

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS – NOT FOR QUOTATION OR CITATION

Report to UAA Working Group Co-Chairs on Strengthening USAID:

On Tuesday February 10, Patrick Fine and Barbara Turner from the UAA met with Gene George, Director Office of Human Resources and Susan Riley, Director of Foreign Service Personnel in HR (both are experienced Foreign Service Officers serving in HR). Barbara also had a separate meeting with Janet Ballantyne who is organizing the training for the next DLI class in March. We got excellent responses and it is clear there is a strong interest in support from the alumni association. e've pasted below an email Gene sent in response to our request for a meeting which gives you a sense of his strong interest in working with UAA.

Meeting Conclusions: Key areas of interest from USAID include:

1. **Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) Hiring:** USAID hopes to bring in 300 to 400 new officers over the next 2 years – 4 classes a year of about 40/50 each, depending on funding in the FY 09 and 10 bills. However, the processing and hiring of this large a number of staff is swamping the capacity of existing Agency staff. They currently have about 400 applications for this round alone. For each position they fill they are interviewing about 7 to 8 applicants. HR would like to draw on USAID alumni to work part time – on a paid basis -- over a several month period to bring each class on board. USAID is prepared to pay for these services but like would use the UAA to advertise and link interested Alumni with the opportunities. Gene and Susan will send us an announcement to post on our web and send out. They are looking for the following types of assistance:
 - a. Reviewing and screening applications
 - b. Interviewing and ranking potential candidates
 - c. Assisting in on-board arrangements (see more below)

HR prefers that candidates be in the DC area as they would need to spend some time in the HR office, particularly in interviewing. However, much of the work of screening application, ranking, etc. can be done on-line from home. As a next step Gene and Susan will get us an announcement we can send out to our membership for support in the DLI hiring process.

2. **Coaching/Mentoring:** The coaches in HR are overloaded as are the supervisors in the field and will be even more swamped when the new numbers kick in this coming year. HR is setting up an expanded coaching system both here in DC as well as travel to posts for US-based coaches who can visit a few times a year. In some cases they may even post someone in a larger Mission to work with DLI staff for a year. HR has not yet worked out the details of this but they see the Alumni as a key source of such an arrangement as they need mentors experienced with USAID.

3. **CR language needed:** Because the DLI was started last year with supplemental funding, the OE to support it is not part of the FY 08 budget and therefore not included in the FY 09 Continuing Resolution. They need an Appropriations Bill to get the added DLI funding. If Congress seems more disposed to passing an omnibus CR, USAID will propose language to include funding or at least authorization for the DLI in the CR. They will need help in convincing Congressional staffers on the Appropriations committees why this is critical. We should keep in touch with USAID's strategy and see how we can engage our members.
4. **Senior Managers:** USAID would like to find ways to attract back alumni into FS 1 and senior management positions for one or two tours while the DLI classes get more experience. HR is exploring options or legislative wording that makes it more attractive financially for retirees to return to USAID for one or two tours. The UAA may want to survey our members on what would attract them back from a financial or other incentive perspective.
5. **Unified Combatant Commands** (term for the former CINCs – Wikipedia has a pretty good plain English description of their authorities, structure, etc.: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unified_Combatant_Command)

The Commands have asked that USAID provide senior development specialists to be co-located with the headquarters operations. In some cases the military may even support the costs, but USAID will need to augment its current senior staff to do this. HR felt that alumni returned for such a tour would be a great support over the next few years. Again, this is an idea not fully fleshed out but we have an opportunity to give HR some thoughts.

6. **March 30 DLI Class:** As of this moment, USAID is awaiting confirmation of funding in relation to the FY 09 bill and the final clearance of individuals to determine how many will come on board and in what backstops. Janet will keep us posted as the class firms up. Janet will be leaving this job just as the class comes in and Bill Douglas is scheduled to replace her so Janet will link us with Bill. Unlike the paying jobs that Gene George identified above, our talk with Janet focused on volunteers from the Alumni. Key roles we agreed on include:
 - a. Mission Director's Panel: During the first week, she would like to organize a panel of former Mission Directors to talk about their career paths and experience with USAID. Terry Brown and Aaron Williams and a few others did this for an earlier class. Janet would like our help in identifying people to do this. She would like to start the first week of each new class this way.
 - b. Alumni panels: During the course, Janet will reserve space for 3 or 4 sessions with USAID Alumni. Depending on the class make up, some

groupings we talked about were: the role of Program Officers; Role of Contracts staff (there are likely to be 7 or 8 coming in this next round); the role of evaluation and monitoring and why it is important. She also suggested a panel of GS staff talking about the role of GS in the Agency. Working with the Embassy may be another topic, particularly for crisis countries. She is open to our suggestions.

- c. Mentors/buddies in DC: Janet said that many of the new staff are recruited from outside of DC and come here for the 3 to 6 months before going to the field. She indicated it would be great to have volunteers meet individuals as they arrive, introduce them to DC, the metro, etc. as well as to some of the international seminars available. HR just has no capacity to help new employees adjust to the move.
- d. Temporary Housing: For the new hires recruited from outside the Washington, DC area, they come to DC for just the 3 to 6 months of training before being posted overseas. They do not receive per diem and many are having trouble finding reasonably priced temporary housing. Many do not bring their families so they are often willing to rent a room. HR is looking for help with lists of potential housing or Alumni who might be willing to take in a paying boarder for a few months.

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