

WEEK 2–AFR/SD Training. Amherst, MA

Overview of Acquisition and Assistance, July 24

Facilitators: Mark Stevenson and Jeffrey Goodman (USAID/??)

Stevenson and Goodman presented a four-hour PowerPoint presentation that summarized the various financial mechanisms available to USAID to carry out its activities, i.e., acquisition and assistance. The presentation covered the differences between acquisition and assistance. In sum, *acquisition instruments* (purchase orders, task orders, delivery orders, contracts) are used to purchase property or services, while *assistance instruments* (grants and cooperative agreements) are used to transfer funds to a recipient. The presentation also discussed:

- how to choose between acquisition or assistance;
- the legal framework (history and regulations);
- how USAID manages implementation of acquisitions and assistance;
- the three main phases of the acquisitions and assistance process (planning, solicitation and award, and administration);
- the roles of the cognizant technical officer (CTO); and
- the ins and outs of performance-based contracting.

In the discussion, one of the issues that came out most strongly was the need to lessen the burden on mission staff of managing projects and activities. Both Stevenson and Goodman recommended that missions look more closely at the use of grants, cooperative agreements, and endowments, as these instruments offer flexibility, reduce management time, and, when properly designed, are no riskier than traditional contracting mechanisms.

Capacity Assessment, July 24
Facilitator: Beryl Levinger (EDC)

Capacity, said facilitator Beryl Levinger (EDC), is “envisioning, articulating, and enacting an ideal,” while *capacity assessment* is measuring the difference between this ideal and what is actually achieved. Examples of particular capacities that AFR/SD has measured include the capacity of:

- SD to support mission staff;
- teachers to teach well;
- ministries to analyze and devise solutions to problems;
- ministries to coordinate their efforts;
- missions and countries to manage large-scale reforms; and
- project managers to concomitantly design, implement, and assess activities.

Upon reflection, participants noted that assessments are usually conducted by outsiders and have “something to do with change and innovation” related to people, systems, and institutions, but use diverse methods. Levinger said that capacity assessment is by nature “oracular,” that is, “you receive ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers to your questions. For example, is this organization/sector x capable of y , where y is a series of capacities we want to measure.”

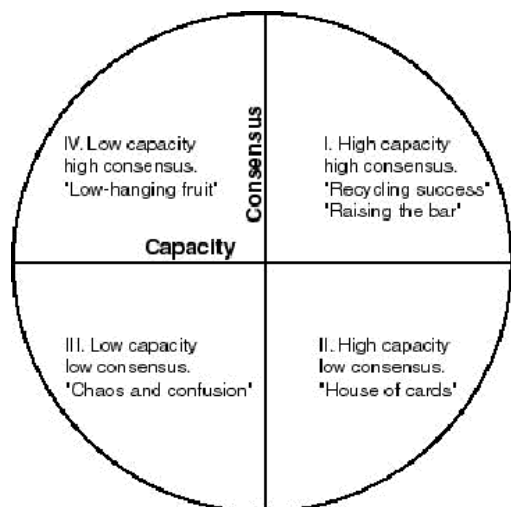
Participants then brain stormed some assessment questions they might want to ask someday.

- About AFR/SD: Can it understand the needs of and provide appropriate support to mission staff and education ministries?
- About an education system: Can it train and pay the teachers? Design strategies? Decentralize EMIS? Increase community awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS? Measure pupil performance? Expand access, improve equity, and maintain or increase quality?
- About local NGOs: Can they design and implement microprojects? Advocate for education issues? Improve student learning? Become more self-sustaining through fundraising?
- About communities: Can community schools implement effective conflict resolution/post-crisis “reconciliation curricula”? Can communities engage in quality innovation? Finance schools? Articulate an education “vision”?

Levinger cautioned participants that assessments are not undertaken with the assumption that there is a deficit. On the contrary, it is a vehicle for organizational learning. “Even a gold medalist renews, maintains, and tries to surpass his level of excellence,” Levinger said. Indeed, assessment is only useful, she added, when “it helps us work toward excellence.”

Ron Bonner (consultant) countered that in some contexts, more dramatic change than “building upon an organization’s strengths” may be desired. Jane Schubert (AIR) commented that while the goal may be to work toward excellence, the judgments that assessments imply have often come across as negativism. “We’ve failed to communicate that assessment means building on an organization’s strengths.” Ash Hartwell (EDC) pointed out that assessment implies shared, but unstated, principles and values. Faroon Goolam (USAID/South Africa) agreed, saying that some of the entities being assessed may not necessarily want to improve those things being assessed. Diane Prouty (AIR) said that in one assessment she conducted, “we didn’t know what we were measuring, exactly.”

Levinger then presented her approach to assessment. As the goal is to “learn through structured assessment,” the process begins with a hypothesis to be tested and four questions: Who assesses? Who determines what is assessed? Who receives the results? And what is done with the results?



Levinger then presented a “compass” diagram like the one on the left. Using focus group discussions followed by “self scoring,” an organization’s profile is developed and mapped to the compass.

Organizations in group I, with both high capacity and consensus, must build upon their success or risk complacency and stagnation. The key is to raise the bar or to recycle the success, which might mean the organization “needs to” move into group IV, where there is still high consensus, but the capacity is not there. (The healthiest organizations are located in IV, but move to I and then back to IV in a dynamic

process.)

The low consensus found in organizations in group II often have to do with financial or sustainability issues. The solution is to use fact-finding to pinpoint the problem and to rebuild consensus.

Organizations in group III are characterized by dissatisfaction with different things, e.g., financial or “identity” (mission) issues. The key may be to leave the organization or redefine it through fact-finding, development of consensus, and a plan to change.

The value of this compass as a metaphor for an organization’s capacity is that it does not aim to locate a deficit but to help an organization decide how to proceed: to use fact-finding to move from II to IV; raise the bar to go from I to IV; or simply “work” to go from III to IV.

In the discussion, Prouty asked what would the impetus be to engage in self-reflection for organizations in III. “What motivates individuals to change is the same for organizations, which is the cost of the consequences. The inference is that we cannot always pump money into systems that are in crisis.”

Participants then conducted an exercise to develop a simple capacity assessment “tool,” i.e., checklist. The general approach was explained in a handout, the key steps of which were to:

- identify in general terms a set of performance goals
- identify a set of capacity associated with these goals
- describe “what it means to be excellent” in that area with specific criteria
- create scorable items to measure each criterion
- group and validate the items
- identify participants and conduct the assessment
- provide feedback

Quality of teaching and learning, July 24–25

Facilitators: Jane Schubert (AIR) and Diane Prouty (AIR)

The overall vision for this session was to articulate what quality teaching and learning means in relation to the job responsibilities of USAID Mission staff, i.e., fulfilling S.O.s and R4s; monitoring progress and impact of program implementation; developing and designing programs; and facilitating policy dialogue.

A few assumptions served as guiding principles for the session and ensuing discussion around the quality of teaching and learning. They are that:

- Realistic attempts for educational improvement and success must reflect knowledge about teaching, learning and school environments;
- Single investments aimed to improve the quality of education seldom address a multifaceted situation;
- Procedures for measuring teacher and pupil performance must reflect the conditions for learning; and
- Responses to address the quality of teaching and learning must be integrated into programs.

The session began with an activity that asked participants to review definitions of quality. This activity underscored how interconnected different components of quality are and stressed the need to develop a holistic and system level response to issues of quality. For instance, to improve the quality of classroom instructional materials certain inputs are needed at various "levels" of the system in order to achieve improved instructional materials i.e., better procurement measures, better writing and editing of the materials, better distribution mechanisms, and improved training programs helping teachers to better utilize instructional materials.

This activity also deconstructed what quality means to a wide audience of stakeholders. It illustrated that definitions often fall into one of three categories: inputs, outcomes, and processes. These three categories can cause confusion in efforts to define action to take to address quality and achieve results. The activity also highlighted that efforts to define achievement (often called standards) are complicated and cannot always be easily linked to a specific quality input, in part because of a specific country context/bias or an insider/outsider perspective on the value of learning certain things.

Videotapes of classrooms in Africa allowed participants to examine aspects of quality in those classrooms physical environments, instructional materials, quality of instruction, student/student interaction, student/teacher interaction, etc. Using the taped classrooms as an example, participants were asked to move backward from these classrooms to think about what inputs in the system would be needed, to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In order to do this one needs to determine what is happening in the classrooms, identify what the links are to this classroom and other units/parts of the education system, and see where the entry points are where change can be effected. In order to ground what was being learned about the quality of teaching and learning, the view from the classroom, participants were asked to draw classroom evidence from their own countries and:

- identify what it is that they already know about this aspect of quality,
- identify what else they need to know about this aspect of quality,

- determine what program changes need to take place to either get more information and/or take action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and finally,
- list the tasks that they must take to carry out the actions identified.

Participants were introduced to a wide array of documents and materials that address the quality of teaching and learning. These included articles of recent research on quality; examples of assessment instruments; articles on educational standards, assessment & accountability and other items of interest. Participants were also provided with materials that included books on assessments and a toolkit for conducting classroom observations and PLA.

Information Technologies for Educational Strengthening, July 24
Facilitators: Steve Dorsey (AED) and Stacy Cummings (AED)

The objectives of this session were to familiarize participants with the current uses of information technologies in Africa. Steve Dorsey began by discussing USAID's LearnLink project, which is operating in Benin, Ghana, Egypt, Namibia, and Uganda. LearnLink uses information, communication, and educational technologies (IETs) to strengthen learning systems essential for sustainable development. In Africa, LearnLink is working in the areas of teacher development (Uganda and Namibia), Community Learning Centers (Benin and Ghana), and Basic Education (Egypt).

Dorsey said that when LearnLink began four years ago, discussing the role of technology in education in Africa was "like pulling teeth." Now, Ministers are approaching the project to learn about how to catch up in the use of these new technologies. Still, there are several challenges to bringing information technologies in low-resource environments. Some challenges brainstormed by participants included:

- Obtaining access to computers, Internet, etc.
- Sustainability once USAID funding stops
- Diversifying participants more and targeting women (majority of participants are males aged 16–24)
- Connectivity
- Institutional behavioral change
- Transforming users into producers

Stacy Cummings, Project Manager for Uganda's Connect-ED project, explained to the participants that Connect-ED was going to utilize computers to develop a CD-ROM for an interactive teacher training curriculum. Once the CD-ROM is completed they plan to establish computer centers in four primary teachers colleges throughout Uganda, where primary teachers will receive training via computer. Ciyata Coleman suggested that technology use needs to begin very early in life. "What is being done for children?" Dorsey and Cummings responded that teachers are being encouraged to bring their pupils to the technology centers.

The final 45 minutes of the session was a fun, discovery time for the participants. Dorsey had brought many technological gadgets, including video cameras (standard and digital), digital cameras, laptop computers, and voice recording devices. Participants were divided into teams and instructed to design their own multimedia presentation on the subject of their choice. The teams had fun videotaping each other and learning how to use digital cameras. At the end of the session the groups returned to watch some of their productions. Steve and Stacy promised the group that they would take all of the videos and photos and assemble them into a CD-ROM to mail to participants as a memento of the training session.

Areas in Crisis or Transition, July 25

Facilitators: John Hatch (USAID) and Talaat Moreau (AED)

John Hatch (USAID) opened the session by setting forth its purpose: to review and discuss the findings/issues raised by the AFR/SD Paper, *Countries in Crisis: Basic Education Issues*; to present a few resources; to review the GINIE project; and to consider “next steps.”

Talaat Moreau (AED) synthesized the results of the AFR/SD research paper. The research was based on an extensive literature review as well as on interviews with 32 people from over 27 organizations representing international multilaterals, NGOs, and USAID units. Moreau noted, however, large gaps in the information, citing as an example the lack of contact with indigenous NGOs or resettled people. Moreau’s presentation was designed around a series of questions, representing the key issues from the research:

What is a country in crisis? In addition to armed conflict and environmental disaster (including the HIV/AIDS pandemic), the research also included systemic failure within the definition of crisis, i.e., failure of a given system to provide basic educational services to the citizens it is supposed to serve. In terms of defining crisis, Paul Blay (consultant) underscored the need for a distinction between an actual breakdown of civil society on the one hand and systemic failure on the other. He also noted that the nature of the intervention will necessarily be quite different depending on the type of breakdown.

- *What are the stages of crisis?* Talaat reviewed the four stages of crisis: pre-crisis (characterized by declining community cohesiveness and resources); *crisis* (characterized by violence, massive movements of displaced persons, and a total lack of effective public services); *post-crisis/transition* (where violence decreases); and *reconstruction/rehabilitation* (characterized by the restoration of services). Moreau emphasized that each stage warrants a certain type of intervention.
- *What can education accomplish?* Moreau stressed the importance of education as an element of normalcy, but also referred to the fact that it can be a tool for either good or evil. Moreau then listed some of the problems involved with providing educational services in times of crisis/emergency by posing the following questions
 - For education to help, how does one:
 - recruit and support teachers: will anyone do or are the systematic attempts to keep traumatized adults away from children?
 - restructure curriculum (and whose curriculum)?
 - decide which language to teach in?
 - promote multiculturalism?
 - determine who the students are?
 - determine where the “delivery point” of educational services is?

At this point, participants started raising their own concerns: Blay asked, “Who is you?” (the donor organizations). David Evans (CIE) highlighted potential ethical problems, and Jeff Ramin (USAID/Mali) questioned how often education actually comes into play in these situations

(when you're concerned with saving people's lives). In response, Hatch reiterated the need to match the intervention to the crisis.

- *How can education be used as a development opportunity?* Talaat said that relief should be linked with development and that education could provide the bridge. "Given that the system has been destroyed, let's do something better."
- *How can donors' different approaches, mandates and agendas be coordinated?* Moreau said that the issue with donors is not just a challenge, but a crisis in and of itself. She cited as an example, the issue of monitoring and evaluation, which came up again and again in the study (currently there is little tracking of interventions or projects).
- *How to replicate or improve on education's role in stable times?* Talaat noted that this returns to the opportunity for doing things better—the question is *how* to do that.
- *How can one involve all the stakeholders?* Moreau outlined the various members of the crisis population (adults, students, ministry officials, host governments, and communities), and remarked that the governments and ministries play a much more dominant role once the situation starts to stabilize.
- *Who decides? Who has a voice? Who must be listened to? Refugees? Host country?* The response to this series of questions posed yet another question – if everyone is speaking at the same time, then what happens?
- *How can education be part of a consistent whole?* In concluding her presentation, Talaat said that education *should* be part of the total approach but again posed the question, *HOW?* In considering the potential role of USAID in this regard, Talaat suggested that it might be in the way of transition (since little is being done there at present), through NGOs or by partnering up with people in the field.
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In responding to Moreau's request for feedback, Evans emphasized the need for differentiated levels of participation depending on the situation, while Norm Rifkin (consultant) asked how education can be used as a tool for reconciliation. Participants then listed the countries in crisis in Africa, coming up with a total of 19, and distinguishing between those undergoing some kind of armed conflict and those suffering from systemic failure.

Ciyata Coleman (AFR/SD) raised the issue of rehabilitating young militants (who have a different set of needs) stressing the need for curriculum reform in order to create a curriculum that fits the needs of young militants. Moreau noted that none of the organizations interviewed were doing anything to help young combatants. Julie Owen-Rea (AFR/SD) mentioned the work of a Kenyan psychologist who had stressed the importance of role-play and mentioned one project where people were encouraged to act out different roles. Steve Dorsey (AED) referred to his Central American experience, where the children did not want to be back in the classroom but did want some kind of technical skills training. Evans suggested that the young combatants might need something that doesn't resemble school at all, but some kind of moral/psychological assistance. Owen-Rea gave another example from the field, citing the work of Rev. Sullivan in

Liberia, where psychological help is combined with skills training. In rounding off the discussion of young combatants, Hatch added that the length of time since the last formal schooling was also an issue to be considered.

In the second part of the session, Hatch gave participants a number of conflict and reconstruction oriented Web sites including Conflict Web (www.usaid.gov/AFR/conflictweb); Hatch also referred to G/WID's studies on women in post-conflict settings and the work of the Office of Transition Initiatives (more relief oriented). He also mentioned the work of the World Bank and UNICEF in this field.

Rifkin commented on the pockets of opportunity that exist and asked about the possibility of coming up with some kind of systematic response. He suggested looking for countries where there is no "cadre" of teachers. Evans suggested expanding beyond basic education into nonformal and adult education opportunities. Blay again stressed the need for "matching," and encouraged bilaterals to be open to "what is that something" that we can do.

Hatch also facilitated the third part of the session—the overview of GINIE and what GINIE is doing/can do. He noted that UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNHCR have given GINIE financial support to make education in crisis areas a focal point. GINIE will also provide relief workers with usable formats to get information quickly.

In the final part of the session, participants and facilitators brain stormed "next steps" which were presented as a series of questions and recommendations. Blay led off by commenting that "lots of people want to do something but they don't really know what to do." Daniel Koroma (CIE) and Coleman advocated supporting what is already going on. Coleman emphasized that even though the quality may be in question, education is going on and gave as an example Guinea Bissau's mobile health unit. She urged a nonpartisan approach that influenced existing education efforts. David Evans and Norm Rifkin suggested developing an nonformal education-type project and tying it to an existing project, perhaps by alternative means such as interactive radio.

Amidst the positive suggestions, questions and problems remained front and center. Participants again raised the issue of language of instruction, and Hatch distinguished between mother tongue and economic tongue (focus on reconstruction language and life skills/practical/applied skills). Then Blay focused in on the difficulty discerning internally displaced persons who are not technically refugees under the UNHCR. Hatch suggested using education as the pivot around which one can begin to talk about integration. Another concern, raised by Rifkin, related to the method of delivery of assistance.

Returning to options for next steps, Julie suggested putting together a manual, *Where there is no school/teacher* (similar in format to *Where there is no doctor*), offering action options for people who are cut off but who want to do something. Although the group responded positively to this suggestion, they did raise some concerns. Stacy Cummings (CIE) asked about the audience, about who would be using the book and doing the educating, about which language to use, about existing educational efforts. She proposed finding out what is currently going on and then building on people's capacities that way. Mary Lugton (CIE) pointed out the multiple references

to “matching” during the course of the afternoon and suggested that this would also apply to the options offered in the manual. Blay suggested studying the market, looking at existing NGOs and incipient NGOs, and compiling a collection of best practices. He thought that the publication would work if it were very practical and non-bureaucratic. Rifkin proposed coming up with a body of knowledge that would be appropriate for use in times of crisis/emergency. This would include values, attitudes and basic skills—essentially what every child needs to know and where to get that information.

In summing up the session, Talaat said that the group seemed to believe that we should be involved with education in areas of crisis/transition. However, she qualified this by suggesting that we might have to narrow our focus a little. She asked people to think about the question: “Where, in the immediate future, could we go in and make a difference?”

Budgeting, July 25

Carrie Johnson (USAID, AFR/DP)

Carrie Johnson of the Africa Bureau's Office of Development Planning presented a PowerPoint presentation that outlined how the U.S. Government budget process works (in relation to USAID's overall budget), and what USAID's role and responsibilities are in this process.

The U.S. Government budget operates on a three-year cycle, the actual amount spent in the previous fiscal year (FY), the current FY estimates, and the next FY requests. A budget is prepared by the executive branch and then is sent to Congress, which can modify or make up its own budget. Each arm of Congress (Senate and House) creates a separate budget and then works out a compromise budget that the President signs into law.

The major steps in the budget cycle for USAID has seven steps:

- 1) The missions send a request to the regional bureau about 18 months in advance (in April.
- 2) In July, these requests are consolidated and submitted to the agency.
- 3) In October, the agency's request is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget.
- 4) In December and January, the OMB prepares the President's budget.
- 5) In February, the budget is submitted to Congress.
- 6) From March to September, Congress debates and finalizes the budget for the President to sign into law.
- 7) The FY begins in October and the agency "executes" the budget as provided for by the law .

One of the main points of this session was that the Agency's budget process is "iterative," that is, missions' strategies feed into the R4s. In turn, the R4s form the basis for the agency's annual performance plan, the various bureaus' Project Budget Submissions, and the Agency's budget request to OMB.

The Budget Justification serves as the Congressional Notification for activities in the current FY. Missions contribute to the BJ through their country overviews, which contain the country's "development challenge," a summary of what other donors are doing in the country, and a description of the mission's own program.

There was some discussion of non-project assistance, or NPA, which may often seem hard to fit into the Agency's reporting and budgeting requirements. However, according to Ash Hartwell (EDC), "NPA is absolutely essential to support our approach in a country program." The two strengths of NPA, as Hartwell explained it, are that it leverages what other donors contribute and that it "puts the host country in control" of the reform program.

The session concluded with a discussion of overall Africa Bureau funding levels and the outlook for the coming fiscal years.

People Power: A Review of USAID Education Program Staffing, July 26
Presenter: Ron Bonner (consultant)

Ron Bonner presented a PowerPoint presentation that summarized the study he and two other consultants conducted in late 1998 on USAID education program staffing trends. The executive summary of that paper follows.

USAID is engaged in examining the appropriate levels and types of staffing to meet its future program management needs. A key element of this discussion is the need for and the role of USAID direct-hire (USD11) technical staff. Although this issue is common to all technical areas, the Agency's third goal—human capacity built through education and training—was selected as the development sector in which to open the inquiry.

This study is intended to address the issue of where direct hire education staff (Human Resource Development Officers—HRDOs) are most needed and effective in terms of enabling USAID to achieve results. Of corollary concern are questions of the condition of the current corps of HRDOs and the relative effectiveness of other, non-HRDO staff configurations used to support education assistance programs.

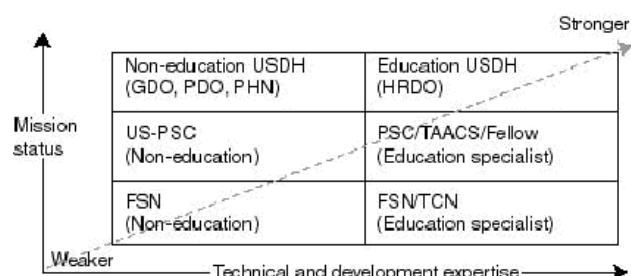
The study has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Survey and interview techniques were used for the qualitative component, while USAID staff and budget databases were the source of input for the quantitative analyses. The qualitative part of the study articulates the roles and responsibilities of education technical field staff, including U.S. direct hires and others, and examines relationships that exist between various staffing structures and program management characteristics. To provide a degree of commonality across country programs, the qualitative inquiries focused on those countries that are presently or have recently been engaged in basic education or girls' education activities. The quantitative analysis complements the qualitative by examining trends in the numbers of education USDH staff and in funding over time compared to other technical areas, as well as the deployment of education USDH vis-a-vis the location of education programs.

Summary Conclusions

1. *Strong HRDOs are the best bet but a rare commodity.* Other options are workable, but not without costs and risks. There is broad consensus among Mission managers, HRDOs and others with first-hand knowledge of USAID education efforts that education sector program design and management by a technically strong HRDO is generally the best option for USAID. Other staffing options may be necessary in times of scarce OE resources, and can be effective, but these are more risky and impose additional burdens on the Mission. Unfortunately, the corps of HRDOs has been seriously depleted. It needs to be enlarged, reinvigorated, and reoriented.

In most instances, having non-education USDH manage education programs is believed to result in serious shortcomings in technical interactions (quality and frequency) with partners and donors, and less engagement in sector issues within and outside the Mission. There is also wide belief that non-USDH (US-PSCs and FSNs/TCNs) who are put in charge of education programs are handicapped due to their lower status in the Mission organizational hierarchy, authorities that are circumscribed by USAID rules and regulations, and unfamiliarity in accessing other

resources and support, e.g., from USAID/W. The chart below portrays this view in terms of staff type and program management effectiveness.



2. *New approaches to education support need to be widely shared and better understood.* Rather than top-down vertical, input-focused interventions common in USAID projects in the 1970s and SOs, broad-based sector reform efforts, involving policy, financing, pluralism and grass roots initiatives, such as those pursued in the 1990s in Africa, will likely continue as USAID's approach to education improvement. Skills to provide effective management of such programs derive from a core knowledge of education principles and processes such as any educator will possess, but need to be enhanced through more orientation and training in USAID's sector support approach and through experiences gained in multiple development settings.

3. *Education staff of all types need new and different skills to be effective.* Developing and managing basic education programs for USAID requires different skills today than ten years ago. There is less need for expertise in specific technical areas, such as curriculum design, teacher training and non-formal education, but better understanding of inter and intra-sector linkages as well as of broader social sector policy and financing issues. Training in team and resource management and negotiation deserves particular attention. Also, in light of recent emphasis on partnership and donor interaction, there is heightened need for staff of all categories to become more skilled and comfortable in this arena.

4. *There appears to be an imbalance in and misallocation of existing HRDO staff,* despite a preference in the field for such personnel. Education Officers have the smallest professional corps compared to the three other sectors examined (agriculture, health/population, environment). While the recent R4 reports project a slight decrease (of 1) in demand for HRDOs from 1998 to 2001, the use of non-USDH for education program management remains highest (7.6 non-USDH for each HRDO) among four other sectors examined (agriculture, health/population, environment, democracy). Of the 18 Missions with education SOs or IRs reviewed, 13 are managed by USD11, and only 8 (44%) are managed by HRDOs. Finally, of the 18 USD11 Foreign Service Officers listed as having education as their primary skill code, 11 are currently posted to Missions, and of these only 8 (44%) are managing education programs.

Assessing Learning, July 26
Facilitator: Steve Ferrara (AIR)

The session on assessment began with some definitions and an explanation of the “principle of alignment.”

Definitions

Assessment is any systematic basis for making inferences about characteristics of people, usually based on various sources of evidence; it is also the global process of synthesizing information about individuals in order to understand and describe them better. This process stops just short of *evaluation*, or the making of value judgments.

Formative assessment is ongoing, diagnostic assessment providing information to guide instruction and improve student performance.

Summative assessment is culminating assessment for a unit, grade, or course of study that provides a status report on mastery or degree of proficiency according to identified standards.

A *test* is one type of instrument to make assessments or evaluations. It may be a set of questions, with a limited range of acceptable answers, designed to elicit responses that permit an inference about what a student knows or can do.

The principle of alignment

How curricula, instruction, and assessment are “aligned” is important. For example, it there have been instances where school systems would develop new curricula that teachers then ignored. In response, the school systems would revise the curricula yet again. In the late 1970s in the United States, assessments were developed that showed teachers were not “teaching students how to think, organize their thoughts, and present their ideas persuasively.” Instead they were teaching grammar, despite school leaders’ insistence that they teach these other things. The assessments helped begin changing this lack of alignment.

Participants pointed out other sources of misalignment. There may be no national curricula while there may be national tests; educational policy (and reform), curriculum frameworks, and assessment may not be clearly linked or the linkages may not have been articulated; the alignment could vary by region or by the resources available to the schools; and alignment can vary according to the degree of system centralization. The important point is that all these elements are related, and the stakes for the students are quite high.

Ferrara moved the discussion to the some results of a U.S. national assessment, the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), which has been ongoing for about 30 years, and has compiled enough data to allow descriptions of “levels of performance.” The results of the NAEP have led to specific state- and national-level actions to address the deficiencies revealed by the assessment.

Diane Prouty (AIR) pointed out that the regional breakdowns like those provided by the NAEP can help define areas to focus resources, e.g., to provide schools with additional resources, or

improve students' health or nutrition. On the other hand, she said, the tests will not define the problem, only point out that there is a problem. Ferrara agreed, citing as an example, that Maryland's results were at about the national average, even though the state is one of the wealthiest and has a high per-capita student expenditure.

While the NAEP is within the means of the United States to undertake, Ferrara pointed out that such examinations can cost about \$20 per student, which might be high in low-resource countries. In addition, as Tracy Brunette (AFR/SD) pointed out, some ministries may not have the ability to contract such assessment services.

The discussion then moved to classroom assessment and how well teachers assess their students' learning. David Evans (CIE) stated that continuous assessment has been "spectacularly unsuccessful" in Africa. Hartwell said that in Swaziland, continuous classroom assessment has been built into the curriculum and teacher instructional materials. He pointed out that there are many resources on standards and instruments—most on the Internet.

Discussion of the R4 Process, July 27
Facilitator: Tracy Brunette

Tracy Brunette (AFR/SD) handed out a summary of the main issues that arose in the Africa Bureau's R4 wrapup for the education sector. Brunette and other speakers emphasized that a primary issue is that SD is a resource for missions in the R4 process—they can submit their R4s for review before they send them to Washington, for example. In addition, the R4s should not be the main method of communicating between the missions and Washington; regular communication with the SD backstop is vital. Mitch Kirby (AFR/SD) suggested that one effective method of communicating what is going on would be through an “annual update,” such as the one put together by the South Africa mission. Another suggestion was to share work objectives and policy agendas and to seek feedback. Finally, Julie Owen-Rea (AFR/SD) reminded the backstops that they should “get out there and visit the missions.” Paul Blay (consultant) said that the discussion on communication reminded him of the World Bank's own struggle to improve communication between the field and headquarters. He suggested that the R4s try to capture what other donors are doing in the country. “They could benefit from more context,” he said.

The rest of this session was spent on a discussion of the central issues that arose in the R4 reviews:

Central issues:

Focusing on quality of education and measuring student learning

Enrollment is increasing, but what is the quality of the schooling that more children have access to? How do we measure improvements in quality of learning?

To better track changes in the quality of teaching and learning, measuring student learning achievement is crucial. The number of Missions attempting to report on student learning as an indicator of quality (vs. reporting on access only or other more tangential indicators of quality) has been increasing over the decade—a trend that SD highly encourages. National capacity to measure and report on student learning achievement, particularly on core competencies of reading comprehension, writing and numeracy needs to be developed. Should the Mission support this capacity development, if so how?

Keeping the strategic focus on basic education

In this time of competing demands for scarce development dollars, AFR/SD has been most fortunate to be able to maintain the focus on basic education in the form of primary education reform. We encourage staying the course in primary education reform. Staying the course includes using other levels of education to strengthen primary.

Status and future of sector investment plans and non-project assistance

Are sector investment plans working well? Can we participate in sector investment plans without NPA? SIP does not mean NPA only. AFR/DP mentioned the need for a policy piece from the Bureau on NPA. DP may need to broker higher level dialogue in this area. Non-project assistance has been enormously successful in countries such as Uganda. We are

using it less and less due to a scarcity of funding, lack of USAID staff who know how to use it effectively, and failure of host countries to effectively manage budgetary support. It is believed to be an effective instrument, and we should strengthen our own capacity to use it effectively.

Shortage of qualified Education staff

Sector programming requires seasoned education staff in both Missions and Washington.

Improving the quality of education data

Data in the education sector is problematic. It is difficult to obtain common data across countries on even the most basic indicators (gross enrollment, for example), and international sources are often several years out of data. AFR/SD attempted to gather this data last December by sending out matrices with common indicators to each Mission. The response was very low. DP agreed to step up efforts to encourage Missions to comply with the modest data request.

Regional issues (issues raised in the context of a specific country program but with larger regional implications):

Since AFR/DP often reports on budget allocation to education as a success story in the Agency, they were surprised to hear of the *low absorptive capacity* issue. It was noted that absorptive capacity was an issue in virtually all MOEs.

What does it mean to graduate in the education sector given nearly universal enrollment rates in some of the countries in which we have education programs? It was emphasized that access is only part of the equation. A focus on quality education has to be encouraged and/or maintained in order to realize the returns to children's schooling and in order to keep enrollment rates growing or stabilized at near universal levels. In Uganda, for example, the focus for the education system at this stage is the quality of primary education.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the teaching and professional education force, and the strategies for ameliorating the impact of HIV/AIDS through the education system need to be further examined and reflected within country and Mission programs.

Should money be taken from those countries with large pipelines (such as Ghana) and redistributed it to needy and deserving countries such as Malawi and Zambia?

The trend is for *increased emphasis on community participation* in education programs. What are the implications of this trend for sustainability and its positive impact on democracy?

Team Presentations, July 28
Facilitator: Ron Bonner (consultant)

During the second week of the training, participants began moving toward the application of some of the ideas they had been discussing. On Monday, each country team chose an “assignment” to work on throughout the week—to design or revise the mission’s education sector strategy, results framework, or activities plan/management strategy. Participants continued to attend presentations and discussions in the morning, but in the afternoons divided into country teams and met informally with resource people to prepare their presentations. On Friday morning, Ron Bonner allowed each team to make a brief presentation of the results, and allowed followup questions from the participants. A brief summary of the presentation follows:

Benin

The problem: Benin’s education SO was too wordy and abstract and was too hard to measure, even though it did describe the kind of education system USAID wants to help the country build. IR1 walo suffered from wordiness. And the 21 indicators were too numerous and cumbersome.

The solution: The Benin team revised the strategic framework, rewording and simplifying the SO; redefining equity to include rural/urban; and combining IRs. The new SO has only four IRs and the number of indicators has been greatly reduced. In addition, the new framework makes clearer the cross-relationships between IRs. For example, the work on the curriculum and textbooks will reflect the focus on equity; and NGO and PTA strengthening will be related to work in sectoral finance.

The assumptions the Benin team made are that textbooks are replaced as appropriate, decentralization proceeds and becomes “effective,” and the ministry of education provides schools with adequate staff.

The team will present the new plan to the mission, revise the PMP, and begin to develop the consensus with the mission and stakeholders to move forward.

Comments from participants:

- The new framework could take into account what government, other players (including donors) are doing or need to do.
- The SO is a long-term objective, and the mission should be on the lookout for changes to occur first at the IR and subIR levels.
- Indicators should not drive the mission’s program, that is, you shouldn’t *not* do something because you cannot measure it.
- As there are no cost figures in the RF, there is no means of assessing whether, on a cost basis, the interventions are worthwhile.
- The RF does not take into account the effect of HIV/AIDS on demographics. Will the gross enrollment rate be an adequate indicator in such an environment?

Guinea

The Guinea team also revised and simplified its SO, but divided an IR into two to better describe the different activities the mission is supporting. The team also developed a set of indicators for

the IRs.

Comments from participants:

- " The IRs related to community participation need to make more clear the desired relationships among communities and the outside environment, e.g., local government and the ministry of education.
- " The *quality index* used to measure improved instruction should be more detailed. How will the mission measure instruction?
- " Sub-IRs can be activities phrased as results.
- " IR3 is a means to an end and touches all other IRs.
- " Does the framework recognize the difference between input and impact?
- " Could the framework benefit from use of *process* indicators?
- " The connection between inputs and impacts can be multiple. For example, a training activity can train so many teachers, who in turn may change their teaching practices, which in turn may lead to improvements in student achievement. On the other hand, these changes might not materialize. Does that mean that an activity was not worthwhile when the impact cannot be measured at the student level?

Mali

The Mali team's objective was to develop an analytical framework to use in developing a plan to improve access to and the quality of community schools. The rationale for the plan was that community schools represent the most viable opportunity for Mali to attain universal primary enrollment while promoting quality.

The development hypothesis of the team was that community participation in schooling leads to improved access and quality. Access will improve as communities create adequate school facilities, and quality will improve as more (and better) teachers and materials arrive in these classrooms. As the quality improves, more parents will enroll more children, demand will increase, and communities will contribute their share to accommodating the new demand by ensuring the creation of more facilities.

The analytical framework was broken down into problems, issues, and strategies as follows:

Problems	Issues	Strategies
ACCESS (supply)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Limited resources " Limited community participation " Lack of political will " Low population density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Regional/gender disparities " New schools or new classrooms? " Community incentives? " Basic education's share of the national education budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Community mobilization " Supplementing salaries " Construction " Training of APEs and teachers " Reducing the use of scholarships at higher levels
" ACCESS (demand)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Opportunity costs " Distance " Poor facilities " Traditional beliefs " Other schools " Irrelevant programs " Parental view of schooling low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Low enrollments " Regional and gender disparity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Incentives " Extra classes " New schools (where?) " Sensitization " Improved programs and facilities " Girl-friendly
" QUALITY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Low achievement " High repetition " Low efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Teacher shortage " Low teacher support " Lack of materials " Inappropriate curriculum " Weak support of community schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Increase teacher services: cluster schools, BRAC model " Privatize creation and distribution of school materials " Outcomes based education " Teach in national language " Increase NGO capacity "

Next steps: The Mali team will prepare plans and budgets to achieve the access and quality goals, considering the technical, political, and economic feasibility. The team will work with a group representing as many stakeholders as possible.

Comments from participants:

- The central question is political—no matter how strong all the other arguments are, politics can sweep away any reform effort.
- Community schools are a threat to the “entrenched” school system and the “colonial mentality.” We should look at how to engage the government and civil service in the process.

South Africa

The South Africa team continued some of the mission’s work in trying to define and measure quality in a convincing way, focusing on basic education. Team members tried to develop an indicator at the IR level that measures quality more convincingly than the existing indicator, which the team “relegated” to the sub-IR level.

The new “composite indicator” for primary education is the percentage of DDSP schools in which three out of four quality criteria are met: the practice of continuous assessment; the systematic maintenance of records; the development of school governing body constitutions; and the utilization of library boxes. For each of these indicators, the team developed one to five sub-IRs.

The team’s development hypothesis was that if quality criteria are implemented, greater student learning will result. The hypothesis will be tested by correlating test scores with schools that have and have not implemented the quality criteria.

Comments from participants:

- Some of the sub-IRs are “tenuous,” and it may be difficult to show that learning is really improving.
- It will be difficult to collect the data on the 20 or so indicators listed for the IR.
- Why is the focus on schools rather than classrooms or quality?
- Does the SO reflect that the mission works in only a few provinces? Will the sample be national or local?
- There is a need to articulate and link the impact of USAID’s work to the overall education system.

Zambia

The Zambia Team, having stated that the country Results Package for their SO had just been reviewed, presented an overview of the results framework, IRs, and performance monitoring indicators. The SO indicators call for increases in assessment scores as well as in enrollments and retention. This plan was unique among all the presentations in that it made an effort to take into account of the effect of the HIV/AIDS crisis on education.

The Zambia Team outlined HIV/AIDS school-based activities that could be fit into the existing IRs. Some of the activities outlined by the team to lead to the IRs included:

- NGO programs to provide daycare and school feeding – IR2.1
- Interactive radio instruction for out-of-school youth – IR2.1
- Bursary scheme/fund – IR2.1
- School feeding program – IR2.2
- Life skills education – IR2.2

- Peer and teacher counseling – IR2.2
- IEC campaigns – IR2.2
- Data collection and impact analysis related to teachers and orphans – IR2.3
- Intersectoral working groups on HIV/AIDS and orphans – IR2.3
- Dissemination workshops – IR2.3
- Research – IR2.3

Comments from participants:

- What is the impact of the country's "context" statistics on the program?
- How will you replace teachers lost to AIDS?
- Is Zambia considering alternative school models? Incentives?
- How is the government reacting to the HIV/AIDS crisis?
- Does the government have the resources to address the problem? What can be done right now?
- How do health education, MIS, and girls' participation link to the SO? (The answer was that a range of other activities are being undertaken by the ministry and other donors. USAID's work complements the overall sectoral investment program.

Closing session, July 29
Facilitator: Mary Lugton

During the closing session, participants revisited the training tree, this time on a much larger scale. On July 17, Megan and Mary had introduced participants to the tree in the session on objectives and expectations. It was designed as a reflective tool through which participants could consider personal and professional objectives, and the conditions needed to accomplish those objectives. On July 28, the tree became a public posting of the accomplishment of those objectives as well as of the learning that had occurred during the training. Outcomes were posted as leaves on the branches of the tree in response to question prompts such as “What will I take home with me?” “What have I gained from this training?” And “Which of my objectives has been accomplished?”

- Think systematically; act strategically
- Increased my capacity to better manage my projects
- The importance of community participation/involvement in achieving quality education
- Relating community participation to education
- How to move forward with community school programmes
- Share experiences about how country USAID programs are managed (professional goal)
- Recuperate from USAID/Washington; refocus on education
- Learned and enjoyed thinking and strategizing about Basic Education in Africa
- Familiarization with many issues, concepts and procedures concerning USAID and the countries in which it works
- Better understanding of how strategic frameworks guide Mission activities
- Understanding of the internal dynamics of AID programming
- A results framework with a quality focus for USAID/SA Basic Education
- Developing RF and Indicators
- Assessing and interpretation
- HIV/AIDS Awareness
- Need to prepare for HIV/AIDS crisis now!
- Fun and fellowship

In thinking about the conditions which had helped them to accomplish these goals, participants paid tribute to many of the resource people by posting the following on the roots of the tree:

- Small group discussions
- Open discussions
- Focus on teachers, classrooms and students
- Community participation
- Teamwork
- Resource persons

Participants also paid specific tribute to resource people and participants by posting the following on the roots of the tree:

- Carrie Johnson, Jeffrey Marburg Goodman, Steve Ferrara and Jane Schubert
- Ash on Indicators
- Winnie on HIV/AIDS
- Faroon, Alpha, Mohamed, Winnie, Eric and Georgette

- Brad, Anthony and Megan
- Paul, Ash and David
- Monika for her great teaching skills/ concurrent session on Youth/Workforce Development
- Ash for his work on the overall program—designed/led gently!
- Nancy for her work on the social events