



FEED^{THE}**FUTURE**

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative

Building Effective Relationships: Universities and USAID Missions

Clara Cohen

Tuskegee University

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Mission Challenges

- Frequent staff turnover
- Sometimes short staffed
- Little free time to spend on non-essential work
- Foreign service staff and foreign service nationals offer different perspectives and different biases
- Budget constraints
 - but sometimes excess cash that must be spent quickly!!
- Lack of in-house technical expertise in some domains
- Demanding timelines
- Circumstances may change abruptly
- Sensitivity about centrally funded programs – balance between mission and central priorities
- Want to see impacts in near term
- Difficult to make long-term commitments to CD; where commitments exist, hard to prioritize how to get most bang for buck



University Challenges

- Academic calendars often don't mesh with local timelines
 - Inability to respond in a timely fashion or travel from September-May
- Academic demands of tenure and promotion might constrain range of activities possible
 - Research productivity may come first
 - Original research vs. synthesis
 - Research vs. development impact



Mission Dos and Don'ts

- Ensure that you and the Mission really have the same objectives; review Mission documents (CDCS, MYS, program documents)
- Accommodate Mission ideas and priorities in design and implementation, even if last-minute
- Develop a process for communication; present results periodically; participate in learning events
 - Use AOR as a resource for communication (tools: list serve, phone calls, notes to the field)
- Seek guidance from Missions on whom to meet with and learn about sensitivities before meetings; let them know whom you working with
 - Don't engage in discussions with senior government officials, industry, civil society without checking with the Mission first



Mission Dos and Don'ts

- Consider visiting the Mission when in country on one project to explore interest in others (don't travel on program funds for exclusive purpose of marketing)
 - Be prepared with short, written summaries; be clear in oral presentations
- Solicit input on work plans, PMPs, etc.; share documents (annual reports, PMPs, work plans)
- Use local consultants to help with logistics and to schedule activities in country; don't impose on Mission
 - Mission staff can be great resources to help you find them
- Establish guidelines or working agreements with mission-funded projects (e.g. Africa RISING MOUs with value-chain projects)



Mission Dos and Don'ts

- Invite Mission staff to join travel; visit the Mission before and after doing project-related business in the country (can be by phone)
- Copy your AOR and local activity manager on all project-related correspondence to missions
 - AOR keeps CSOs in loop, esp. on travel
- Follow formal travel clearance processes for your own safety and security (eCC required for some missions, but always inform missions of travel, emergency contacts, etc.)
- Comply with environmental regulations and communicate with AOR, BEO, local mission staff about any issues
- Be sensitive to Mission time constraints



Lessons: Mission and Bureau Demand

- Mission interest from non FTF as well as FTF countries (Armenia, Nicaragua, Indonesia)
- Mission interest from education offices and climate change offices as well as economic growth offices (Uganda, Rwanda, Indonesia)
- Strong interest in workforce development and youth (Rwanda, Nicaragua, Indonesia)
- Interest from USAID Bureaus (e.g., E3 interest in training)



Lessons: Country Experience

- **Armenia:** use of Mission as a resource; regular communication with the mission;
- **Jordan:** local consultant used; uncertain whether or not mission and team had same objectives; AOR should have been looped in more
- **Cambodia:** strong interest by local USAID officer; joint identification of common objectives; regular check-ins with the mission during the planning process, on-the-ground, and after the visit.
- **Uganda:** use of Mission as a resource for identifying interviewees; incomplete understanding by Innovate team of mission priorities.
- **Nepal, Honduras, Haiti, Kenya:** Clear messages about lack of interest



BFS Country Support Officers

- **Melissa Fraser:** East Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan mfraser@usaid.gov
- **Erin Shutty:** Malawi, Mozambique, Southern Africa regional, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa eshutty@usaid.gov
- **Kirsten Spainhower:** Rwanda, Uganda, DRC kspainhower@usaid.gov
- **Regina Eddy:** Senegal, Mali, West Africa regional reddy@usaid.gov
- **Sara Calvert:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Tajikistan, RDMA scalvert@usaid.gov
- **Jessica Cagley:** Tanzania, Nigeria jcagley@usaid.gov
- **Kris Gorham:** Liberia kgorham@usaid.gov
- **Sukhi Dosanjh:** India, Krygyz Republic, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Egypt, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza, Yemen sdosanjh@usaid.gov
- **Meredith Soule:** Burma msoule@usaid.gov
- **Phil Steffen:** Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, ECAM, Brazil, DR psteffen@usaid.gov