



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC AND
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



Good Practices

in Leveraging Long-term Training for Institutional Capacity Strengthening



February 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by the Association for Public and Land-grant Universities, Knowledge Center on Higher Education for African Development.

Good Practices in Leveraging Long-term Training for Institutional Capacity Strengthening

Anne-Claire Hervy
Andrew Gilboy

February 2014

DISCLAIMER

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

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	4
Purpose of This Report.....	4
Overview of the Knowledge Network Activities.....	4
II. The Institutional Strengthening Lens	7
Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD)	9
Observations.....	11
III. Good Practices to Leverage Institutional Strengthening.....	13
A. Leveraging Training for Institutional Impact – Before, During and After Training	14
B. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of Individual Training on Institutional Performance Strengthening.....	18
C. Mentoring.....	24
D. Integrating Gender into Training	27
E. Leadership Development.....	31
F. Private Sector Outreach and Service Learning	33
G. Professional Networking	42
H. Recruitment, Selection and Orientation	36
I. Building a Dynamic Alumni Network	38
J. E-learning.....	40
IV. Works Cited	44

I. Introduction

In May 2013, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), established a knowledge network among long-term training¹ and capacity development programs in the area of agriculture and food security to share knowledge and disseminate good practices on using long-term training to build human and institutional capacity. Through this knowledge network, APLU engaged in dialogue with a variety of implementers of individual training and/or institutional-development programs and funders of such programs through individual interviews and a series of public webinars. An online platform was also established via USAID's Agrilinks site to facilitate communication among members of the network and to share resources and tools. The network was formally named the Knowledge Network on Long-Term Technical and Leadership Training.

Purpose of This Report

This report was developed for USAID to document the results of the Knowledge Network and to encapsulate the knowledge shared and good practices promulgated through the webinar discussions as well as through individual discussions with implementers, program designers, and funders. This report also covers a number of

¹ Long-term training was loosely defined to include a broad range of programs including degree and non-degree training of a technical nature (but not "study tours" or conference attendance), as well as long-term leadership training.

additional topics that were not the focus of discussion during the webinars.

The report is organized in two sections. The first gives a brief overview of the institutional strengthening lens through which the Knowledge Network examined good practices in long-term training. The second examines eleven topics related to long-term training and, through this lens of institutional strengthening as one of the goals of individual training, identifies good practices in each of these areas to achieve that goal.

Overview of the Knowledge Network Activities

In preparation for the webinars, APLU conducted fifteen interviews with individual training and institutional capacity development program implementers, several USAID Mission staff, and a major foundation funding human and institutional capacity development in Africa to gain a sense of the overall challenges faced by the group. In order to cast the net beyond USAID as a funding agency, the APLU team included training programs funded by other donors. (The list of all program implementers contacted is found in the Annexes.)

The purpose of the interviews was to identify priority niche topics in training and capacity development program implementation and M&E, where program implementers and USAID could benefit from a sharing of good practices across the community of development partners and stakeholders. The top priority topics were then selected as the focus of four webinar discussions.

The interviews briefly explored the structure of each training program and provided information on current practices being used across a broad range of programs. By interviewing field-based USAID staff, APLU also became aware of the challenges faced inside a USAID Mission in terms of program design and compliance with USAID regulations. After the initial telephone interviews, APLU continued discussions by telephone, email and at a major agricultural education conference held in September in the Washington, D.C. area.

From these highly-informative telephone calls, which lasted between one and two hours with several staff at each training provider office, the APLU team developed several observations on the role of institutional strengthening in training program management. These observations are discussed in Section II.

The Knowledge Network convened four webinars between June and October 2013:

1. **“Monitoring Your Training Program's Results – How do you know if your work is having any impact?”** - The first webinar took place on June 27th on monitoring the training results through the lens of institutional performance. It included a presentation of key issues, which stimulated a discussion among participants about major challenges to assessing the results of individual training effectively.
2. **“Attracting and Retaining Women in Long-Term Training”** - The second webinar, held on September 12th, focused

on recruiting and retaining women in long-term training. Participants discussed good practices for encouraging female participation and success in long-term training programs. Major points of discussion included recruiting women when few are “in the pipeline,” encouraging gender equity when most trainees are men, and addressing family constraints that prevent women from accepting training grants.

3. **“Mentoring and Other Ways to Leverage the Impact of Training”** - In the third webinar, held on October 3rd, participants heard about mentoring and action planning from the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) fellowship program. Good practices for effective mentoring programs were described, as well as other ways to leverage the impact of training.
4. **“How to Leverage Institutional Impact After Training is Over”** - The theme of the final webinar, held on October 24th, was increasing the impact of training programs on institutional performance after training has been completed. The webinar began with background information on institutional strengthening and performance improvement and their importance in sustaining gains from investments in training. Participants then discussed strategies to increase the impact of training programs on trainees’ home-country institutions.

The ideas that emerged from these four webinars form the backbone of the first four topics discussed in Section III, although the order of presentation has been changed in this report. Audio archives of the webinars, as well as written summaries of the webinar and links to resources related to the topic of each webinar can all be found on the [Agrilinks discussion group page \(http://agrilinks.org/working-group/26/about\)](http://agrilinks.org/working-group/26/about) that was established to help disseminate the learning from this Network.

II. The Institutional Strengthening Lens

Training has been at the forefront of interventions sponsored by USAID in developing countries from the inception of U.S. foreign assistance programs in the 1950s. Development projects were defined as consisting of three components: technical assistance, training and commodities. If a local institution were targeted for strengthening, a prevailing assumption was that by delivering these three project inputs the institution would be strengthened – and continue on a path of improving performance. Highly-trained returned graduates would fuel the institutional changes needed for Africa’s future.

The training component consisted typically of in-country workshops designed and delivered in tandem with technical assistance. Out-of-country training (called “participant training” at the time) consisted of short-term courses and long-term training generally leading to an academic degree either in the United States or in “third countries.”

Early programs spanning the 1960s to the mid-1970s included “best and brightest” programs, where high school and university students were selected according to merit for placement in U.S. higher education institutions. In Africa, the programs aimed at building *individual* skills and knowledge intended to fill human resource gaps in newly-independent African nations replacing departing colonial bureaucrats and leaders,

primarily in public institutions, including universities.²

By the early 1970s, USAID realized that its “best and brightest” programs were contributing to the “brain drain” and were in fact inhibiting the strengthening of existing institutions. Programs were adjusted to focus long-term training on faculty and public-sector employees as a way to strengthen their institutions. The AFGRAD program was a leader in this effort, focused on Africa, and over a 40-year period, trained over 3,000 Africans in graduate degree programs in the United States. Almost all had undergraduate degrees and many were already employed at institutions. Over 90 percent returned. The USAID focus at the time was clearly institution-building, using individual training as the primary mechanism.

Other programs, such as the CRSPs, promoted advance agricultural training for emerging researchers, which also aimed at building stronger research institutions, training over 5,000 students to degrees in agriculture. Other priority development sectors, such as health and education, had similar programs targeting specific institutions working in those sectors.

² Early efforts also included, in some cases, major institutional building projects where US faculty were resident in new higher education institutions and USAID provided not only human capacity development but also the bricks and mortar for new institutions (such as the creation of Alemaya University in Ethiopia in partnership with Oklahoma State University).

Many of these degree programs included supplementary workshops (called “mid-winter seminars”) organized during vacation periods where students gathered at different venues to learn “soft” skills they would need to assist in their career development and help their home institutions improve. Management training emerged as a key topic most “participant trainees” were required to take as part of their U.S. training program.

The decline of participant training as a widely-used USAID development tool began in the early 1990s for a variety of reasons. Long-term training in agriculture, for example, plummeted from 1995 until the food price spikes in 2007-8 stimulated the creation of the Feed the Future program that began to turn the tide back to larger-scale long-term training. Although the new training programs did identify their trainees from sector-specific institutions (in agriculture, health, education, etc.), the emphasis remained on helping individuals acquire degrees and new skills and knowledge, but this time with little supplemental training that would equip the returned trainees with the know-how to help change the home institution. The mid-winter seminars had long fallen from institutional memory and budgets did not include exposure to the soft skills needed to help introduce major performance improvements the home institutions desperately needed.

These ambitious programs achieved some impressive results, according to numerous evaluations. However, the goal assumed that training would lead to sustainable institutional change. Yet it cannot simply be *assumed* that training helps build an institution’s capacity. Under

certain circumstances it certainly can achieve that objective. In other circumstances, however, it can produce little or no change at the institution. Worse, it can sometimes inflict a negative impact on an institution’s capacity, such as when an employee leaves the home institution for greener pastures due to inequities, lack of resources or an overwhelmingly negative work environment.

USAID recognized that the principal reason training did not lead in many cases to sustainable institutional change was the lack of a link between the performance needs of an institution and the training offered. USAID Missions or implementing partners did not routinely undertake an in-depth performance analysis of the institution so that project interventions address identified gaps and their root causes. In some cases, training was not the appropriate solution to righting a sinking institution or to help correct its course. For at least twenty years the mantra in institutional performance improvement associations, such as the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) and American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), has been that “training is not always the solution to closing performance gaps in an institution.”

Today, USAID has adopted this organizational development principle in its Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) model. After the publication of the USAID HICD framework, which draws from the ISPI and ASTD experiences, USAID made the HICD approach mandatory for all USAID Missions to follow in embarking on capacity building activities. The APLU activity is designed to accelerate this HICD process by identifying ways of tweaking existing

training long-term programs so they equip the trainees with the institutional strengthening skills they will need upon their return. And along the way, to inform USAID Missions how to design better capacity-building programs that both build individual as well as institutional capacity. The central premise of the Knowledge Network project is that by increasing focus on *institutional performance improvements in developing-country institutions*, investments in training individuals will lead to greater and more sustainable change. Research of USAID's previous training programs supports the veracity of this premise.³ **The challenge of the Knowledge Network project is to identify good practices for linking training to institutional need.**

Many programs involved in the Knowledge Network were not designed with an institutional-strengthening mandate; they are training programs focused on individual career development, as designed by USAID, to fill sector-wide needs rather than institutional needs. Through the four webinars and telephone conversations with individual programs, we proposed adjusting the focal point to include the institutions where the trainees will eventually be employed. Even in

³ Gilboy, A. et al. (2004). Generations of Quiet Progress: The development impact of U.S. long-term university training on Africa from 1963 to 2003. Prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development by Aguirre International under the Global Evaluation and Monitoring IQC, Contract FAO-I-00-99-00010-00, Task Order 13. Gilboy, Andrew; Flora, Cornelia; Raphael, Ron; and Pathak, Bhavani. 2010. *Agriculture Long-term Training: Assessment and Design Recommendations*. BIFAD (2003) Renewing USAID Investment in Global Long-Term Training and Capacity Building in Agriculture and Rural Development. Report to Administrator Natsios.

instances where the program is designed in such a way where the training institution has no contact with a home-country institution, a number of activities can be introduced that increase the future impact the individual can have on institutional performance. These good practices are described on the following pages, all of which sharpen the lens through which training is delivered so that institutional performance is also in sight.

Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD)

How to improve performance at institutions is well-known and time-tested.⁴ A large body of information is available that describes the steps to follow in identifying the performance constraints in an institution, or in an organizational unit (an office, division, etc.), and analyzing the root causes that impede higher performance. Interventions, also called a “solutions package,” are then proposed and implemented, bolstered by a change management strategy, that can close the performance gaps identified. The methods are used with significant results in corporations, non-profits and a number of government agencies around the world and especially in North America.⁵

As noted above, the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) framework adopted by USAID draws from the models as

⁴ The website of the [International Society for Performance Improvement](http://www.ispi.org) (ISPI) provides extensive documentation on performance improvement methods.

⁵ See www.ispi.org and www.astd.org.

promulgated by the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI). Donors working in developing countries have, in general, not recognized the limits of training *as a solution to institutional problems* for many reasons. Chief among them is the general belief that by improving the skill set and knowledge of employees in an

organization, there will be significant improvements in institutional output.

The table below illustrates the differences between training and institutional strengthening (HICD) that helps us observe training through a new lens.

TRAINING	HICD
Focuses on only individual performance – skills and knowledge	Focuses on five performance factors*
Sequence of actions leading to a degree or certificate	A process
Measurement limited to obtaining degree or certificate	Continuous measurement process
Based on individual needs	Based on organizational needs
Evaluated by individual performance	Evaluated by Organizational Performance
Focus on individuals to obtain results	Focus on systems approach to improve organizational performance
Single type of intervention (training)	Multiple types of interventions
Based on project outputs	Based on organizational commitment
Training needs assessment - sector, individual, institutional	Performance assessment
Builds capacity of individual to perform	Builds capacity of organization to produce results
Results-oriented at individual level	Results-oriented at organizational level
Can be ad hoc or long-term but skills & knowledge focused	Must be systematic
* Five performance factors: 1) job expectations; 2) performance feedback; 3) work environment & tools available; 4) motivation; 5) skills & knowledge.	

Source: Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook, USAID, October 2010.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT442.pdf

Again, the goal of the Knowledge Network is to help training providers adopt a new lens that views institutional strengthening as the ultimate result from the training being provided. Even though a training provider may not be proximal to a home country institution to conduct a gap analysis as the HICD guidebook prescribes, there are a number of actions that can be taken to leverage training of individuals so that their institutions can also change, some of which may require some reallocation of resources.

Observations

Although the Knowledge Network activity began with a notion that the agricultural training programs being implemented through a variety of USAID mechanisms could be improved by a greater emphasis on institutional strengthening, there had been no formal surveys or evaluations to determine the intensity of focus on institutional strengthening. While the purpose of this project was not to conduct a formal survey or evaluation to determine the veracity of this notion, interviews and webinar discussions with training program implementers led the authors of this report to conclude that the links between individual training and institutional capacity strengthening can be greatly strengthened.

Based on all the information gathered formally and informally from the major training providers drawn from both the telephone interviews and webinar participation, the team developed the following observations. The methodology did not allow for a quantitative inquiry, and such an effort would be helpful in producing evidence to justify,

qualify, or oppose the following anecdotal observations.

1. **Focus is on the individual's training objective.** The training programs engaged in the Network are by and large designed to focus on the individual, rather than the institutions from which the individual came and to which they will return.⁶ As a result, long-term training and post-training activities are largely designed to support individual career development. Often a sector-wide approach is taken to analyze needs, which means that once a trainee is selected in response to an identified sector-wide need, attention turns to meeting the individual's training needs.
2. **Institutional strengthening and training conceived as separate.** In programs with dual mandates to train individuals and build institutions, the dual goals tend to be implemented with little cross-over leverage.
3. **In programs with a clear focus on institutional strengthening, training is viewed as the driver to improve institutional performance with little attention given to non-training drivers, such as change management or other interventions described in USAID's HICD Handbook.**

⁶ There are, however, a number of programs, such as BHEARD and iAGRI, that have an explicit institutional strengthening mandate as part of the program.

4. **Institutional needs assessments are often biased towards identifying gaps in human resources, and particularly technical knowledge.** In programs where an appropriate institutional needs assessment does inform the program's activities, activities still favor individual knowledge-building over institution-building tools such as change management or leadership development.

5. **Strong focus on providing student support.** Across a range of program types – from a research grant to supplement a US-based graduate student's resources to a university managing an overseas project involved in the entire process of training, from recruitment to re-integration – a common objective is to support the students in their difficult journey toward degree completion. This focus is the hallmark of U.S. university education for international students – a willingness to be sensitive to the student's needs and make adjustments to fit the student's particular research agenda. Telephone interviews reconfirmed the high degree of care provide by the program implementers to their sponsored graduate students.

6. **Minimal connection to home-country institutions.** Often, links are weak between the individual's training program and the needs of the home institution. In some cases the training provider had no

knowledge of the institution, or the student had not been employed by an institution prior to being selected and admitted. Some informants stated that USAID had not asked them, or provided funds, to conduct a performance assessment of an institution or attempt to identify the needs in order to link a student to addressing those performance constraints.

7. **Increasing but still limited attempts to build soft skills.** Recently there has been increasing recognition of the need to integrate soft skills (management, leadership, presentation, communication, etc.) into academic/technical training. In practice, however, in degree training programs in particular, there does not appear to be a particular focus on soft-skills development for trainees of USAID-funded programs relative to the normal academic requirements. Some programs reported on the development of leadership workshops or an orientation program to prepare students for a foreign academic environment, but few programs that are focused on degree attainment described particular strategies to develop soft skills beyond what is normally included in their academic programs for all students.

8. **Action planning not generally integrated into training programs.** Interviews did not reveal much use of trainee action plans developed prior to departure and adjusted regularly, where

progress is monitored and reported regularly to program managers. Action plans serve as buoys against which a student's academic and non-academic work is measured. They provide an avenue for students to set goals for upon which to focus after their return home. Are the soft skills being mastered? How are the trainee's individual goals tying into a broader institutional objective and how is the trainee engaging others at the institution? A living, flexible and monitored action plan, developed by the student with assistance from others, such as a mentor, can be a key to migrating the focus of individual training to institutional strengthening. Action planning can also be entirely focused on the career of the individual, however, which would not

directly serve an institutional strengthening purpose. Therefore, action planning should be developed within an institutional strengthening framework.

9. **Mentoring can be better utilized as a tool for institutional capacity development.** The power of mentoring to support training appears to be increasingly appreciated. However, good practices for designing and implementing formal mentoring programs are not well understood and, often, mentoring is not done with an eye toward institutional strengthening but rather individual career development, which is the purpose of many of the programs in the Knowledge Network.

III. Good Practices to Leverage Institutional Strengthening

A. Leveraging Training for Institutional Impact – Before, During and After Training

While institutions can range from informal or grassroots organizations to powerful, structured government ministries, all types of institutions can work strategically and practically to improve performance. Very often, discussions on human and institutional capacity development focus on identifying technical gaps in a particular sector (agriculture, health, etc.) and on targeting training to fill those gaps, which is an improvement over an approach that simply targets the “best and brightest” students for training regardless of sector demand. To truly build institutional capacity, however, programs should be designed to go beyond improving individual competencies or identifying sector skill deficiencies, to linking training to specific institutional performance gaps.

The International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) is the leader in the field of institutional strengthening, and USAID has adapted the ISPI model to apply to the international environment through its Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) framework. Both the ISPI and the HICD models begin the process of institutional strengthening by comparing the present situation of an organization to its desired future performance (based on its Strategic Vision or Strategic Plan). The organization will then analyze the root causes for the existing performance level and propose solutions, of which training is only one of many options.

In becoming involved in any institutional reform program, those pressing for change will encounter resistance. There are entrenched interests working against change – skeptics sabotaging anything new and citing previous attempts that failed, and those desiring change but fearful of their jobs or status in a new work environment. The organizational change method can take one of two paths: compliance or commitment.⁷ Many are familiar with the former, where leadership imposes change by issuing new rules, directions and threats. With the latter, leadership slowly brings change agents or “champions” on board who assist in building a new reform culture where employees see themselves improving their situation, while helping the organization achieve its objectives.

Training program managers can tie individual training to institutional strengthening by preparing trainees for their return home and helping institutions to capitalize on their employees’ training. Some challenges trainees are likely to meet include jealousy from peers (for not being selected), adjusting to a different organizational context, inadequate research support, and encountering peers unreceptive to new ideas and methods acquired during overseas training. To help pave the way for returning trainees, program implementers can provide trainees with tools and effective approaches to enable them to return

⁷

<http://www.imaworldwide.com/blog/bid/174351/Change-Management-Methodology-Tactics-Compliance-vs-Commitment>.

under the best circumstances where they can become long-term catalysts for institutional strengthening.

Preparing trainees to have an impact on their home institutions is an effort that should be undertaken throughout the life of a program – not only towards the end of the training period. Actions for boosting post-training impact on institutional strengthening should be built into a program’s core and should be taken before training begins, during training, and after trainees have returned home. A dynamic action plan for each student can crystallize these issues in the minds of the trainees and prepare them for hitting the home turf fully aware of the challenges they will face.

Preparations before Training Begins

- Program implementers should have a **clear picture of the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) each trainee will acquire by the end of training**. The KSA to acquire should go beyond the technical area, such as plant physiology, to include soft skills such as leadership, collaboration with peers, working on teams, communication, etc. Trainees can make specific commitments to introduce changes in their institutions back home and their communities. In short, trainees’ plans should include “giving back” and sharing, drawing from their entire overseas experience.
- Require each trainee to develop a **comprehensive work plan** (or action plan) that states the knowledge, skills and new attitudes they hope to acquire during training. Accompanying this refinement of the general training objective, trainees would detail in their plan how they will reach specific performance goals as described. They should reflect on the way achieving these goals would affect their research, contribute to changes in their home institution, and improve the well-being of others working in their sector. With a work plan, or action plan, in place, students can monitor their progress easily for themselves and for their training overseers. They can also modify the work plan during training so it reflects both the needs they discern as they become involved in their professional life, and their institution’s needs. Trainees could also be asked to describe their regular communication with colleagues and administrators in their home institutions.
- Involve selected trainees in a **root cause analysis** of their institution’s current and future performance, followed by groups of students designing interventions (solutions) to be introduced. If the institution is involved in this process, some of the proposed interventions could be supported by the trainees during their overseas program, such as assisting their home institutions in gaining access to documents and resources available from the overseas institutions.
- Arrange for program implementers to query candidates applying for scholarships about their knowledge of the current trends in their sector. The objective is to **inspire trainees to think about the “big picture”**

in their field so that they can develop as future leaders. Program implementers have reported receiving positive feedback from trainees who were challenged before they joined the program to consider their training beyond receiving a graduate degree.

Actions to Take During Training

- **Networking** emerged as an important way to leverage institutional impact during training programs. Providing opportunities for trainees to network with career professionals and with trainees in their program cohort, can help them build a learning resource outside of the classroom. Social media tools such as LinkedIn or a Google Community are great resources for program implementers to use for networking efforts. (See Section III. E for more information on Professional Networking.)
- **Facilitate trainee’s engagement with the home institution.** Trainees need to maintain close ties to their home institutions during training, for many reasons, including to solidify their career path and to increase their ability to bring about changes at their home institutions. Monthly telephone or Skype calls between the trainee and various contacts can be part of the required tasks in the action plan. Through regular communication the trainee learns about developments at the home institution and helps ensure links between the trainee’s

program and the needs of the home institution. Each trainee can be asked to summarize these monthly calls for the program monitors. Trainees can also write reports about the institutional changes and needs they have observed in their home institution after visits home. Finally, trainees can serve as information resources for colleagues back home who have difficulty accessing information.

- **Trainees should generally conduct research in their home country** or in a similar developing country setting. This appears to be already a widespread practice among training implementers today. In-country supervisors or faculty advisors can assist the trainees in developing a thesis topic that addresses a critical local problem, and they can add context, support and advice while the trainee is conducting research. Trainees can also collaborate with colleagues back home in conducting research, which can help mitigate resistance when the trainee returns.
- **Strengthening ties between sending and receiving institutions** can also increase the potential of trainees to impact their home institutions. The receiving institution should seek to actively learn about the needs of trainees’ home institutions by communicating with each institution’s leadership and accessing any assessments conducted of each institution. This can aid receiving institutions in shaping each trainee’s degree program to fit the

home institution's technical and performance needs. Program directors of receiving institutions should also stay informed about any visits to the U.S. by members of a trainee's home institution or any visits to the country of the home institution by U.S. faculty, and should seek to facilitate meetings between the two institutions through these visits. Finally, administrators at the receiving institution should be aware of existing relationships between faculties and students' home institutions—whether formal or informal—to better coordinate and leverage opportunities for capacity-building.

- With help from the home institution, **identify individuals willing to support returning graduate students in re-integrating back home, settling in, and networking** in a new way as young professionals.

Follow up After Training Ends

- **Conduct periodic evaluations** of the impact of training, if any, on the institution targeted, whether a university, research center or government office. A useful tool in conducting training impact evaluations is Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation, which consists of categorizing data analysis into four levels that correlate training to a higher-level result. After a donor-funded graduate training program has closed out, post-training evaluations can be conducted by using low-budget, creative ways to survey former students, perhaps with help from all

of the universities where the trainees attended.

- **Setting up automatic emails** to be sent at a later date after the training program has closed can be effective in inducing returned trainees to implement their comprehensive action plans as they had promised. The automatic emails could be tailored to each trainee at the time of departure based on their action plan and priorities. Predetermined questions can be quickly answered online which facilitates monitoring and analysis by the program implementer.
- Assist trainees in an ongoing manner in thinking through **how to share their newly-acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes with others** upon returning home in a way that minimizes jealousy and maximizes the transfer of knowledge.
- **Involving returned trainees in regional meetings** where the overseas university is active can empower trainees to use the leadership skills they developed during training. Informal groups of professionals can become involved in a "network" or "blog" with their counterparts and professors sharing the same professional interests. These informal groupings appear to be more effective than the traditional alumni associations, which too often are overly formal in their approach (office, detailed charter approved by the local government with elected association leaders, funding raising appeals, etc.). Although perceived as ways to support individuals in their professional growth, these networks and

informal professional groups can in fact have a significant positive institutional impact as well. Professors active in pursuing their individual careers also enhance their institution's reputation and increase revenue through successful grant writing.

Additional Tools and Resources

Generations of Quiet Progress

This report is an evidence-based impact assessment of the value obtained from major investments in graduate education for 3,219 African professionals by USAID and its partners in the ATLAS and AFGRAAD programs.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADBI30.pdf

Agricultural Long term Training Assessment and Design Recommendations

This report is divided into three sections: an introduction that includes a historical look at the use of long-term U.S. degree training (LTT) to build African agricultural institutions and a description of the methodology used and programs reviewed; a findings section that focuses on identifying the good practices or valuable features that can lead to institutional change; and a final section listing the Recommendations for designing and implementing future programs and on implementing them.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT511.pdf

USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook

USAID's comprehensive HICD (Human and Institutional Capacity Development) Guidebook describes in detail the process of building capacity and improving performance in developing country

partner institutions. The annexes are full of useful tools and links to other sites. For example, page 24 has a long list of website links that address capacity development, many of which offer tools and templates.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT442.pdf

FORECAST II Practitioner's Handbook: Building a Global Community of Practitioners

Chapter I of the Forecast II Practitioner's Handbook is on Human and Institutional Capacity Development, and was developed by the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) to help USAID integrate Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) into its development assistance programs. This chapter provides information on the evolution of HICD, implementation guidance, and tools for implementing HICD initiatives.

pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADO720.pdf

B. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of Individual Training on Institutional Performance Strengthening

The focus of this section is on good practices in monitoring and evaluation with specific reference to the impact of individual training on institutional performance strengthening. Although all training programs monitor and assess "trainee progress" throughout the training period, assessing the impact of training on institutional performance requires an additional set of measures.

In order to be consistent with the USAID monitoring and evaluation terminology, this section begins with a review of the monitoring and

evaluation terminology as defined in USAID Evaluation Policy.⁸ Per the policy:

- **Impact evaluations** measure the change in a development outcome that is *attributable* to a defined intervention; impact evaluations are based on models of cause and effect *and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual* to control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change. Impact evaluations in which comparisons are made between beneficiaries that are randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group provide the strongest evidence of a relationship between the intervention under study and the outcome measured.
- **Performance evaluations** focus on descriptive and normative questions: what a particular project or program has achieved (either at an intermediate point in execution or at the conclusion of an implementation period); how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring; and other questions that are pertinent to program design, management and operational decision making. Performance evaluations often incorporate before-after comparisons, but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual.

- **Performance monitoring** of changes in performance indicators reveals whether desired results are occurring and whether implementation is on track. In general, the results measured are the direct and near-term consequences of project activities.
- **Performance indicators** measure a particular characteristic or dimension of project results (outputs or outcomes) based on a project's results framework and underlying theory of change. In general, outputs are directly attributable to the program activities, while project outcomes represent results to which a given program contributes but for which it is not solely responsible.
- **Performance management** (Managing for Results) is the systematic process of monitoring the achievements of program activities; collecting and analyzing performance information to track progress toward planned results; using performance information and evaluations to influence decision-making and resource allocation; and communicating results to advance organizational learning and communicate results to stakeholders.

Following this terminology, this section is focused on “performance monitoring” and “performance evaluation” of training programs and focuses in particular on ways to monitor and evaluate changes at an institution that may have occurred as a result of the training received by the individual.

⁸ USAID Evaluation Policy. January 2011.
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf>.

Currently, many USAID-funded training programs were not designed with a clear institutional-strengthening mandate. Therefore few training programs either monitor indicators of institutional change or collect institutional performance data at the outset.⁹ It also appears that few training implementers collect information from trainees on non-academic indicators that are known to make an impact on institutional performance. For instance, performance indicators that track leadership skills or soft skills development, which could equip trainees with skills and attitudes to use in effecting change at their home institutions, are either not included in the trainee's program or not monitored.

Even for training programs with no link to the sending institution, there are many ways to integrate an "institutional strengthening" goal to an existing program with minimal resources redirected away from individual training. Described below are several good practices that training programs might adopt to assess how effectively they leverage long-term training to support institutional change.

During the Training Program

- **Monitor elements in the "Action Plan."** An Action Plan (or Purpose Road Map, as one organization terms it) defines the longer-term goals that trainees hope to achieve upon return to their institution, what skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to achieve those goals, and what

⁹ Having accurate baseline data is essential for conducting performance monitoring and performance evaluation.

actions they need to take to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes. When every trainee has developed a personal Action Plan, the trainees and the training program can track progress toward achievement of the stated goals. If "Improved Leadership" is a goal, what actions has the training provider taken to assist the trainee improve leadership skills? Are the trainees acquiring new skills and applying them while in training? If learning to chart influence clusters in an organization is a stated skill-need, progress toward that goal can be tracked. The monitoring in itself assists the trainee to make progress and demonstrates that being an effective change agent depends on acquiring non-academic skills to complement the technical accomplishments of long-term training.

- **Monitor that contact is occurring between trainee and home institution.** Building and maintaining relationships with key people in the home institution is a precondition to leveraging the impact of training on change. Trainees need to demonstrate on a regular basis that they are in contact with a variety of colleagues (peers, administrators, faculty, etc.) at their home institution.
- **Provide opportunities for trainees to build professional relationships and monitor progress.** Trainees that have built strong relationships with their home institution during training, especially those

from diverse technical areas will be better equipped to form change groups that can collectively induce change at the home institution. Training providers can facilitate those relationships by providing lists of trainees, convening webinars and teleconferences on various subjects – led by trainees not by faculty, holding annual country-focused workshops where a country’s development challenges are debated, and so forth. Monitoring and valuating this kind of activity is another way to assess the impact of training on institutional strengthening.

- **Maintain close interaction with the sending institution.** Measuring the effect of training on institutions presupposes that training implementers build and sustain relationships with the institutions themselves. In this way, training programs can assess to what extent returnees are applying their new academic knowledge and change skills at their home institution. Although such an assessment may not be comprehensive or rigorous, it can provide valuable information on the returnee’s experience in inducing performance improvements back home. A training program that includes institutional strengthening in its mandate would also want to articulate well to the trainees these institutional strengthening goals. Trainees can come to view themselves as key change agents with specific responsibilities in helping to improve performance at their home institution.

Their overseas training institution should encourage and support them (through creative use of social media, teleconferencing with Skype, etc.) to build strong links while away with both peers and leaders from the home institution.

- **Integrate M&E skills development into training.** The AWARD project based in Nairobi uses this strategy with great success. Their fellows create a purpose road map at the start of their training, a tool in which they identify measurable goals to achieve through the course of training, as discussed above. The fellows are then responsible for monitoring progress towards their self-determined goals. The data gathered from self-monitoring are then supplemented by other measures to assess the fellow’s performance improvement. This approach helps generate useful data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the AWARD training program while at the same time empowering the fellows to acquire non-academic skills they can deploy to improve decision-making at their home institution.
- **Engage the trainees in monitoring and evaluation of institutional performance.** Prior to departure for training, have the trainee create a performance baseline of the home institution (or faculty or department) using a simple assessment tool. Afterward, the trainee can refine the performance analysis, during the first visit home to conduct

academic research. After training is completed, the trainee can then use new skills in change management, leadership and mentoring to instigate changes as a returned graduate. Results of any changes the returned student reports will feed into the implementing partner's post-training impact assessments. Documenting organizational changes includes quantitative as well as qualitative assessments of change – both are desirable in producing evidence-based findings. However, whatever information the returned student provides is useful in gauging changes that are occurring. Attributing those changes requires more in-depth evaluations probably beyond the student's capacity. The point here is to engage the student fully in a change management strategy and in measuring any increases in capacity observed.

The above monitoring actions can give the training provider some sense of the home institution's performance challenges and help inform whether the training being provided (technical and soft skills) may contribute to institutional strengthening post-training.

After the Training Ends

- **Conduct returned participant interviews.** If the training program budget includes post-training performance evaluation, administer questionnaires with returned trainees by email, via Survey Monkey, by teleconferences to determine changes that may be occurring based on

the trainee's perceptions. Use triangulation and grounded analysis to filter out as much bias as possible in respondents' answers. Of course, it is a good practice to conduct some post-training performance evaluation even if it is not in the training budget to uncover findings that can improve future training programs.

- **Contact institutions where significant numbers of returned participants work.** Administer short questionnaires with university leaders (or wherever the trainees are employed) to determine their perceptions of the former trainee's performance and contributions to the institution. Triangulate answers when possible. Develop a preliminary idea of whether change is taking place, what aspects of change, if any, can be reasonably attributed to the trainees' interventions or impact, and what actions are being planned to further change.
- **Use social media and social networking.** Social media and social networking platforms can be used after the donor-funded program has ended to learn about changes that may be a result of training. Facebook, LinkedIn and other platforms offer easy and affordable ways for participants to share their successes and challenges in improving their home institution after they return.

Funding M&E presents obstacles to many training implementers. Despite USAID guidelines that

stipulate “five to ten percent of total program resources should be allocated for both Monitoring and Evaluation” (ADS 203.3.1.4), the reality is often starkly different. Many programs have some funds to monitor training but little to conduct post-training performance evaluations. On the other hand, some training programs, such as African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), designate a larger budget percentage allocation (15%) to M&E than the 10% recommended. Whatever the M&E budget is, creative implementing partners can find ways to implement low-cost monitoring of trainee capacity to institute change back home, and to conduct effective follow-up evaluations using low-cost methods. Budgets will always be tight for M&E and follow-up despite the lofty goals.

[Additional Tools and Resources](#)

USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook

USAID’s comprehensive HICD (Human and Institutional Capacity Development) Guidebook describes in detail the process of building capacity and improving performance in developing country partner institutions. The annexes are full of useful tools and links to other sites, including ways to monitor and assess institutional change.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT442.pdf

Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation

The most widely used and popular model for the evaluation of training programs is known as “The Four Levels of Learning Evaluation.” The model was defined in 1959 by Donald L. Kirkpatrick in a series of articles that appeared in the US Training

and Development Journal. Kirkpatrick redefined the evaluation model with his 1998 book “Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels.” The idea behind the model is for an organization to have meaningful evaluation of learning in the organization. The degree of difficulty increases as you move through the levels. However, the knowledge learned regarding the effectiveness of the training program more than compensates for this. The four levels of the model are: reaction, learning, behavior and results.

agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/Donald%20Kirkpatrick%20Four%20Levels%20of%20Evaluation.pdf

USAID-Liberia GEMS Project

This PowerPoint presents the process of Integrated Change Management (Assess, Design, Implement, Sustain), Change Visioning and Change Readiness and includes both tools and exercises.

agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/USAID-Liberia%20GEMS%20Project%20-%20Change%20Management%20intro%20%26%20tools.ppt

Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation: Managing for Impact

This website is managed by the Centre for Development Innovation (CDI), Wageningen University and Research Centre. It provides access to key publications and internet resources on planning, monitoring and evaluation. Special reference is made to Managing for Impact, an integrated approach to managing for results with attention to engaging people in a learning oriented process.

<http://www.managingforimpact.org/>

C. Mentoring

Mentoring can be a powerful driver for career development and by focusing on developing an individual as a change agent can also drive institutional performance improvement.

Mentoring is a developmental partnership between a more experienced professional (“mentor”) and a less experienced partner (“mentee”). Mentoring is not “encouraging others to be like you,” nor simply telling others what you would do in a certain situation. Nor is it general advising or supervising. It fosters a two-way relationship, not simply a one-way communication from mentor to mentee. A good mentoring program builds a supportive partnership that benefits and serves both parties.

Many of the suggestions that follow come from the webinar conducted on October 3, 2013 by the APLU team. In the one and a half hour participatory webinar, Marco Noordeloos, the Fellowship Manager of the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) program, described AWARD’s mentoring approach and implementation details. The APLU team subsequently discussed the AWARD mentoring model and its “good practices” with other program implementers participating in the webinar.

The AWARD Mentoring Model

AWARD fellows meet with their mentors at least monthly for one to two hours for one year—a time frame which AWARD has found long enough for fellows to make substantial progress but short enough to stay focused and purposeful. Once the

first year of mentorship is over, the AWARD mentees become mentors for more junior women professionals, which creates a cascade effect with experienced mentees nurturing new mentees.

AWARD’s mentors are expected to:

- provide nurturing support by listening, asking questions, and sharing their experience, scientific knowledge, and networks
- support and challenge the mentee to grow within her field and within her institution
- encourage the mentee to focus on her career development and leadership skills

AWARD’s monitoring and evaluation findings show that both mentees, who report positive outcomes on goal achievement and career development, and mentors, who report that they have learned practical new skills about effective mentoring, leadership, and staff development, gain impressively from the program.

Effective mentoring programs enhance personal career development, which in turn can promote institutional change and builds capacity. AWARD has evidence that the mentorship program effects policy-level changes where AWARD fellows are employed. A well-designed and executed mentoring program also transfers mentoring skills to the mentee, who can then serve as mentor for others. AWARD has evidence that former mentees apply their newly-acquired mentoring skills to mentor others after the completion of their AWARD fellowship.

Strong Support Structure for Mentoring

If mentoring is to be viewed as a critical part of the training program, it should have a strong support structure in place as a guide. Mentoring can be empowering to both individuals and organizations and requires skilled staff to coordinate and guide structured mentoring. A mentoring coordinator's primary responsibility is to coach the mentor/mentee pair through the entire process, ensuring that they have a rich relationship through which both parties benefit. The role is a key element in effective mentoring. The CGIAR has developed a useful guide for mentoring coordinators as part of the Gender & Diversity Program of the CGIAR System, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the mentoring coordinator position.¹⁰ AWARD uses a modified version of these guidelines for its mentoring program.

Distinguish between supervisor and mentor

It is hoped, of course, that a supervisor or academic advisor will also be a mentor and use mentoring skills in their relationship with the trainee. However, in establishing a formal mentoring program, it is recommended to separate the mentoring role from that of a supervisor or academic advisor. When structuring a formal mentoring program, the supervisor-supervisee relationship, with its existing dynamic and respective responsibilities, does not accommodate the new mentor-mentee relationship. The supervisor's responsibility responds primarily to the organization's needs,

¹⁰ The guide can be accessed here: http://agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/WP4_2_English_Mentoring%20Program%20Coordinator%20Guidelines_0.pdf.

whereas the mentor focuses on mentee's interests and goals. If these responsibilities are held by the same person, prioritization of needs and conflict of loyalty can occur. AWARD aims to have at least two layers of separation between the mentor and the fellow (mentee). For example, mentors within the same institution must be in a different department *and* at a different level. In this way the program creates a baggage-free space where mentor and mentee can talk openly about goals, ambitions and developing skills, minimizing the risk of jealousy or competition.

Academic advisors have a much closer role to that of a mentor than a supervisor, and some academic advisors may be very well suited to mentor students on both academic challenges as well as non-academic challenges. However, for many academic advisors, their focus is particularly on academic matters. Therefore, with regard to the development of many of the soft skills needed to become a change agent in an institution, a mentor focused on the development of non-academic skills can provide important support to a trainee who is likely to face many challenges upon return to their home institution. A non-academic mentor with deep understanding of some of these institutional challenges could be particularly useful in some contexts.

Careful Matching of Mentor to Mentee

In order for mentoring to have an impact, mentors and mentees are paired carefully. Mentors are selected according to personal styles, willingness to serve, interests, knowledge of the mentee's technical area (but not necessarily an expert in the student's precise academic field). A strong

mentoring relationship will have positive “chemistry” between the partners at both a personal and professional level. Although pairs need not become “best friends,” some sort of personal connection is a large part of successful mentoring.

Mentoring is a key strategy where program implementers can increase their ability to foster institutional change. It equips students with skills and confidence to reach beyond the confines of their technical interests to stimulate change in the workplace. Selecting the best mentor who is committed to helping students develop their careers and practice their leadership and networking skills becomes paramount. For this reason, the type and extent of incentives offered to mentors should be carefully considered; while it is important to recognize the time commitment that mentors make, financial incentives could attract the wrong type of people to the program.

While location plays a role in creating mentorship pairs, it need not be a limiting factor. Mentorship pairs not in proximity or impeded by busy travel schedules, can conduct virtual mentoring via telephone, Skype, and email. Virtual mentoring can be as effective as in-person mentoring, as long as both the mentor and mentee remain committed throughout the mentorship program.

Action Planning

An Action Plan is a written statement that consists of a goal or strategy, steps needed to reach the goal, a timeline for each action and any resources needed to implement the plan. It is widely used in short-term training to help participants apply their

new knowledge, skills and attitudes once back in the work place. Action plans are an effective tool to help trainees ensure that all aspects of their training – whether in the classroom or the community – contribute to their stated goal. It can describe the synergy between technical training and soft-skill development so that the trainee becomes an effective change agent upon return. Mentors assist mentees in developing action plans and provide guidance and support as the mentees put them into action.

AWARD uses a form of action planning that they call “purpose road-mapping.” During mentorship orientation, mentors and mentees review mentoring guidelines and expectations, develop a “Purpose Road Map” for the mentee to capture her life’s vision and career ambitions, and create a mentoring plan to organize their year of mentoring. Through the purpose road-mapping, each mentee defines her ambitions and life goals, identifies the professional position that would best allow her to achieve those goals, and creates a career path tracing how to reach that stated position. Purpose road-mapping can extend beyond the individual’s career goals to include desired institutional changes. Furthermore, individual goals may include bringing change in an organization, such as developing tools and guidelines for the institution’s future use.

Additional Tools and Resources

AWARD Mentoring Guidelines

AWARD's mentoring guidelines present a framework to be used in creating an effective mentoring program. The documents include both the English and Spanish versions of (a) Mentoring

Program Coordinator Guidelines, (b) Guidelines and Workbook for Mentees, and (c) Guidelines and Workbook for Mentors. These can be accessed on the Knowledge Network's Agrilinks site: <http://agrilinks.org/working-group/knowledge-network-long-term-technical-and-leadership-training/group-resource/tools-a-l>

Commentary: building science and leadership skills in African women in agricultural research and development

In this commentary, Mary Njenga and Yvonne Pinto share their mentoring partnership experiences through the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) program, a model that has potential for scaling out to other developing countries and organizations with an aim of creating a critical mass of skilled women scientists in agricultural research and development (R&D). The empowerment of women by AWARD is based on three cornerstones including mentoring partnerships, technical capacity building and leadership skills development. AWARD is a program of the Gender & Diversity Program of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) supported by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14735903.2011.607609#.UoU8VY0eLrZ>

Best Practices: Mentoring - United States Office of Personnel Management

In collaboration with the Department of State, the Department of Energy, and several other U.S. Government agencies, the Office of Personnel management developed this document as a tool to

assist agencies in creating a business case for mentoring and as an outline of the critical steps in developing and implementing a formal mentoring program.

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/career-development/bestpractices-mentoring.pdf>

Mentoring Best Practices - A Handbook – University at Albany – State University of New York

This handbook considers various perspectives on mentoring and offer resources for additional exploration. It covers the following topics: Starting a Mentoring Program—Why do it and what are my options; Best Practices in Mentoring for Colleges and Departments; Guidelines and Resources for Mentors; and Guidelines and Resources for Mentees.

<http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.toc.shtml>

D. Integrating Gender into Training

The ability of women's empowerment to increase a community's economic growth and enhance its quality of life is well documented, and the goal of gender equity is assumed for most long-term training programs. Although the "why" question with regard to women's empowerment and gender equity has been largely answered, the "how" question is more difficult. How can training programs recruit women when there are so few in the pipeline in many cases (in particular, in agriculture, science and engineering) and when many women are held back by family constraints?

Though most donor-funded programs include targets aiming to achieve gender equity, when faced with pipeline (supply) constraints, most of the program implementers interviewed indicated that they were not able to meet their targets. When pressed on strategies used, it appears that many programs lack a comprehensive strategy for increasing the numbers of female participants. Achieving gender equity requires that program implementers create detailed strategies to overcome constraints they encounter, in other words demonstrate a real commitment to finding appropriate, actionable solutions to meet their stated gender targets. One interviewee characterized the challenge as a need for programs to be “intentional” – with a concrete and well-thought out plan for actively recruiting women and affecting the pipeline for future recruitment.

Adopting a deliberate, long-term approach

USAID and program implementers should adopt a long-term approach addressing the shortage of women in the pipeline. Programs – either directly in their training or with complimentary efforts alongside training – can improve the likelihood of women entering the pipeline in the future. Through this lens, short-term and medium-term goals are viewed in a different light.

In cases where too few women are available for training, program implementers might consider designing activities that will help rectify the situation. For example, programs could design and conduct workshops for teenage girls in local primary and secondary schools, utilizing the trainees in their programs. Of training programs could link up with other programs focused on

advancing the education of young girls. Many reports have studied the so called “girl effect”— that investing in the education of girls between the ages of 12-18 in developing countries can increase national income by decreasing dropout rates, reducing teenage pregnancy and early marriages, and lowering HIV/AIDs incidences.¹¹ Even though most long-term training programs focus on tertiary education, targeting primary or secondary school girls for awareness raising programs can address the pipeline dilemma future program implementers will face. A creative long-term training program can find innovative ways to motivate the home-country institution to support community out-reach efforts – even though those activities would be beyond the purview of the long-term training provider. For example, a U.S.-trained woman scientist returning to her country could have in her Action Plan the goal of changing the mind-sets of young girls via local school visits to encourage them to consider male-dominated academic areas. Male trainees should also be strongly encouraged to participate in such outreach.

Programs could also create and take advantage of opportunities to raise gender issues with those in leadership positions in institutions. Some refer to these opportunities as “touch points” – opportunities that abound where the dilemma of too few women present in male-dominated fields

¹¹ Chaaban, J., Cunningham, W. V., & World Bank. (2011). *Measuring the economic gain of investing in girls: The girl effect dividend*. Washington, D.C: The World Bank; Levine, R., & Center for Global Development. (2008). *Girls count: A global investment & action agenda*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

can be raised openly and directly. When program implementers repeatedly discuss solutions to increasing female participation in male-dominated technical fields with local counterparts, progress could be made. If training programs and institutions can have meaningful discussions on the overall strategy of the institution to address gender equity, together they can make a difference in changing the gender environment and increasing gender equity in the future.

Involve Men

Often, long-term training programs (especially in agriculture) have much larger numbers of male trainees. These male trainees present another opportunity to address the imbalance between men and women – the training program can help foster leadership among male trainees on the gender issue. Integrating gender effectively into training programs requires going beyond a single “gender equity” session at orientation. They require repeated examinations of the challenges and discussions of possible solutions. Gender can also be integrated into the student road map (or Action Plan) for all male graduate students, as well as for female students. Repeated discussions can encourage men and women to take seriously their responsibilities in working to overcome gender-based challenges and include in their action plans to further gender objectives.

Program implementers can take bold actions that challenge traditional gender roles and assumptions. One Knowledge Network participant described sessions that his program had held with male trainees to reflect on male roles in their society to help recast traditional gender definitions and begin

changing attitudes towards masculinity. Male trainees can be encouraged to become leaders in sensitizing their colleagues back home on the importance of achieving improved gender balance in their profession, and to recommend changes that will help. They can, together with female colleagues, visit local schools and women’s organizations to present a new face to young girls – that there is room for them in the sciences, agriculture, engineering, law and architecture (to name a few male-dominated areas).

Focus on Quality

In seeking to integrate gender into training, programs should focus on the quality, not just the quantity, of women’s participation. Achieving gender “equity” goes beyond arriving at an equal number of female and male trainees. Gender equity cannot be thought about separately from leadership and influence – both ensure that equity targets include the quality dimension as well. Some strategies to ensure quality include designing mentoring programs for women to connect with leaders in their field and to upgrade women’s program design skills. Monitoring and evaluation of progress toward gender equity should include both the qualitative and quantitative elements to best reflect results.

Understand the Country-Specific Context

Programs can highlight the specific barriers to women’s participation in the cultural context in which they work. They should consider, for instance, the best methods to reach women with information about training opportunities in a specific community, or what time of day would

enable the most women in a particular community to attend. Program implementers need to be familiar and involved in the communities in which they work, in order to be aware of community dynamics. Programs should reach women in ways that fit their time constraints in order to hear solutions from women directly. Working closely with local organizations (i.e. a variety of civil society organizations) can also assist implementation partners overcome obstacles that impede outreach to the surrounding community.

Build Support into Program Design

Strategies to achieve gender equity should be part of the original program design. In particular, consideration should be given in program design to the particular needs of women in different stages and circumstances: women with families and women without families may face a substantially different set of constraints. One program uses a phased approach to help women (particularly young, unmarried women) and their families become more comfortable with the idea of the woman being “on her own” and far away. For women residing outside the capital, the first phase of training (e.g., language or leadership training) could be offered in a nearby community or in the capital city, to enable the family to adjust to a longer separation. The second phase could include a short tour to a nearby country with other women, for a workshop or to attend a professional conference. When the longer-term training begins, families may feel ready to accept that their daughter departs for a full year. This phased approach has been used successfully in Egypt and Pakistan.

Programs can include home visits for trainees after the first year, justified by field work required for their degree. Women with children could be offered day-care services at their training venue. United States government policies make it difficult for a trainee’s spouse and dependents to join him or her in the United States for the duration of the training, which often forces potential trainees to choose between furthering their education or keeping their family together.¹² This means that women are less likely to pursue long-term training in the United States than men. Missions can certainly help guide trainees through the legal process of allowing dependents to accompany the trainee. However, there are significant barriers to having dependents join trainees while studying in the United States and most trainees simply cannot overcome these obstacles. In such cases program implementers can consider long-term training in a third country (South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, India, Thailand, Israel or Turkey), or shorter-term periods of time away (for example, one semester) combined with long-term training in country.

Additional Tools and Resources

¹² See USAID’s ADS 253 for regulations on participant training. Per Ads 253, “If the Participant travels with a family member who also serves as a personal assistant, the Sponsoring Unit may reduce or waive the amount of funds required to be available in order to qualify for dependent status. In addition, the Sponsoring Unit may increase the Participant’s monthly maintenance allowance to cover the expenses incurred by the dependent up to 50 percent of the Participant’s maintenance, plus an amount to cover the dependent’s health and accident insurance. USAID will only provide additional maintenance for the personal assistant and not for any other dependents that accompany the Participant and assistant.” <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/253.pdf> pp. 14-15.

Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, USAID

Published in March 2012, this document outlines USAID policy to address gender equality in programming.

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf>

A Curriculum for the Training of Trainers in Gender Mainstreaming, African Women's Development and Communication Network

This curriculum was prepared as a guide for the African Women's Development and Communication Network's (FEMNET) Gender Training workshop for Uganda, Ghana, and South Africa. It provides tools for gender analysis and planning for gender responsive programs.

<http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww4.worldbank.org%2Faf%2Fssatp%2FResources%2FHTML%2FGender-RG%2FSource%2520%2520documents%2FTraining%2520materials%2FTRGENI%2520Femnet%2520Gender%2520Mainstreaming%2520TOT.pdf&sa=D&sntz=1&usq=AFQjCNElBsN990nlzVWqBlNBxzFVyhNCz0A>

How much is enough: Thinking about Education for Gender-Responsive Agriculture

– Presentation by Deborah Rubin, Cultural Practice at the 2013 InnovATE Symposium on Capacity Building for Agricultural Training and Education in Developing Countries, September 18-20, 2013.

<http://www.oired.vt.edu/innovate/documents/2013%20Symposium%20general%20session%20presentations/Rubin-HowMuchIsEnoughv3.pptx>

E-Consultation: Gender Integration for Improved Food Security, USAID Bureau for Food Security

This two-day e-Consultation was a facilitated online discussion where USAID professionals, gender experts, and program implementers discussed examples of their successes and challenges in gender integration. This event was part of USAID's Gender Global Learning and Evidence Exchange (GLEE). The overall objective of the Gender GLEE is to share good practices, lessons learned, and challenges in integrating gender into Feed the Future programs and to support and strengthen the gender-agriculture community of practice globally.

<http://agrilinks.org/agexchange/gender-gee-econsult>

E-Consultation: Innovation for Agricultural Education and Training in Developing Countries, USAID Bureau for Food Security

This two-day e-Consultation documented successful agricultural education and training interventions and identified development challenges regarding gender equality, working in post-conflict environments, and rural youth workforce development. This event was put on by the InnovATE Program, which is sponsored by USAID to promote food security through institutional and human resources capacity development in agricultural education and training.

<http://agrilinks.org/agexchange/e-consultation-innovation-agricultural-education-and-training-developing-countries>

E. Leadership Development

Developing trainee leadership skills greatly increases the likelihood that a returned trainee will make sustainable changes back home. To apply their new technical and leadership skills, trainees need a long-term plan and “big-picture” vision, be able to articulate their dreams and cultivate support from often skeptical peers. Although leadership is often thought of as innate, it is a skill and a mind-set that can be learned. Training providers can find innovative ways to instill these leadership capabilities in trainees that will equip them to become institutional change agents back home.

As leadership is necessary at all levels in an institution, leadership training should be integrated into all types of technical training programs. Leadership training should seek to instill core competencies into trainees, such as decision-making, the ability to influence others, mentoring, communication, strategic thinking, and the knowing how to inspire trust and confidence.

Focus on Developing Leaders, not “Training” Them

The idea of leadership “training” often carries with it the presumption of a “one-size fits all” approach. Conventional leadership training may consist of lectures or presentations, where trainees are listening passively. This approach assumes that trainees are homogenous and will develop leadership skills in the same way. A more effective approach considers the trainees’ many different perspectives, skills and abilities, engaging them on an individual level in a dialogue about leadership.¹³

¹³ Myatt, Mike. (2012). “The #1 Reason Leadership Development Fails.” Forbes.com.

This approach recognizes that leadership is not a hard skill, such as language or technical ability, which can be taught via a common curriculum or approach.

To tailor leadership development to each person’s needs and abilities, program implementers can integrate leadership into the trainee’s action planning or purpose road mapping (as described in the Mentoring section of this report). Action planning allows trainees to identify the particular leadership skills they need and to identify a plan to acquire those new skills.

In finding ways to integrate leadership development into existing training, program managers need to apply adult learning principles. Leadership training programs should not replicate the classroom where theories and ideas are presented and debated. Leadership is a skill acquired through practice and trainees will learn by doing. Students can apply their newly-learned leadership skills in their group living environments, on a local community project or with their peers, so that these new attributes become part of them. Their *behavior* has to change, not merely their knowledge. To monitor any leadership change, managers of training programs can conduct student self-assessment surveys – working from a baseline taken at inception (or ideally, upon their arrival at the training institution) through application of the leadership skills acquired.¹⁴

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2012/12/19/the-1-reason-leadership-development-fails>.

¹⁴ See Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels referenced in this report. The application of the acquired skill is Level 3 in the Kirkpatrick framework.

They can also use 360-degree performance appraisal techniques by surveying those who are in a position to observe changes in the trainee (peers, colleagues working with the trainee on a community project, beneficiaries of the trainee’s service activities, etc.)

Integrate Leadership Development Efforts throughout Program

Program implementers can go beyond producing a “single workshop or webinar” on leadership to integrating leadership development into the entire training “experience.” Coaching can start early on so that trainees can focus on building their leadership skills throughout the course of their training. A review of good practices for leadership development conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences found that effective leadership development depends more on consistent implementation than on one particular practice. Given that individuals develop leadership abilities over time, and in different ways, leadership development can permeate all aspects of a training program. As the report notes, “leadership development must become a systemic process, not an event.”¹⁵ This process can encompass a variety of techniques—participatory leadership workshops, one-on-one coaching, mentoring — and can be applied both inside the classroom and out.

¹⁵ Day, David V. and Halpin, Stanley M. (2001). Leadership Development: A Review of Industry Best Practices. Alexandria: U.S Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Many of the good practices described elsewhere in this report offer trainees practical experience applying their leadership skills. Service-learning activities where trainees teach or mentor youth, allow them to put to the test their leadership abilities in an unthreatening environment well before they face the more challenging situations back home. Practicum courses, which are mentioned in the private sector engagement section of this report, can give trainees experience in project management and allow them to take a leadership role with other professionals in their field. Internships provide many opportunities to demonstrate leadership qualities. Inside the classroom, trainees can practice their leadership skills by taking initiatives with group projects or speaking out more actively in class.

Additional Tools and Resources

Leadership Development: A Review of Industry Best Practices

This report was developed for the U.S. Army and discusses leadership development best practices, based on a thorough review of the formal leadership development programs of various for-profit organizations. The practices it discusses include formal development programs, 360-degree feedback, executive coaching, job assignments, mentoring, networks, reflection, action learning.

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/trlll.pdf>

F. Private Sector Outreach and Service Learning

What are effective ways to engage the private sector through long-term training in a manner that focuses on building *institutional* capacity? Structured opportunities in manufacturing companies, non-profit organizations, professional service firms, and other private sector entities can add skills and knowledge that the returning student can employ back home and provide a rich experience to round out a trainee's long-term academic training.

The most obvious connection between private sector engagement and long-term training is the internship model, which most U.S. higher education institutions (and institutions in many other parts of the world) know well and implement widely. Much thinking and research has taken place on what makes an effective internship program. For many programs the goal of an internship program is to help students advance and apply their technical knowledge as well as provide the student with opportunities to further develop the so-called "soft" skills that are so critical to career success: the ability to lead, and the ability to drive institutional change. Given the importance of soft skills development (noted above in the USAID evaluations of ATLAS and AFGRAID programs), program implementers might consider prioritizing this goal in an internship program for USAID-funded long-term trainees.¹⁶ Among the

¹⁶ As an indication of the importance placed by some in USAID on supplementing academic knowledge with soft skills, the USAID Mission in Vietnam, in a Public Private Partnership with Intel, designed and funded a 3-year training program whose goal was to transfer such skills to 130 engineering professors so they in turn could alter teaching methods so that young Vietnamese engineering graduates would have soft skills to be hired in a booming

most important soft skills that a well-designed internship can provide include learning to work in teams, making professional presentations, writing proposals, defending their ideas and communicating effectively in a work setting. As articulated by Dov Seidman, "it is no longer what you do that matters most and sets you apart from others, but how you do what you do."¹⁷ The qualities that many once thought of as "soft" are now frequently identified by employers as among the most important for success in the workplace.

Other possibilities to expose students to various roles the private sector can play in strengthening institutions are suggested below:

- Provide an internship in the Implementing Partner's business development division, where students can learn the strategies and mechanisms by which the university involves the private sector, from fund-raising, job identification for graduating students, accessing companies' corporate social responsibility opportunities, building linkages to overseas institutions, etc.
- Involve students in the design and implementation of internships – how to design, implement and evaluate them. How does the university "sell" the internship idea to a local private entity that has never before hosted a university

high-tech marketplace that demanded more than expertise in engineering. (Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program – HEEAP, 2010-2013)

¹⁷ **How: Why How We Do Anything Means Everything**, Dov Seidman, with forward by President Bill Clinton, John Wiley and Sons, New Jersey, US. 2007.

student? How do they define the roles and responsibilities of the local business?

- Sponsor a competition among returning students to receive a grant for an activity that would build linkages between their home institution and a private company. Were the students aware of this grant opportunity, some might set out to build the skills needed in order to show a capacity to implement the activity. The activity could be closely aligned with the student's academic field, for example developing a relationship between the department of soil science and a multinational fertilizer company with offices in-country.
- A project to improve the home institution's ability to reach out to local private sector players, for example in agriculture, could be part of a trainee's Action Plan to execute after return. The focus would be on transferring the skills observed and learned overseas, to senior staff at the home university who may have little experience or limited success engaging with local private companies.
- Help students identify possible commercial applications of their research and provide an opportunity for students to more deeply understand the functioning of the university's office that focuses on commercializing university research.

Service Learning offers a different and valuable opportunity for trainees to acquire soft skills

working with local community groups. Service-learning refers to a teaching and learning strategy that integrates community service with instruction and reflection, with a goal of promoting civic responsibility and engagement. Being involved outside oneself – in a community or group of peers – builds confidence and multiple skills useful in changing institutions. As Christine M. Cress writes in *Civic Engagement and Student Success: Leveraging Multiple Degrees of Achievement*, “Students who participate in civic engagement gain interpersonal effectiveness, the ability to collaborate across diverse perspectives, and a sense of self-efficacy for positively impacting individuals, organizations, and communities.”¹⁸ Service learning encourages trainees to stay connected to their home communities, and provides links between institutions and the communities they serve.

Program implementers that mandate civic engagement, for example targeting youth or women, can fulfill their responsibility to improve the selection pool for future donor-funded development projects. Involving trainees in tutoring or mentoring programs with younger students will not only help trainees build leadership and teaching skills, but will also shape the development of young students who can be candidates for future training programs.

Additional Tools and Resources

¹⁸ Cress, Christine M. (2012). Civic Engagement and Student Success: Leveraging Multiple Degrees of Achievement. *Diversity & Democracy*, 15(3).

A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement

Campus Compact disseminated this white paper in 2010 to examine the links between civic engagement and academic success in higher education.

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.compact.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2009%2F01%2FA-Promising-Connection-corrected.pdf&ei=Rc-KUrGVEI7C4AOnhlGoCg&usg=AFQjCNECXfev63-KEcgwT09Ed8AWzbT85g&sig2=hB-InzJomjerU8FJMV2VSA&bvm=bv.56643336,d.dmg>

Service-Learning Webpage of the University of Tennessee Knoxville

This webpage gives an overview of ten principles that service learning programs should practice, taken from Jeffrey Howard's article called *Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy*, which is one of the most widely accepted documents addressing service-learning practice.

<http://servicelearning.utk.edu/faculty-resources/best-practices/>

G. Recruitment, Selection and Orientation

Within the world of USAID-sponsored long-term training, the responsibility for recruitment and orientation rests with a variety of actors. In some cases, USAID Missions themselves continue to manage selection of trainees for overseas training. In others, a program implementer is charged with organizing the selection. The program implementer could be a university or consortium

of universities or it could be an NGO or consulting company. In some cases, the receiving university, whether in the United States or a third country, is given no role in selection or in orientation, and starts implementation upon receipt of a student application. In Mission-wide long-term training programs covering multiple sectors (agriculture, education, etc.), USAID often contracts with a *placement agency* to handle the entire spectrum of tasks including conducting training/performance needs assessments, recruitment, selection, pre-departure orientation, placement at an appropriate university or training provider, monitoring during academic training, soft-skill development via workshops and webinars, pre-return preparation, post-return follow-up – in short, all the tasks described in USAID's ADS 253 necessary to support long-term training in its entirety. Examples of *placement agencies* are the prime contractors on USAID's IQC *Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition, Participant Training* (FORECAST II-PT): the Institute for International Education (IIE), World Learning, and EnCompass.

With such wide implementation variations, what might be done to increase the impact of individual training on home institutions? Below are a few practices that can help bring about the institutional performance changes sought, grouped by implementation types.

Program implementer resident in-country

- Conduct a performance assessment of the institution(s) targeted for long-term training following HICD guidelines¹⁹
- Based on the causes for performance gaps, design a “solutions package” with the institutional leadership that typically would include training, among other interventions, some of which may be supported by the program implementer (e.g. on-site leadership training, strategic planning, etc.), and others of which may be beyond the scope of the program implementer (e.g. facility renovation, new space allocations, equipment upgrading, etc.).
- If competency gaps are identified, design a menu of training solutions that will resolve the performance constraints.
- Select trainees who can best bring about the changes needed to improve performance in the organization. Selecting only employees of the institution forces a focus on staff upgrading – working with a predefined cohort quite distinct from selecting trainees based on individual merit.

¹⁹ Often, training decisions are based on an analysis of labor markets or “sector need.” Other times training will be funded with a target institution in sight, without any systematic performance analysis done on the institution. The “analysis” might simply be based on several individual’s statements, for example, that “we need more people with Masters in Public Health who know health financing systems.” No holistic performance analysis of the institution is actually done. The training is done on the basis of a “felt need.”

- Recruit with the strong, clearly-stated intention of meeting gender goals established with the institution’s leadership. Adopt measures described in the chapter on gender to ensure progress toward meeting gender targets in recruiting trainees, whether short-term or long-term.

These are some of the ways a program implementer can leverage training to influence performance changes in the home country. Without this holistic approach, the returning trainees could face a dysfunctional or declining institution where their new knowledge, skills and attitudes will hit an unmovable object. The resulting frustration and professional challenge can stifle much of the development impact USAID had anticipated from its considerable investment.

In many cases program implementers are not positioned in a single country or institution to tackle many of the problems cited above. What can they do to ensure that recruitment, selection and orientation positively influence institutional change?

Program implementer not involved in recruitment, selection or orientation

In many instances, a university or training provider receives the names and biographic background on a student whose application is reviewed for admission. The criteria typically focus on the applicant’s ability to obtain the degree since a university wants a student to succeed. Some additional criteria may be applied to the international student but overall, a sponsored student’s application is evaluated on academic grounds. Since the USAID agreement with the program implementer in this instance

limits its role to managing the training upon the student's arrival, what can the partner do within its contractual boundaries to increase the institutional impact of the individual to be trained?

The Knowledge Center Network project identified a number of good practices described in this report that the training provider can introduce to increase institutional capacity-building upon the trainee's return. One area is in the pre-departure activities, loosely referred to as "orientation," to prepare the student for overseas training.

Training programs typically feature a pre-departure and post-arrival orientation. The length, type and quality of pre-departure programs run the gamut, from a 2-hour meeting at USAID that focuses on travel logistics, security, health and financial matters, to a 3-day workshop to help the trainee prepare professionally for a career-changing opportunity and provide space for questions and answers. More creative orientation programs include the trainee's family, who may have anxieties about the departure of a loved one to a far-off place.

Post-arrival orientations often organized on campus also run the gamut, from a set program for all foreign students focusing on lodging and living questions, to a more substantive session dealing with language challenges and how to overcome them, cultural differences, early tips on building networks on campus, and using available resources. Orientation to U.S. life and culture used to be required for all USAID-funded participants arriving in the United States – a week-long continuously-offered program managed by the

Washington International Center, where leading experts in various areas of U.S. life lectured and interacted with newly-arrived international students. Those orientation programs disappeared in the 1990s. The investment in quality orientations yielded huge returns by preparing students for life in the United States, equipping them with information on American culture and history, and in short, reducing the risk of more serious adjustment problems that might hinder a student from succeeding.²⁰ Program implementers can create ways for newly-arrived students to more quickly overcome adjustment challenges so they can concentrate on the dual responsibilities of obtaining their degree (acquiring technical expertise) and learning the soft skills needed to be reintegrated into the home society and become a force for change in the work place.

H. Building a Dynamic Alumni Network

Alumni associations can offer alumni of long-term training programs a support structure and network to help increase the impact of their training upon return home. Additionally, alumni associations provide for a forum for programs to continue to engage and partner with alumni to advance shared objectives. Associations come in many different forms and there is no single model that will guarantee the long-term success and sustainability of an alumni association. In recognition of the many challenges in establishing and maintaining effective alumni associations, USAID issued a new edition of its "Alumni

²⁰ Gilboy...

Association Formation: A Guide for USAID Missions” in 2012 as part of the ADS 253 series that details all aspects of managing USAID-funded training.²¹

According to the USAID guide, successful alumni associations must be grassroots, member-driven organizations. However, “Missions can provide a number of invaluable resources, such as modest funding, meeting space, relevant speakers, access to senior U.S. Government staff, logistical support, guidance and advice - without usurping the organization - and thereby cultivating a lasting, fruitful, mutually-beneficial relationship with the alumni association.” Top-down development efforts to form locally-run organizations are known to fail over time and can easily create an “assisted” mentality. However, several members of the Knowledge Network highlighted the need for programs to play an active role in helping to establish associations and an ongoing facilitation role much like what the USAID guide describes just above.

As USAID readily admits, “Starting an alumni association can involve a serious commitment of time and resources on the part of USAID. Although seemingly daunting, with careful and rational planning, forming an alumni association can be a smooth, manageable process with lasting fruitful outcomes.”

²¹ USAID, 2012. Alumni Association Formation: A Guide for USAID Missions. P. 4.
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/253saf.pdf>

First Steps

The very first step in forming an alumni association is to conceptualize what is hoped to be achieved by forming an association. If the goal is institutional strengthening rather than individual career development, this may affect decisions about how best to structure the association and articulating this purpose helps shape the way members of the group interact. Were change management to be included among the major objectives of such an association, a solid group of professionals from diverse study fields and interests, all trained under USAID auspices, could indeed become a focal point for an institutional performance improvement strategy. Such an “alumni” association could be established in a way that invited other like-minded returned professionals to join – students with degrees from Holland or the UK or with MBAs from management institutes where organizational development is a major concern.

At this early stage of conceptualization, it is essential, of course, to involve the alumni or future alumni of the association, in order to make the alumni association authentically member-driven. As presented in the USAID guide, “This provisional alumni board will serve as a sort of steering committee and will operate as the alumni association’s leadership until the association has been formally organized and a set of officers and/or board members has been elected by the founding alumni members.” Program implementers should engage a group of alumni (or future alumni) who are motivated and willing to devote their time to take a leadership role in the association. If a significant focus of the alumni association is going

to be on institutional change, it might be useful to also engage some key individuals from the institution to help in brainstorming ideas for goals and targets of the association's activities.

For more details on the steps involved in the formation of an alumni association, the USAID Mission guide on alumni association formation provides a fairly comprehensive overview.²²

Ongoing development

Once an association has been established, there are many issues and challenges that must be addressed during the ongoing management of the association, including:

- How to retain members' interest;
- How to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization;
- How to plan and execute larger projects and activities for alumni and, in the case of associations focused on institutional strengthening how to plan and execute projects focused on achieving certain institutional goals; and
- How to conscientiously and effectively engage external stakeholders in alumni association projects.

There are several good practices with regard to maintaining a dynamic group over time. One important practice is to “pass on the torch of leadership” to others. It is important not to

become reliant on only a few core activists or dominant personalities. This means that as each new class of trainees graduates, there must be an effort to recruit the new alumni into the activities of the association. In fact, another good practice is to connect current trainees while they are still in training with alumni and engage the trainees in the association's activities before they become alumni.

One practice that may help stimulate participation in an alumni network – and therefore increase the chances of forming a self-sustaining group – is to offer competitive grants to members of the group. The U.S. Department of State's International Exchange Alumni program provides an example of such a practice: an “Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund” provides grants of \$25,000 for members of the alumni group to pursue their innovation idea. Alumni are encouraged to join the International Exchange Alumni Website to access the benefits offered, which include an alumni directory and access to the grants programs. One possibility might be set up a grant mechanism that enables alumni to pursue institutional performance improvement innovations.

The institutional-strengthening lens applied to alumni associations poses some unique challenges. To date, most USAID-funded participant training associations have probably not had an institutional-strengthening focus. Therefore, there is room for experimentation and an important need for collecting good practices from associations that may in the future incorporate such a mandate.

²² USAID, 2012. Alumni Association Formation: A Guide for USAID Missions.
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/253saf.pdf>

I. E-learning

A significant amount of information is available online on the general subject of e-learning and distance learning, and the use of technology to improve educational outcomes. This chapter presumes that the reader is somewhat familiar with these alternative learning options. The question to be raised below is to what extent can students in long-term training use online learning options to improve institutional capacity in their home institution.

Online education of various forms is making its way throughout the continent from South Africa to Senegal, where e-learning centers are being established in towns remote from tertiary education facilities and e-learning technologies are being used to improve the quality of education on African university campuses. If traditional African institutions, whether educational or in the public service sector, will be using online learning in the future, then equipping graduate students in training today with some basic understanding and skills about e-learning would add an important element to their package of institution-building solutions to try upon return.

Similar to equipping students with leadership skills and enabling them to practice these newly-acquired tools, becoming familiar with e-learning can be woven into a student's training program without compromising academic achievement. Below are a few ideas of workshops that could be incorporated into long-term training to familiarize trainees with e-learning and get them thinking about ways it can be of benefit to their home institution:

- **Online Education Workshop fundamentals**

- How are online courses different from face-to-face
- Overview of different educational technologies
- Planning and developing an online course
- Developing online teaching materials
- Instructional strategies for online teaching (learning contract, discussion, self-directed learning, small group learning, project-based and collaborative learning, case study analysis)
- Evaluating and assessing online teaching

The purpose is to familiarize the target audience with various components of effective online teaching rather than developing highly-trained experts in online course design. If returned trainees understand the role e-learning can play, either as stand-alone courses or blended with traditional classroom learning, they can be effective change agents within the institution helping it improve learning and teaching styles. Today's new generation of student learners are more increasingly accustomed to reading by tablet and conducting research online. The challenge is to find ways for students in long-term academic programs to return with enough knowledge in online learning methods to help build capacity for tomorrow's learning environment.

Using other technologies in a learning environment can also help the returned trainee become a

capacity-building agent upon return. Increasingly universities are using a variety of technology platforms to improve access to materials for students. Designing and managing webinars is a useful skill that requires a small investment of time to master, so that returned trainees can initiate webinars with their overseas colleagues on topics of direct interest back home. How can these technologies be adapted to the home institutions? Returned trainees can be a source of considerable local knowledge of how these systems can improve institutional performance. Short introductory courses or webinars, offered while in their academic program, can familiarize them with these technologies so that the appropriate questions can be addressed at home.

Students will learn about new technologies by using them along with other students. But by explicitly teaching students about various e-learning technologies, they can return armed with at least a minimum of exposure to how technologies can be adapted to the local environment.

J. Professional Networking

Mentoring, coaching and academic advising are ways through which an organization managing training can impart non-technical skills and awareness in the trainee. Each has a particular role to play, with academic advising being the best understood. The chapter on mentoring demonstrates the critical role it plays in equipping the trainee with non-academic skills to assist in leveraging the “training experience” to strengthen institutions back home.

Networking is another powerful skill for trainees to add to their arsenal prior to degree-completion and return home. Somewhat like leadership or public speaking, networking comes easier for some than others. Yet it can be learned and practiced during a graduate training program, for example, so that even the shy trainee can learn how to network to advance professionally or advocate for change.

For many, culture and personality present the main obstacles to overcome. In many parts of the world, talking about one’s accomplishments overtly is unbecoming at best or alienating at worst. Sahelian Africans, for example, grow up learning not to speak loudly about their strengths or successes, or at least to present them indirectly and subtly. Japanese culture has well-known parameters for public behavior. Yet knowing how to network *within the confines of cultural constraints* and remain genuine can be an acquired skill. As Keith Ferrazzi puts it in his book *Never Eat Alone*, “successful networking is all about building intimate, sincere relationships based on mutual generosity, not duplicity, and without that they can't achieve their career goals on their own.”²³ Successful networking does not involve manipulation or deceit; rather, it entails learning to proudly and with sensitivity to the prevailing environment, present one’s bona fides without being viewed as boastful or arrogant.

²³ Ferrazzi, K., & Raz, T. (2005). *Never eat alone and other secrets to success: One relationship at a time*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Learning how to utilize online networking opportunities can also be refined during long-term training. Drafting a professional and accurate Curriculum Vitae and knowing that it can be useful beyond LinkedIn are significant learning points for the trainee. Learning to write and submit articles, research results, or comment on professional online publications, sector-specific blogs and for conferences not only advances the trainee along a career path, but also builds confidence and reputation that can be instrumental in bringing about changes in the home institution. Networking today involves new skill sets and awareness that Andrew Carnegie, author of perhaps the first book about networking (*How to Win Friends and Influence People* [1936]), could never have imagined.

Universities managing USAID long-term training can fold learning about networking into programs that build critical soft skills. They can do this within the mentoring program, during leadership training or by arming one or more students with the responsibility to share networking skills with their peers. Learning and practicing are of course distinct and the former without the latter often leads to no change. Students have ample opportunities to practice professional networking they have learned during their training. Upon return, applying their newly-acquired networking skills can set them apart from many of their colleagues who lack a systematic understanding of the power of networking.

IV. Works Cited

Chaaban, J., Cunningham, W. V., & World Bank. (2011). Measuring the economic gain of investing in girls: The girl effect dividend. Washington, D.C: The World Bank.

Cress, Christine M. (2012). Civic Engagement and Student Success: Leveraging Multiple Degrees of Achievement. *Diversity & Democracy*, 15(3).

Cress, Christine M.; Burack, Cathy; Giles, Dwight E.; Elkins, Julie; Stevens, Margaret Carnes. (2010). *A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement*. Campus Compact.

Day, David V. and Halpin, Stanley M. (2001). *Leadership Development: A Review of Industry Best Practices*. Alexandria: U.S Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Ferrazzi, K., & Raz, T. (2005). *Never eat alone and other secrets to success: One relationship at a time*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Feed the Future. (2011). *Women & Agriculture: Improving Global Food Security*. United States Department of State.

IFAD. (2012). *Gender equality and women's empowerment policy*. Rome: IFAD.

International Food Policy Research Institute. (2005). *Expanding the Role of Partnerships for Innovation in Food and Agriculture in Developing Countries: A Project Description*. Washington, DC: IFPRI.

Levine, R., & Center for Global Development. (2008). *Girls count: A global investment & action agenda*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

Myatt, Mike. (2012). "The #1 Reason Leadership Development Fails." *Forbes.com*. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2012/12/19/the-1-reason-leadership-development-fails/>.

Rachael Yeager, Blythe Chorne, BSR. (2010). *Partnering with USAID: A Guide for Companies*. USAID.