolades from workshop attendees.

Participants found this format to be an effective method of communicating program-specific information not fully addressed by the broader module presentations. The panel discussions were routinely ended by the moderator due to running out of time, not due to a lack of questions or interest. While not all cultural settings lend themselves to this type of exchange, in Ethiopia this format worked very well, and CAP recommends that future workshops include similar sessions.

G. Topics for Future Trainings

In our participant evaluations and follow-up survey, the CAP team solicited suggestions of topics that should be included in future commodity management workshops. We have categorized their responses as follows:

- 1) Topics related to the *implementation* of FFP programs:
 - Local and regional procurement program: its process and management
 - Best if used by date requirements and complexities
 - Connection between food aid commodity management and grants management
 - Best practices in specific program types, like PM2A and Food for Work
 - Commodity management practices, like how to tally commodities in a warehouse
 - Annual results reporting
 - QWICR, WBSCM and quarterly financial reporting
- 2) Topics about *FFP-related* programs:
 - Feed the Future and Secure the Future program updates
 - USDA reporting requirements
 - USAID regulations and their interpretations
- 3) Topics for follow-up trainings:
 - Monetization Workshop
 - Advanced Commodity Management