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INTRODUCTION

In 2013 USAID's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Center created its first Learning Team. Renamed in 2019 as the Evidence and Learning Team (E&L), the team has sought (1) to provide USAID's DRG cadre with access to high quality data, evidence, and learning products, and (2) to motivate the DRG cadre to use such data, evidence, and learning in their programmatic decision-making. In short: generate evidence; share evidence; use evidence. This document intends to capture the knowledge, tools, and processes that have been generated to further these goals. It covers:

- **Fostering Rigorous Evaluations in DRG (FRED):** An effort to promote and encourage impact evaluations an rigorous outcome performance evaluations to generate stronger evidence and learning around DRG Programming.
- **ALEC - Improving Performance Evaluations and Qualitative Researc**h: The Addressing Learning and Evaluation Challenges (ALEC) initiative includes guidance on how to address common pain points in performance evaluations and how commissioners can ask better evaluation questions.
- **Advancing Utilization and Dissemination in Research Activities (AUDRA):** AUDRA offers a process to promote dissemination and utilization of research from the start of a tasking through to the development of an action plan and beyond to track and measure utilization.
- **The Evidence Help Desk**: The help desk offers DRG Cadre a place to go for research evidence to inform their program designs.
- **Tasking Management:** 341 learning products have been developed though the Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) mechanism; this section lays out the standard operating procedures for managing LER taskings.
- **The Learning Digest**: Monthly digests produced by the E&L curate the latest research and insights on priority DRG topics.
- **Learning Agenda Development and Implementation**:

Fostering Rigorous Evaluations in DRG (FRED)

Introduction

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) – and before it the DRG Center – has been supporting and conducting impact evaluations since 2012, following a recommendation from an influential National Academies of Sciences review. After a pause in such support, in 2021, the DRG Center completed a retrospective of its impact evaluation work to identify lessons learned in how to more effectively build the evidence base in DRG. Based on the recommendations from the retrospective, the DRG Center created the Fostering Rigorous Evaluations in DRG (FRED) initiative. To demonstrate the FRED process, the following text uses a randomized controlled trial of USAID/Liberia's classroom-based civic education programming to provide illustrative examples.

The FRED Process

1. **The call and early evaluation planning:** Each spring, the DRG Bureau's Evidence and Learning (E&L) team issues a call for expressions of interest to plan a rigorous evaluation with DRG Bureau support. Selected Missions benefit from up to $250,000 in co-funding, technical support from E&L impact evaluation experts, and use of the Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) III mechanism held by firms with expertise in rigorous evaluation: The Cloudburst Group and Social Impact. Of course, Missions don't need to wait until the call to engage with the E&L team on rigorous evaluation planning, as the team is available to help and support throughout the year. Once a Mission reaches out, the E&L team conducts a rapid evaluability assessment that lays out potential evaluation options. Ideally, if this is done at the design stage, clear language will be included in the solicitation. The E&L team generally seeks to conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) if possible, but recognizes that such an approach cannot be used with all interventions, and also supports quasi-experimental impact evaluations and rigorous outcomes performance evaluations.

2. **The evaluation design process:**
   - **Evaluation team contracting:** Using the E&L team's scope of work template for impact evaluations as a jumping off point, Cloudburst's evaluation team was led by a principal investigator from New York University. Ideally a member of the evaluation team is also based in the focus country.
   - **Getting key stakeholders looped in:** One key element of the FRED approach, is that implementing partners co-design the evaluation along with USAID and the evaluation team. For new awards the evaluation design process starts in the mobilization phase of the award, once the implementing partner's (IP) key personnel have been onboarded but

before key design and implementation decisions have been finalized. There should be a point of contact identified. It's important that key sub-awardees and other stakeholders are also identified and brought into the process. In the Liberian case, key stakeholders involved in the design process included Democracy International (prime), UMOVEMENT (local sub) and the Ministry of Education. Stakeholders had access to a shared folder, were invited to regular meetings memorialized in a running notes file, and were on a common email chain.

- **Evidence review:** An early deliverable is a review of existing research evidence (e.g., IEs, systematic reviews, rigorous studies) to ensure the intervention to be tested has an adequately robust theory of change. Liberia's evidence review identified the key programmatic components for a civic education program to influence knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors.
- **Evaluability assessment:** Through further meetings, conversations, and a document review, the evaluation team (1) determines what evaluation approach is viable, (2) identifies the questions that still need answered to arrive at a design, and (3) identifies evaluation risks that require mitigation strategies and monitoring. This interim deliverable determines the agenda for the evaluation workshop.
- **Evaluation workshop:** Based on the evaluability assessment, the evaluation team proposes an agenda for a three day workshop to develop a consensus around key design decisions. While preferably in-person, the Liberia workshop occurred during the COVID pandemic so was conducted virtually in half day segments. As illustrated in these example slides, the workshop sessions should be organized around key decisions, and the Liberia evaluation team did a good job of proposing options, facilitating a discussion, and arriving at decisions.
- **Evaluation design memo**: The output of the workshop is another interim deliverable - the evaluation design memo. This is a short memo that sums up the decisions made at the workshop.
- **Scoping trip**: Evaluators then take a scoping trip to address pending questions and risks, further ground truth the design approach, develop draft instruments, provide a workplan for the evaluation, and lay out stakeholder commitments. In the Liberian case, the scoping trip involved visits to potential participant schools and interviews with teachers and school directors.
- **Evaluation design report and budget:** The culmination of the design process is the evaluation design report, which lays out the approach in detail and is reviewed by stakeholders and revised by the team prior to finalization. One of the important features of the design in Liberia was that the evaluation did not start right away in year one of the intervention. Instead, the IPs had a year to "pre-pilot" their civic education approach,

learn, and adapt their programming. Then baseline data was collected in the second school-year of the program. This also allowed the evaluation team to test their instruments with the pre-pilot population. After finalizing the design, the original approach to randomization had to change, and changes to the evaluation design were maintained in a pivot log.

3. **Randomization:** Because this evaluation was an RCT, the IPs worked with the evaluation team to develop a list of schools in targeted communities and code them for the feasibility of implementing the program. The IPs also worked with the Ministry of Education to obtain data on these schools. Based on this information, the evaluation team randomized schools that the IPs had identified into treatment and control groups of 70 schools each.

4. **Baseline data collection, analysis and report:** Once the evaluation design and budget are approved, the evaluation team contracts with a local data collection firm and follows the steps laid out in the design. To ensure that the baseline study is useful to stakeholders, one of the evaluation questions not only asks for the baseline values of key outcome indicators, but also what factors explain variation in these indicators. In the Liberian case, the baseline report was limited to a slide deck to reduce costs and focus on key information.

5. **Final data collection and the impact evaluation report:** The endline data collection in Liberia entailed a student assessment (140 schools), a study survey (140 schools), classroom observation (60 schools), interviews with teachers and principals (30 schools), and focus group discussions with parents (6 schools), The final report (still pending DEC version) answers the evaluation questions, which can vary from study to study, but typically ask about (1) impact on key outcomes, (2) different effects for different groups, and (3) reasons why we do or do not see impacts. It is also now a requirement to include an analysis of cost effectiveness, which can be found in Annex O of the report. In the Liberia case, the impact evaluation found that the program had a meaningful impact on knowledge but not on attitudes, skills, or behaviors. This was consistent with the evidence review, which found that these outcomes were far harder to achieve, particularly in a context with the educational challenges of Liberian schools. The evaluation team offered several recommendations for how to build on the program and continue to work towards these higher level outcomes.

6. **Dissemination and utilization of findings:** The FRED process places a premium on dissemination and utilization of the findings. In the Liberia case, the evaluation team returned to Liberia to present the findings, including a presentation to Ministry of Education officials. To aid in dissemination, the team developed a brief for the Ministry of Education and tailored briefs for

each district showing that district's scores from treatment schools in relation to overall treatment group and control. The team also conducted a virtual dissemination event with the larger civic education community. Finally, USAID Missions develop an action plan in response to the recommendations that lays out what steps they and their partners will take based on the study findings. In the Liberia case, the action plan laid out a series of measures to improve the programming and increase the likelihood of impacting attitudes and behaviors in the future.

ALEC - Improving Performance Evaluations and Qualitative Research

Introduction

Many performance evaluations (PEs), assessments, and other studies involve a team of researchers conducting numerous interviews in the field over three to four weeks. Commissioners often complain about the accuracy, reliability, and usability of findings of such studies. The Addressing Learning and Evaluation Challenges (ALEC) initiative examined seven common challenges in PEs and offered guidance to address them. Most of this guidance is oriented towards the learning partners (LPs) and evaluation teams (ETs) carrying out PEs; however, the actions and decisions of PE commissioners can either exacerbate or help avoid these challenges. For example, the success of a research initiative often depends on the questions that USAID asks researchers to answers.

Resources

- ALEC guidance for researchers (DEC link)
- Brief of ALEC guidance for study commissioners (DEC link)
- Webinar recording of ALEC guidance (DEC link)
- Evaluation question development workbook (DEC link)
- Evaluation question guidance: Three keys (DEC link)
- Evaluation questions glossary of common terms (DEC link)
- Report on evaluation questions (DEC link)
- Performance evaluation SOW template (here)

Summary of ALEC guidance for researchers

1. Improving site (case) selection

The Challenge: Many evaluations, studies, and assessments typically entail selecting a small number of cases, units, or sites for deeper analysis. If not selected well, however, these can provide an inaccurate sense of the program or not adequately address questions and learning needs.

Guidance:

1.1 Decide whether the PE will require selecting sites as soon as possible after having the necessary information.

1.2 If selecting sites is necessary, determine the number of sites that the evaluation team can visit given the available resources and, to the extent possible, make this decision independently of actual site selection.

1.3 Determine the site selection approach and complete site selection only after developing a strong understanding of the activity and evaluation priorities.

1.4 Determine the site selection approach based on evaluation questions and the analytical goals of the evaluation. Consider two broad types of site selection approaches: representative and purposive.

1.5 Do not select sites using convenience sampling, but adjusting site selection to reflect security and accessibility considerations may be necessary.

1.6 Consult with USAID and implementing partner (IP) staff to inform the site selection strategy, but USAID and IP staff should not determine the actual site selection.

1.7 Consider whether the PE could benefit from an incremental or sequenced approach to site selection. If planning to use a sequenced approach, the justification and process to finalize site selection should be included in the work plan/design report.

1.8 Provide detailed information on sampling in the report, including any deviations from the original plans and their analytical implications.

2. Improving respondent selection for individual and group interviews

The Challenge: Most PEs and assessments rely on individual and group interviews, including those of program participants and indirect beneficiaries. PE reports often do not provide enough information about the selection strategy and how it aligns with EQs. This undermines trust in evaluation findings and creates a barrier to use.

Guidance:

2.1 Identify the potential population of respondents, including key informants, program participants, and indirect beneficiaries.

2.2 Identify potential key informants following an intentional process that draws on inputs from local team members, preliminary consultations with USAID and IP staff, and a thorough review of program documentation.

2.3 Leave room for flexibility in key informant selection.

2.4 Similar to site selection, select program participants and indirect beneficiaries using representative or purposive approaches as required by the evaluation questions.

2.5 To obtain breadth and depth, consider conducting a survey followed by a random or purposive selection of respondents for more in-depth interviewing.

2.6 Upon completing respondent selection, validate the selection against the evaluation questions and ensure that the information to be collected is sufficient to address them.

2.7 Provide detailed information on respondent selection in the report, including any deviations from original respondent selection plans and their analytical implications.

3. Addressing social desirability bias

The Challenge: If an ET asks program participants if they are satisfied with a program or feel that it had a positive impact, many people will naturally answer "yes" regardless of their true perception. Despite this clear limitation, ETs frequently lean on these kinds of questions and risk drawing incorrect conclusions.

Guidance:

3.1 Recognize the difference between mitigation and resolution of social desirability bias (SDB).

3.2 Identify and use sources of data and data collection methods that are less subject to SDB.

3.3 Limit access to the data, including donor access, and communicate clearly to interviewees about how the data will be used.

3.4 In developing instruments, use indirect questioning, be thoughtful about question wording, and consider prefacing questions.

3.5 Pretest different approaches to questions subject to SDB.

3.6 During the interview itself, create a trusting atmosphere, look for cues of SDB, flag bias risks in notes, and follow up and probe.

3.7 Take SDB seriously in analyzing data, report writing, and quality assurance and caveat findings accordingly.

4. Improving data capture and management

The Challenge: Interview and FGD notes are the data that findings and conclusions should be derived from, and yet in some cases, the data provided to research teams might not be well captured or stored to allow for meaningful analysis.

Guidance:

4.1 Develop and implement a data capture plan to consistently capture a verbatim or close-to-verbatim record of each qualitative event.

4.2 Find the right size in the mix of skills on the evaluation team.

4.3 Follow guidelines for informed consent and data protection, minimizing the collection of and access to raw or identifiable data.

4.4 Encourage teams to follow good practices for note-taking.

4.5 Absent extenuating political or security circumstances, practice the regular recording of qualitative events if consent is given and recording is unlikely to undermine frank responses.

4.6 Select LP staff should have access to all of their team's qualitative data and provide regular quality oversight.

5. Improving data analysis

The Challenge: Without a systematic, documented, and somewhat replicable approach to data analysis, research teams risk several forms of bias, including confirmation bias and deriving conclusions from early interviews, recent interviews, or dynamic and memorable interviewees. In addition, it becomes difficult for teams to collaborate, conduct quality control, or revisit findings and conclusions that are poorly documented.

Guidance:

5.1 Employ a documented systematic approach for arriving at findings from all data sources, including, at a minimum, structured thematic or content analysis for qualitative data.

5.2 Systematic analysis of qualitative data in PEs will most often be facilitated by first coding what was discussed into coherent categories.

5.3 Basic rapid analysis using manual thematic coding is sufficient in certain circumstances.

5.4 Some teams may want to pursue (and some Missions may request) coding using qualitative data analysis software.

5.5 LPs and team leads should provide leadership and oversight throughout the evaluation to ensure that the analysis plan is carried out faithfully.

5.6 Evaluations should be adequately budgeted and staffed to support systematic analysis.

5.7 AI is an emerging tool that, with caution, could be used to speed up the coding process or help uncover hidden themes.

5.8 Combine systematic analysis of qualitative data with other sources (e.g., desk review, surveys, activity monitoring, evaluation and learning plan data, and other secondary data) to triangulate findings.

6. Improving the evidentiary support for statements

The Challenge: There is conflicting guidance on the evidentiary support required for finding and conclusion statements. In some cases, tangential and poorly supported findings and conclusions are offered in reports, but proposed solutions to ensure evidentiary support often create other problems, such as requiring highly structured interviews, treating qualitative data like quantitative data, and ignoring many of the strengths of qualitative data.

Guidance:

6.1 Quantify qualitative data only when using highly structured instruments on a large sample.

6.2 The source of evidence should be cited in a way that provides basic information about the source while still maintaining confidentiality.

6.3 Findings must be based on multiple data points.

6.4 Reports should be organized by findings and not divided by data source.

6.5 Expectations about the extent and style of evidentiary support should be discussed early in the evaluation process and not wait until after a draft has been submitted.

6.6 Take additional steps to proactively build user confidence in the study findings and ensure their utility.

6.7 Be transparent in the level of confidence in findings.

7. Improving the presentation of findings to facilitate uSE

The Challenge: Evaluations, studies, and assessment reports are often lengthy, and key points risk being buried in reports or never read by the intended users. Research teams often struggle to ensure that key points are highlighted without losing needed nuance or adequate empirical support.

Guidance:

7.1 Provide a summary of the question's response at the outset.

7.2 Use bolded topic sentences summarizing findings, followed by supporting evidence.

7.3 Use visualizations to summarize qualitative information.

7.4 Shift much of the methodology explanation to an annex.

7.5 Conclusions sections should identify implications for decision-making and where actions need to be taken.

7.6 Implement processes to ensure a well-written report, including a robust internal review process aided by a checklist.

7.7 Develop complementary products that go beyond the report, including targeted briefs, infographics, slides, presentations, videos, or podcasts.

Evaluation questions development

A set of clear, realistic questions clearly linked to the evaluation purpose can result in detailed findings and actionable recommendations that improve program outcomes. Inversely, questions that are (1) not feasible to answer, (2) too broad in scope, or (3) not adequately clear, will produce evaluations with low confidence, little new information, and reports that deviate from the needs of users. (See figure below). This evaluation question development workbook is intended to help USAID evaluation commissioners develop, refine, and prioritize evaluation questions. This workbook should be used by the primary evaluation commissioner, with input at various stages from other evaluation stakeholders, including members of the technical office, front office, program office, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) teams (including MEL platforms), and Washington-based evidence and learning support. Depending on the evaluation contracting mechanism, the evaluation commissioner may wish to co-create questions alongside the evaluation team.

FEASIBILITY

If the evaluation questions (EQs) aren't feasible, commissioners can't be confident in the answers.

SCOPE

If the scope is too broad, evaluators struggle to tell commissioners information they don't already know.

CLARITY

If questions lack clarity, reports struggle to deliver what commissioners are expecting.

STEP 1: DEFINE THE DECISIONS YOU WILL MAKE WITH THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

All successful evaluations start with a clear purpose. You're investing time and money in conducting the evaluation, so take time in the beginning to make sure you get information you can use! Together with relevant members of your technical or front office teams, clearly articulate the **purpose of the evaluation** and **the decisions you plan to make with the evaluation findings**. Be as specific as possible, as this will make it easier to prioritize and refine your evaluation questions later on.

COMMON EVALUATION PURPOSES

Strategy: Country Development Cooperation Strategy or specific democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) strategy **Design**: Design of future activities

Implementation: Implementation of current or future activities

General learning: Understanding of DRG problems and challenges to addressing them

Beyond identifying the evaluation purpose, you need to articulate what decisions you want the findings to inform. **Some decision questions to consider include:**

- What decisions do we need to make for a follow-on program? This might entail changes to the program components, theory of change, geographical targeting, target population, program scope, or partnership strategy.
- What adaptations might be needed for the implementation? Examples include to increase inclusivity, address implementation challenges, respond to contextual changes, improve adaptive management, improve MEL, increase sustainability, scale the program.
- What questions do we have about areas of uncertainty or assumptions in the theory of change?

Ensure that your timeline matches your evaluation purpose. A basic performance evaluation takes about seven months from tasking to completion. This is in addition to the amount of time needed for SOW development, approvals, and procurement, which varies based on the operating unit and mechanism. Make sure that you will have the results ahead of major decision points for strategy formulation, design development, or implementation workplan development.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS EVALUATION? WHAT DECISIONS WILL THE RESULTS INFORM?

STEP 2: BRAINSTORM QUESTIONS

Now that you know your purpose, hold a brainstorming session for people to write down all the questions they would like the evaluation to answer. This could happen either in a meeting or asynchronously through a Google document. Consult all necessary stakeholders to get everyone's input. Try to avoid bringing people in only at the end, especially those with decision-making power. This is a brainstorming session, so include any questions that people come up with and do not worry about the exact wording or prioritization just yet. Nonetheless, even at this stage, participants should be encouraged to propose questions that fit with the purpose of the evaluation.

Below are some common question types you may want to consider based on the decisions you plan to make:

- Program **outcomes and effectiveness** (both higher- and lower-level).
- Program **implementation and adaptation.**
- Questions about **sustainability.**

- Questions validating the **theory of change** and other assumptions.
- Questions about **inclusivity** (including gender) and program targeting.
- Questions about **partnerships** and stakeholder engagement.

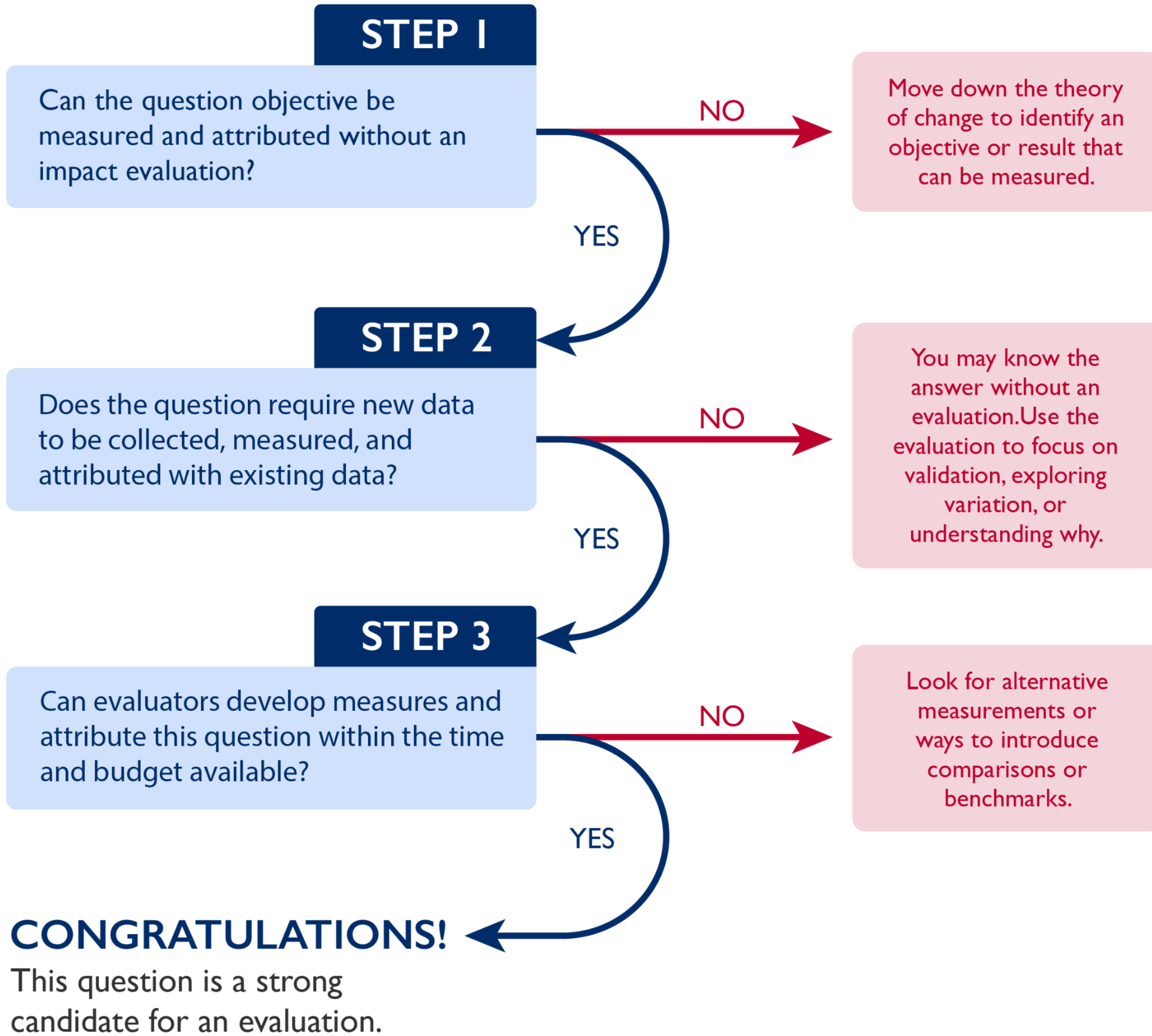
Question 1:
Question 2:
Question 3:
Question 4:
Question 5:
Question 6:
Question 7:
Question 8:
Question 9:
Question 10:

Look over these questions and note any trends that emerge. What types of information seem to be most important? What is more of a "nice to know" than a "need to know"? Are they linked to the evaluation purpose and the decisions you need to make? At this stage, you may also wish to organize questions by theme, eliminate duplicates, and remove questions that are obviously unrelated to your decision-making needs.

STEP 3: CONFIRM FEASIBILITY

Now that you have everyone's input to create a universe of potential questions and have removed duplicates or questions unrelated to your use case, review the remaining questions for methodological feasibility. Feasibility is particularly challenging when asking about effectiveness, results, or outcomes. In these cases, use the following flow chart to determine if a question is feasible. Eliminate or revise accordingly.

To determine if a question is methodologically feasible:



Revise your questions below

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3:

Question 4:

Question 5:

Question 6:

Question 7:

Question 8:

Question 9:

Question 10:

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE

Once the universe of questions has been narrowed to those that are methodologically feasible, prioritize questions until you reach a single question set that can be answered with the time and money available.

REACH

What will this question help us learn?

IMPACT

How much will this information impact our decision-making?

CONFIDENCE

How confident are we in the quality of the findings?

EFFORT

What types of data are necessary to answer this question, and does the evaluation have the time and money to collect it?

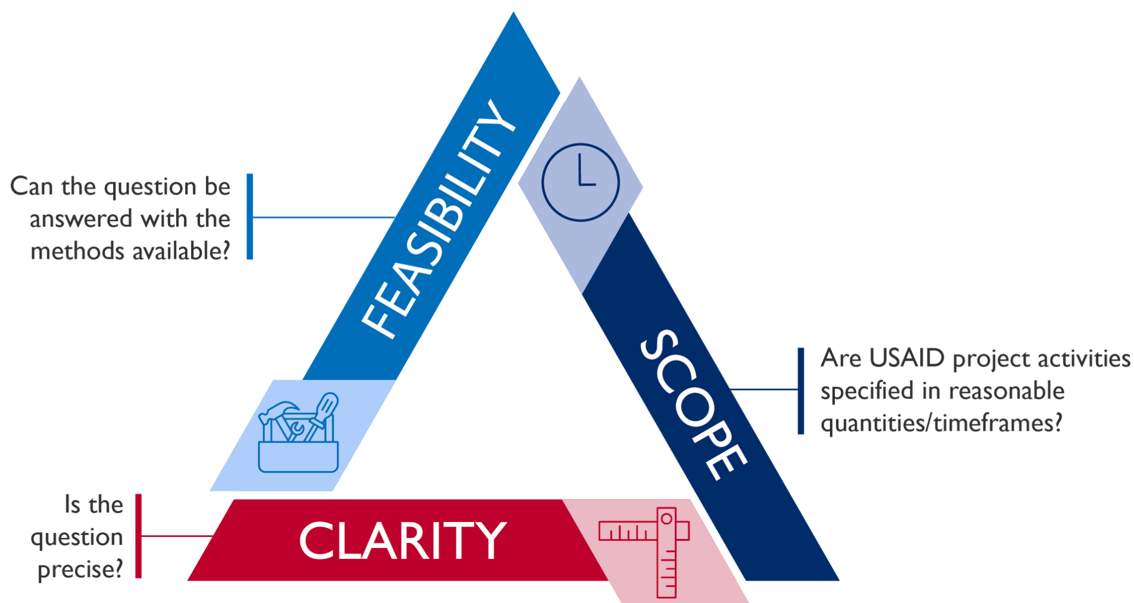
One tool to help prioritize questions is a variation of the popular management prioritization framework, **RICE (Reach, Impact, Confidence, and Effort).** This can be a qualitative exercise to think about the tradeoffs of various questions or a quantitative exercise. For example, if a question requires a great deal of effort but will result in low confidence findings and will not provide critical information for decision-making, then this would be a low priority question. To quantify questions, score each category by creating a three-point scoring system and multiplying reach by impact and confidence, then dividing by effort using the table below.

	REACH	IMPACT	CONFIDENCE	EFFORT
	What new information would this question tell us? 1=Would mostly confirming what we already are confident we know 2=Would triangulate other data sources like MEL data, contextual evidence, or academic literature 3=Information will be brand new	**How much would the answer to this question help our decision-making?** 1=Would provide context 2=Would provide indicative evidence for design or implementation 3=Would provide critical information for a key decision	**Given the methods available, how confident would we be in the quality of the findings?** 1=Low confidence 2=Moderate confidence 3=Strong confidence	**How much of the evaluation team's time, interviews, and budget would need to be dedicated to this question?** 1=roughly the same as other questions 2= is somewhat more than other questions 3=much more than other questions.
Question 1				
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
Question 5				
Question 6				
Question 7				
Question 8				
Question 9				
Question 10				

Depending on your contracting mechanism for the evaluation, you may wish to get additional inputs from your mission, bureau, or independent office MEL specialists, learning experts in Washington, or the evaluation team conducting the evaluation at this stage. They will be well positioned to provide guidance on confidence and effort

STEP 5: REFINE SCOPE AND CLARITY

Once you've narrowed your list to your highest-priority questions (3–5 questions is a good rule of thumb), use the checklist to further refine the scope, feasibility, and clarity of the question. For example, if a question asks about the activity as a whole, can the scope be narrowed to focus on a high priority area that will better support decision-making? Develop a paragraph for each priority question to provide context, define terms, share additional information or nuance, and identify lines of inquiry. Consult the Three Keys for Performance Evaluation Questions, Question Bank, and Performance Evaluation Glossary documents for additional guidance and example questions. You may also wish to consult with MEL specialists at the Mission or MEL platform, learning experts in Washington, or the evaluation team conducting the evaluation to help refine the questions.



Question 1:
Question 1 Context:

Question 2:
Question 2 Context:

Question 3:
Question 3 Context:

Question 4:
Question 4 Context:

Question 5:
Question 5 Context:

Congratulations! You're almost there. Once you have refined your questions, circulate them with the wider group of stakeholders and for any necessary approvals. If your evaluation partner has not yet seen the questions, it can be helpful to note whether your team is open to suggestions from the evaluation team to further refine your questions during the work plan stage or if the question set is unchangeable once approved.

Advancing Utilization and Dissemination in Research Activities (AUDRA)

Introduction

Generating evidence is important, but it is the first step in a process. That evidence needs to make it into the hands of decision-makers, it needs to be in a format that decision-makers can understand, and there needs to be processes and incentives that encourage turning evidence into learning and turning learning into action. The Advancing Utilization and Dissemination in Research Activities (AUDRA), is part of a constantly evolving process to turn evidence into action.

In 2021, the E&L Team asked partners NORC and Cloudburst to conduct follow-up interviews with past LER study commissioners to find out how study findings were used. This resulted in two reports under an initiative called Utilization Measurement Analysis (UMA), one from NORC and one from Cloudbust. While the reports identified some successful examples of utilization and dissemination, many reports were not well disseminated or used. On the recommendations of these reports, the E&L team set up a permanent system to track utilization on current and future work and to promote improved dissemination and learning. There are several steps in the subsequent AUDRA process that has evolved over time.

The AUDRA process

1. **Set expectations:**
    a. At the tasking stage, E&L and evaluation/study commissioners should determine what aspects of dissemination and utilization will go into the tasking and these should be checked on the tasking template. All taskings should produce an action plan of some sort – although the template, which is recommendations-based, might not make sense for every tasking. Any tasking with recommendations should entail a utilization workshop at its conclusion.
    b. The E&L Team will convene evaluation/study commissioners for a one-hour utilization briefing at the start of the tasking (see PPT here). The briefing will aim to promote a "utilization mindset," result in a clear articulation of the use, and build a shared understanding of the utilization promotion process. This will not require LP engagement. This should include socialization of a D&U Checklist and The E&L activity manager should continue to remind commissioners throughout the evaluation process of the need for this utilization mindset, for example, when draft deliverables are shared.
    c. As part of the kick-off meeting agenda, the Learning Partner (LP) should ask the commissioners to articulate the use beyond the language included in the tasking/SOW.

2. **Undertake robust dissemination planning:** There should be a dissemination and utilization plan included as part of the workplan, including a list of key evaluation stakeholders developed in collaboration with the commissioners.

   While there may be some deviations, dissemination should include as a default: (1) production of at least one two-pager, policy brief, or infographic with more targeted information than the executive summary; (2) translation of key content (e.g., the executive summary, two-pager) into applicable local language(s); (3) sharing of outputs with a predetermined group of stakeholders including study participants; (4) an outbrief (immediately following completion of any in-country fieldwork, if applicable); (5) a core stakeholder presentation to core users to inform the final report and recommendations; (6) a presentation to a larger stakeholder community. These are the minimum types of effort that are usually necessary for effective dissemination. Additional dissemination activities are also encouraged.

   To aid in dissemination, LPs should develop in the course of data collection a list of evaluation participants and stakeholders who should be sent the final report and summary and be invited to a dissemination event. In most cases, and with the consent of the commissioners, the LP will be responsible for disseminating this content and sending invitations to presentations. This can also include dissemination of research findings to communities that participated as respondents to surveys, focus groups, etc., so that research isn't just "taking" information from these respondents but also "giving" it back to them in summary form with some analysis. This may require translation of two-pagers and/or oral presentations in local language(s). One example is dissemination efforts with indigenous communities in Guatemala regarding the baseline data from an impact evaluation of a peacebuilding activity (DRG LER I NORC tasking N066).

3. **Provide useful recommendations:** Recommendations are the means through which evaluation findings are translated into potential actions. Recommendations should be (1) based on the findings/evidence/data and conclusions derived therefrom, (2) action-oriented, (3) practical, (4) specific, and (5) define who is responsible for the action. (See How To Guidance on preparing evaluation reports).

4. **Assist in utilization and post-learning action planning:** This entails a number of steps:
   a. If part of the tasking, conduct a recommendations workshop to co-create or refine recommendations.
   b. As a deliverable in the tasking request and concept note (and thus also budgeted for), the Learning Partner provides a post-evaluation/learning action plan (PEAP/PLAP) template with recommendations filled out. (Alternatively, and in consultation with

commissioners, the team may use an alternative template focused on actions rather than recommendations.)

c. Based on the draft PEAP/PLAP, conduct a post-evaluation/learning workshop with "users" of the evaluation. This might focus on determining what recommendations are accepted, amended, or rejected if there is likely to be disagreement, or it might focus more concretely on detailing actions for prioritized recommendations.

d. Conclude the workshop by (1) discussing formalizing the action plan, (2) asking commissioning staff to set a deadline for producing the final version of the action plan, (3) identifying dates and a point of contact for utilization follow-up. The first follow-up should be prior to the expected completion date of action plan items to encourage implementation. The second should be after (at least some) action plan items can reasonably be expected to have been implemented. The default is three and six months, but teams should discuss and determine these as part of the action planning process. (See utilization sampling and outreach protocol here)

e. While the commissioning staff will be responsible for finalizing and implementing the action plan, the Learning Partner should send reminders and obtain a copy of the final action plan. The E&L Team can assist in this process, particularly if there are procurement sensitive items in the action plan.

5. **Prior to tasking close out, fill out the AUDRA Database and AUDRA Calendar with preliminary content and fill out the Learning Harvest:** The database is a comprehensive knowledge management tool that (1) allows for the calculation of basic output and lower-level outcome indicators, (2) provides qualitative narrative information, and (3) links to source materials with greater details. The codebook tab provides information on the variables in the database. The initial columns match the Learning Harvest. The tracker and support material should be uploaded to a shared google folder. There should be a folder for each tasking with the dissemination and use files linked in the spreadsheet. Files should either be done in Google formats or PDF with a preference for Google formats to better enable linking. As part of closing out a tasking, LPs should update the tracker with metadata about the tasking, including linking to any action plan provided by the commissioning OU. LPs should also have identified a POC for follow-up, scheduled the first follow-up meeting, and updated the calendar. At close out LPs should also update the GoogleSheet version of the Learning Harvest. This will be used to update the Excel version and posted quarterly to LEAP.

6. **Conduct follow-up, update the tracker and link resources**: As part of a separate utilization tasking, the LP should conduct follow-up at two points in time after the utilization

workshop. The LP should (a) follow the sampling and outreach protocol, (b) use the utilization follow-up instrument, (c) update the AUDRA Database and AUDRA Calendar, and (d) generate and share the follow-up report using the follow-up report template. Follow-up should be pitched to commissioning staff as part of an effort to assist them with utilization and not at all a "gotcha" exercise. It should also seek to be objective and minimize the chance of overstating any potential use. Efforts should be made to validate reporting of significant use. Small modifications to the instrument do not require E&L approval but major modifications should be shared with E&L ahead of time. Generally speaking the process does not require additional E&L approvals beyond the approval at the outset of the overall tasking concept notes and budgets.

The Evidence Help Desk

Introduction

A study commissioned by the DRG Center found that while USAID activity designers did a good job of using many forms of evidence, they don't tend to use research evidence, such as impact evaluations, systematic reviews, and academic studies as often. This is largely understandable as designers lack the time (and in some cases the expertise) to identify, find, read, and reflect on the programmatic implications of research findings. As a result, the DRG Bureau's Policy, Learning, and Integration Office launched an Evidence Help Desk to help USAID staff in overcoming these barriers. The Evidence Help Desk could be used for providing support ranging from identifying a few key resources to conducting a full review of the evidence.

The Evidence Help Desk Process

The goal of an evidence review is to facilitate the incorporation of research evidence into activity designs. Evidence reviews seek to answer questions such as:

- What are the impacts of a programmatic approach?
- What works, what doesn't work, and why in achieving a DRG outcome?
- What are the key intervening and contextual variables for a programmatic approach to achieve a DRG outcome? Such variables might include differences in implementation approaches, differences across individuals, such as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, location, such as urban and rural, country contextual factors, including types of political/legal/regulatory environments, cultural or demographic factors),

A DRG Bureau supported Evidence Review should:

- Be commissioned at the design stage of an intervention and done relatively quickly to inform early decision-making.
- Communicate information in an easy to understand and actionable format but without simply ignoring important nuances or key intervening variables.
- Serve as one of several inputs to a design process, including other sources of data and learning (e.g., assessments, local data, technical expertise, etc.).

The Evidence Review document should stand as a formal deliverable that will be made publicly available on the DEC. Nonetheless, it is more important to ensure a meaningful dialogue between decision-makers and the reviewers to foster a deeper understanding of the evidence. As such, following the drafting of an evidence review and an adequate review window, a meeting should be held to allow commissioners the opportunity to raise questions and discuss. The evidence review team may present a few slides to provide some overall framing, but this should be limited to 5-10 minutes to prioritize a discussion.

There are several variations that can be considered to improve the usefulness of this evidence review process. (1) The evidence review process could be built into a more traditional assessment and complemented with key informant interviews and in-country data collection to combine experiential, contextual, and research evidence. (2) Alternatively, an academic author could be paired with a practitioner or DRG Bureau technical expert to not only consider the evidence but try to bridge the evidence with existing best practices.

Example Evidence Reviews:

- **Evidence review:** An early deliverable is a review of existing research evidence (e.g., IEs, systematic reviews, rigorous studies) to ensure the intervention to be tested has an adequately robust theory of change. Liberia's evidence review identified the key programmatic components for a civic education program to influence knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors.
- **Evidence Review:** The Kenya evidence review summarizes key assumptions shaping the design of interventions aimed at improving voter registration and turnout. Before detailing key findings from these interventions, the report outlines relevant contextual factors of the Kenya case. It then lists several interventions—with both significant and null effects—that are most relevant and potentially applicable to Kenya.
- **Evidence Review:** The Philippines evidence review establishes an evidence-based foundation for understanding information integrity interventions in the Philippines, assessing current USAID programming and guiding future initiatives. It includes three sections: the theory of change for demand-side interventions against misinformation, a review of specific intervention types and their relevance to the Philippines, and recommendations for prioritizing future programming and research. DEC

DRGLinks

Introduction

DRGLinks is a resource for all democracy, human rights, governance, and anti-corruption practitioners to learn and share knowledge to create and implement successful, effective programs. DRGLinks includes technical guidance, tools, and resources, along with research and evidence all in one easy to find location. DRGLinks also includes content on how to integrate DRG into development programming and adjacent topics including conflict and violence prevention and inclusive development. This includes a dedicated page on DRG Integration that includes resources on Thinking and Working Politically and Political Economy Analysis.

DRGLinks Process

DRGLinks is a curated website with the latest evidence and learning for DRG practitioners to design evidence based programming. Here is the user guide. DRG content from USAID.

The process for setting up DRGLinks, a curated website designed to support DRG practitioners, involved several key steps:

1. **Purpose and Background:** DRGLinks aimed to serve as a centralized resource hub containing technical guidance, evidence, and best practices relevant to Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) for both USAID staff and implementing partners. This platform was intended to enhance communication, shared learning, and accessibility of crucial information.
2. **Content Framework :** The site included several types of resources, such as:
   a. Overall DRG Guidance (e.g., policy documents)
   b. Technical Resources (approaches and frameworks)
   c. Evidence (evaluation reports and evidence reviews)
   d. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Resources (metrics and guidance)
3. **Buy-In Management**: To establish the website, a "minimum viable product" was created, with ongoing enhancements planned as supplementary funding became available. Coordination among USAID and DEVELOP teams was essential, involving monthly or semi-monthly status meetings to monitor progress and address emerging needs.
4. **Quality Control** : A master tracker digitized task assignments and oversaw the collaboration between USAID and DEVELOP teams. Techniques such as Agile and Scrum facilitated effective project management, ensuring timely updates and feedback.
5. **Phased Development :** The development phases included validating content assumptions, ensuring accessibility compliance, and adhering to privacy and governance requirements. The approaches were executed concurrently, adapting to stakeholder feedback and resource availability.

6. **Launch and Maintenance** : Post-launch support was not included in the initial scope; however, options for Operations and Maintenance were made available if requested. The hosting and initial deployment of the website were handled by a third-party provider.
7. **Monitoring and Feedback** : Implementation included basic analytics to track site usage and ensure continuous improvement through feedback and quality assurance mechanisms.

Overall, DRGLinks became an essential tool for fostering a consistent knowledge base in the DRG field, aiding both USAID personnel and their partners in effectively utilizing best practices and evidence in their work. This guide is intended to teach others how to replicate the successful process established during the website's development.

Tasking management

Introduction

Through the DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research mechanisms I, II, and III, the E&L team and its partners at Cloudbust, Social Impact, and NORC have conducted 336 taskings. The Learning Harvest, a database of learning resources generated through the LER mechanism, includes 341 learning products, including impact evaluations, performance evaluations, assessments, evidence reviews, toolkits and guidance, and other research and learning products.

Mechanism	Learning Partner	Number of taskings
LER I (2013-2021)	NORC	84
LER I (2013-2021)	Social Impact	28
LER II (2019-2023)	NORC	88
LER II (2019-2025)	Cloudburst	77
LER III (2023-2025)	Cloudburst	26
LER III (2023-2025)	Social Impact	33
Total (2013-2025)		336

In this section, we present tools for managing this volume of research.

Responsibilities

- **Tasking manager responsibility**: All taskings should have an identified tasking manager responsible for the day to day management of the tasking.
- **COR responsibility:** Responsible for approval of and changes to scope, timeline, personnel, budget, final deliverables, and travel; addressing significant quality or performance issues; communication with the OAA/CO; legal questions.

Initial Contact with OUs and Missions

Initial contact with the Missions and OUs commissioning work under LER III can be done by anyone on the E&L team but the CORs should be part of the conversation early.

- **Add to pre-tasking tracker:** The COR or tasking manager (if identified from the outset) will add the potential tasking to the LER III Tasking and Funding Pre-tasking tracker

- **Identify Tasking Managers:** When a new draft request or request comes in, the request is circulated to the team to aid in identifying a tasking manager. The tasking manager should review the request. The COR will identify from the team who will serve as E&L Tasking Manager. The COR will also clarify the commissioning Tasking Manager and POC for the study as well as other commissioning core stakeholders.
- CORs supported by tasking managers should use the following as a guide and checklist to discuss with potential LER III users in a one hour meeting.

●	**Good fit for LER III**: Confirm that it falls within one of the above tasking categories and that it is DRG related. Please note that promotional or communications pieces are not part of LER III's scope.
●	**Clear use case**: Confirm that there is a clear use case for the tasking and articulate how the study will be used below. This means going beyond broad uses (e.g., informing a design) to specific decisions that need to be made. Please note that the LER III mechanism places a strong emphasis on dissemination and utilization. This includes (1) pre-tasking utilization briefing, (2) early stakeholders identification, (3) clarity on utilization goals, (4) utilization checklist for the life of the tasking, (5) a dissemination and utilization plan including dissemination beyond core USAID users, (6) a utilization focus in deliverable review, (7) recommendation or utilization workshop, (8) a post-evaluation/learning action plan, and (9) participation in follow-up interviews.
●	**Schedule a utilization briefing** with the Evidence and Learning Team.
●	**Decision points and dates:** Note any decision points that the work needs to be completed by (e.g., year four workplan, deadline for follow-on concept note) and the date of that decision? (See sample timeline for most taskings in basic PE SOW template) Date and nature of decision:
●	**Review the process:** Please review the typical tasking process laid out here. Note that most deliverables entail a two week review and that it is important to be able to turn reviews around on time.
●	**Determine approach to SOW finalization.** Select one of the following: ● Ready to be sent out pending LER III COR/TM review ● Drafted but not yet peer reviewed or internally approved to go out ● Not yet drafted or still drafting Please note if either of the following would be helpful:

	● Question Development Workshop to help develop and refine questions. While tailored to evaluations, you can find question guidance here along with a workbook to aid in question development. ● Co-development of the SOW with our learning partners. Please note that we offer several SOW templates Basic PE SOW template, IE SOW template, Evidence Review SOW templates
●	Taking into account any decision making deadlines and the approach to SOW finalization, please develop a planned tasking date, list of tasks pending, and calendar. For example: ● Internal SOW revisions: 2 weeks ● SOW Peer review completed: 2 weeks ● Second revisions completed: 2 weeks ● Finalization: 1 week ● Approvals/clearance: 3 weeks ● Issue tasking: 1 week Planned tasking date:
●	Determine if there is a ceiling for the tasking to be included in the tasking document (generally recommended). All tasks will also have a management fee for 3.5-5% that covers Cloudburst's and Social Impact's contract management costs. Please provide an estimated date for funds transfer: **Social Impact** Operating Unit: DRG Mechanism name: DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) III Contractor: Social Impact Contract number: GS-10F-0294V Task Order: 7200AA23M00014 Period of Performance: September 26, 2023 - September 25, 2028 Contract Type: Time and Material **Cloudburst** Operating Unit: DRG Mechanism name: DRG LER III Contractor: Cloudburst Contract number: GS-10F-0218U Task Order: 7200AA23M00011 Period of Performance: September 26, 2023 - March 30, 2028

	Contract Type: Time and Materials

Utilization briefing

This guide will teach you how to conduct a utilization briefing for LER taskings. All you need are a few resources, an inquisitive mindset, and you are off to the races!

Resources:

- Utilization Promotion Guidance_V6
- Utilization Briefing.pptx
- DRG deliverable review for learning and utilization template
- Template Evaluation Action Planning Worksheet.docx
- DRG stakeholder engagement planning
- Utilization briefing notes template

Instructions:

1. Coordinate with the team commissioning the LER tasking to **set up a time for an internal USAID utilization briefing**
    a. *Ideally, before they submit the tasking request, or before the CN is finalized in order to incorporate any action items or considerations that came up during the briefing into the request*
2. Send the calendar invite and **create a Dissemination and Utilization folder** in the tasking folder to include **copies** of the above resources.
    a. **Draft calendar invite language here: "***As taskings get started we've found that it is helpful to have an early discussion around dissemination and utilization. We use a workshop format and discuss why some of our studies don't get used as much as we might like, identify barriers to use, discuss key stakeholders, and explore some of the things we like to do on LER approach to promote utilization. Please feel free to invite anyone internal to the USAID team that will be key for this conversation. No need to prep anything in advance- it is an informal internal conversation."*
3. Conduct the briefing using the slideshow and take notes in the notes template ***(don't forget to make copies of these templates!)***
4. **Send a follow up email to the internal USAID team using the template** included in the Notes template
5. **Share the key takeaways from this conversation with the LER Learning Partne**r in the

kickoff call, concept note, or via email following the utilization briefing (*the avenue for sharing will depend on the timing of the utilization briefing conversation*)

a. Confirm with the USAID team we are ok to send the notes doc to Learning Partner and to add anything else we may not have captured in the notes

Tips:

- As you work through the slide deck questions- probe to get as specific as possible for how they plan to use the research and **identify key decision points, timeline for making decisions,** and how to best set up the LER tasking for success
- Depending on the use case, there may be implications for who they need to interview during data collection or how they need to budget for dissemination- it is important to probe for this as well
- Take time to share the stakeholders spreadsheet and have them start populating it during the session and then link to that for them to complete in the follow up email

Tasking Request Development

- **SOW vs. tasking requisition**: The evaluation policy and best practice calls for a detailed SOW along with a tasking request. In some instances, SOWs might require extensive internal clearances that a tasking does not require. As technically only a tasking request is required by the LER contracts, the SOW can be dropped in these cases; however, the tasking manager should recommend to the COR other means to ensure messages normally in the SOW are conveyed. This may include sharing other documentation.
- **SOW and tasking development:** If the SOW or tasking are at an early stage, working with the Mission or OU commissioning the request, the tasking manager will identify a @chief SOW author (likely the POC identified above) along with the core review team. After the chief author drafts, the E&L tasking manager will manage the review process, providing the review team at least a one-week window for comments - unless the absence of a core review team means a longer review period is desirable. The tasking manager will send the draft with a clear deadline and instructions on how to receive feedback.(See also earlier PPL guidance on SOW peer review)
- **Consider a study question workshop**: If the commissioning team does not have a clear vision of how they want to use the study and what the questions should be, the tasking manager might convene a workshop to discuss. (*Under development as a part of ALEC-Questions*)
- **Identify data and documentation needs:** If there are items that the team will need to carry out the tasking (e.g., program documents, potential interviewee lists, program

participant/beneficiary/grantee lists), these should be identified and produced early on to avoid delays. These can be shared in a shared folder under the tasking or pre-tasking folder.

- **Determine learning partner**: The LER III CORs, in consultation with the Tasking Manager, will identify the most appropriate contract under LER III.
- **Setting up the tasking folder and file structure:** The Tasking Manager will set up the tasking folder. All files should be saved to the tasking google folder. If an item needs to live somewhere else, create a "short-cut" in the tasking folder. A typical tasking folder structure should include the following subfolders although this might vary somewhat. Try to limit any additional subfolders within these. <u>Be sure to add commissioning colleagues as editors to the folder.</u> It's good to include the folder link in emails (e.g., "I've saved x in the folder here"), as google will notify you if anyone does not have access.
    - CB3-01 Tasking Request & SOW
    - CB3-01 CN & Budget
    - CB3-01 Workplan and Tools
    - CB3-01 Draft Deliverables
    - CB3-01 Final Deliverables
    - CB3-01 Dissemination and Utilization
    - CB3-01 Shared folder (for sharing documents)
    - CB3-01 COR approvals (e.g travel)
- **File names:**
    - Learning Partner, Tasking number, document type, file name, date, clean/track/comments
    - Example: CB3-36_Tasking_Zimbabwe Elections PE_2023-10-21_USAID comments
- **Tasking tracker**: Update in the tasking tracker. (SI tracker here; CB tracker here)
- **Early stakeholder engagement**: The Tasking Manager will support the tasking commissioners to develop a list of initial stakeholders and determine outreach approach. (See template here). Share tasking request/SOW with appropriate individuals including relevant regional coordinators, country backstops, relevant technical experts, and others as needed

Issuing the Tasking

- **Draft the tasking email:** While the COR is responsible for sending the tasking to our LPs, the COR may request support from the Tasking manager to draft content for the email including flagging any key issues the Learning Partners should be aware of. Then the COR will issue the tasking request, including the core stakeholders from the Mission/OU and clearly define their roles in the email. The email will include and introduce other individuals as warranted (e.g., regional coordinators, DRG technical experts) but given the email traffic, consider if they should be informed separately.

- The text should identify who the tasking manager is from the Mission/OU side and from the E&L Team.
- In most cases, the text should propose an initial meeting prior to submission of the CN and budget

Dear XXXX,

I am pleased to submit this new tasking request and SOW on behalf of USAID/South Africa for a civic education PE.

Cc'd are my colleagues from the Mission: Paula Van Dyk (COR), Bertha Mtandeki (DRG Program Specialist), Amy Hamelin (DRG Team Lead), Adam Stefan (DRG Deputy Team Lead).

Adam will serve as tasking manager for the Mission and Daniel as tasking manager for E&L.

A few things to note:

- This is a performance evaluation but it is somewhat more forward looking than a typical PE to aid in planning the follow-on, which is expected to be the primary use of the evaluation.
- The IP is aware of the evaluation. Although it appears that the agreement will conclude at the end of this calendar year there is a chance that there will be a no cost extension.
- There is large variation in activities across CSOs and communities, so it would be good to discuss prioritization.

It would be great to schedule a call to discuss the tasking and SOW ahead of the CN and budget submission. Please let us know if any of the following times would work for a conversation:

- Time 1
- Time 2
- Time 3

Best,
XXXX

Concept Note and Budget

- **Review process:** Once CN and budget are submitted to USAID, the tasking manager (1) confirms receipt and confirms date of response, (2) saves them in relevant tasking folder (unless the partner has access and has already save them in the tasking folder), and (3) shares google versions with pre identified reviewers (which may include regional coordinators and DRG technical experts). The Tasking Manager sets a deadline for when comments/edits need to be returned or entered into the shared google document (usually one week). The tasking manager checks the google versions for major changes in the conversion (e.g., google sheet formulas don't work). Items to consider during the review:
  - **Staffing**: Do proposed staffing meet the qualifications for the SOW and are likely to deliver a high quality product
  - **Budget**: Are LOE, rates, and total price reasonable for the tasking (and within any budget ceiling)? Is the management fee included? It is worth comparing with other similar taskings.
  - **Approach**: Does the CN reflect a reasonable approach? (In some cases the CN is just a restatement of the SOW).
- **Tasking Manager should review ASAP**: It is highly desirable if the tasking manager can conduct a quick review of the CN and budget the same day that it is submitted and raise any key issues with stakeholders. It is far easier for our colleagues to respond to specific points than to find the time to review the files in detail. If a conversation is warranted, you can schedule a meeting to discuss. This review will also provide a sense if a kickoff call can be immediately scheduled or if additional iterations will be necessary. If everyone waits until the last day to review there will be no time to discuss issues without letting the timeline slip.
- **Schedule the kick-off call:** Upon responding, the tasking manager should confirm with the Learning Partner the date the revisions will come back. If approval is likely with minor modifications, it is a good idea to schedule the kick-off call as you typically need 2 weeks lead time to find something that will work with USAID calendars. Identify 2-3 windows and propose these with your response. Please note that the CN and budget must be approved by the COR before the kick off call can take place and typically our partners need a few additional days to onboard consultants. Please take into account the time needed for edits and revisions prior to approval before scheduling the kick off call.
- **Flag for COR approval:** Once the commissioning OU, tasking manager and other stakeholder are satisfied with the concept note and budget, the tasking manager will flag the tasking for approval by COR, who will do a final review before providing official approval to the CN and budget. The final, approved CN and Budget should be saved by the tasking manager.

Dear XXXX,

Confirming receipt of the CN and budget. Many thanks. We will revert back by XXX.

Best,
XXXX

Dear USAID colleagues,

I'm dropping XXX colleagues. I saved the CNs and budget here for collective review and comment. If you can please review and provide any comment or concurrence for approval by XXX it would be very much appreciated.

I took a quick look through and generally speaking. I see some potential concerns with the following:

- Staffing
- Proposal
- Budget

[raise any specific questions or lay out a proposed response]

Thanks,
XXXX

Dear XXXX,

Many thanks again for this proposed CN and budget. Please find detailed comments in the attached files. There are a few items I would like to flag in particular:

- X
- Y
- Z

Please confirm that you will be able to resubmit by XXX.

Assuming that we can get to approval in the short-term, I would like to go ahead and get a kick-off meeting on the calendar. Below are three windows that work on USAID's side. Let us know if one of those works for you. If so, please feel free to just send out an invite to the individuals on this chain. Please also circulate an agenda prior to the meeting.

- X
- Y
- Z

Best,

XXXX

Kick off Call

- The kickoff call needs to be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. See above.
- For more complicated taskings it can be useful to (1) set up a shared folder and (2) set up a knowledge management document.
- The Learning Partner should propose an agenda. Key topics
    - Clarifying/restating the use case for the tasking and what the Mission/OU is hoping to get out of the evaluation
    - Clarifying questions for the LP team.
    - Obtaining documents
    - Identifying stakeholders and potential interviewees
    - Reviewing utilization checklist (see above)

Oversight

- LPs should update tasking trackers including for Cloudburst and SI on a weekly basis with an weekly update.

Tasking	Title	Country	CB Tasking Manager	USAID Activity Manager(s)	Tasking POP	Funding Source	Utilization Briefing conducted	Status (CN, Ongoing, Closed)	Tasking Folder Link (if applicable)	Upcoming deadlines	Week ending 12/27
CB3-004	Rule of Law IDEAS Lab	Global	Aleta Starosta	Andrew Soloman, Maria Selde	11/15/23-end	Rule of Law (ROL) office	02/13/2024	Ongoing		ODI CO request with CO. HiiL Waiver Request submitted 1/7.	HiiL waiver will be submitted by 1/3. ODI waiver in progress. Final formatting of PCJ Typology underway, will be complete by 1/10. Workplan with Andrew for review. BrainFactory logistics package will be sent to participants on 1/7.
CB3-005	Dissemination	Global	Aleta Starosta	Laura Berger, Maria Selde	11/27/23-end	Evidence and Learning (E&L) Team		Ongoing		Waiting on clerence	Designing icons for learning digest themes, will submit 12/30. Expecting January learning digest information early in the new year (light lift).
CB3-006	DRG Evidence Help Desk	Global	Kate Marple-Cantrell	Maria Selde	12/1/23-end	Evidence and Learning (E&L) Team		Ongoing		006 - Zimbabwe final with USAID for approval. 009 - draft outline 1/31. 007 - Planning call 1/22. 010 - budget submitted 1/21.	Revised Zimbabwe evidence review will be submitted 1/17 for final approval. Paraguy on hold. Request #9 recieved 12/23.
CB3-008	Human Rights Achievements	Global	Simon Conte	Maria Selde (E&L) Kelley Strickland (JRS)	3/5/24-XXX	JRS	04/03/2024	Ongoing		Final version of report will be submitted 1/10.	Comments received on briefers - CB finalizing and will 508 and post, except for ME. Recieved final USAID comments 12/9, will incorporate by 12/27 and copy edit/reformat by 1/6 for final approval before 508 version.

Feedback on Draft Deliverables

- **Dissemination checklist:** Follow the dissemination checklist
- **The feedback process:** The tasking manager, in consultation with the commissioning Mission or OU and the LP, will pre-identify a list of individuals that the draft deliverables should be sent to for review. This may include other USAID technical officers, implementing partners, local partners, study participants, etc. The tasking manager should document in an email with the commissioning OU when and how deliverables will be shared with stakeholders. If the commissioning Mission or OU prefers to share the deliverable rather than have the learning partner share directly, the tasking manager should work with the commissioning OU to create a separate timeline for sharing the deliverable and receiving feedback that adheres to the tasking timeline. As soon as deliverables come in (same day), the tasking manager will:
  - Confirm receipt and date that feedback will be provided.
  - It is highly desirable for the tasking manager to conduct a quick review of the deliverable to ensure that there are not any major problems with the deliverable.
  - Save as a Google file and as a second Google file for comments in the appropriate tasking folder (if the LP has not already done so).
  - Determine if feedback will be provided through inline comments in the draft deliverable or using a comment matrix.
  - Determine if a call will be needed to discuss feedback and schedule in anticipation for a couple of days before the due date. This isn't needed for all deliverables but useful for less straightforward deliverables, taskings where there are disagreements, taskings where there are concerns of learning partner team quality. It might be good to conduct a preliminary scan of the deliverable to judge if a conversation will be needed. You can always schedule the meeting as a hold on calendars and cancel if necessary.
  - Provide instructions to reviewers on the review. (Example for a draft report below)
  - Highlight the importance of thinking about utilization while reviewing.

Dear XXXX, Confirming receipt of the XXX. Many thanks. We will revert back by XXX. Best, XXXX
Dear XXX,

We are glad to see that the draft report has been submitted! A few things to note on next steps:

- Please add your comments to this version here saved on Google Drive.
- Please note that converting the file submitted to a Google Doc usually messes up some of the formatting, so feel free to consult the original Word file if you see a problem.
- Comments are due back on XXX. I'll send out a reminder on the XX to remind us all. If there are minor-moderate concerns we can just send our comments; if there are more significant concerns then we can set up a call with XXX to discuss; and if there are major concerns we can discuss internally first.
- We like to keep the revisions to one round but if there are major concerns a second round may be required.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, as you are reviewing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, please also be thinking about what actions you want to take based on the findings (please see the utilization briefing notes [INSERT LINK] where you outlined how you want to use this study). People tend to be very focused on the deliverable itself, and while that is very important, the most important thing is that the findings are useful and used to inform your decision-making. I like to use this simple template in reviewing documents to keep me focused on learning and use.
- Evaluations require a post evaluation action plan. We used to save this to the end, but we've found that it is easiest to develop this when reviewing the draft, as this is when we engage most with the report. I set up a template here. Of course, often we have suggestions for improving the recommendations and those are definitely welcome. In fact we can even set up something of a workshop with the SI team to further develop the recommendations.

Let me know if you have any questions!

- **Utilization:** If a recommendations workshop is to be conducted to co-develop the recommendations based on the draft findings, then this should be scheduled. If not, then the LP should also submit a tailored action plan template to aid in utilization planning. Be sure to check the checklist.

- **Send reminders to stay on track:** Send a reminder three days prior to the due date. TIP: Use "schedule send" so that this goes out automatically. Cc yourself on this automatic message so that you get the reminder as well. Also place a reminder in your calendar of the due date. In some cases OUs might need additional time, but a new date should be agreed upon. Communicate with the learning partner prior to the due date if there will be a delay and provide a revised date.
- **Alert the COR** of any concerns regarding deliverable quality, timeline or cost. If a deliverable is being discussed or the tasking manager wants to meet with the learning partner please inform the COR and include them in any meeting invitations.
- **Revised draft**: Once you have a revised deliverable repeat the steps above. Sample language to the Mission might include the following:

> Dear XXX,
>
> Dropping [LEARNING PARTNER] colleagues to note that these two documents are saved as Google docs here. I took a quick look through and it does look like an improved deliverable. A few things to note:
>
> - At this stage we don't typically envision any significant revisions. If there still are significant concerns, let's discuss. Options at that point entail another round of revisions or a statement of differences.
> - Please do share the revisions with [IP], again noting that we do not envision significant revisions.
> - If there are small things, you can note them either by email or as in-line comments in the documents.
> - Please have your final review completed by the XX at the latest and ideally before to discuss if there are any substantial concerns.
>
> MOST IMPORTANTLY, as I mentioned last time, please also be thinking about what actions you want to take based on the findings. The next step will be to produce a post-evaluation action plan. See template and example. If you haven't already, I highly recommend that key stakeholders (potentially including non-USAID folks) get together to discuss the recommendations and potential actions. [LEARNING PARTNER] will facilitate continued discussion on this at the workshop.

FINAL DRAFT AND PUBLISHED VERSION

- Tasking managers should notify the COR when a deliverable is ready for their approval (i.e., approved by the client and the tasking manager).
- The COR, will ensure a 508 compliant version is produced and long- and short-form DEC links are sent to USAID and added to the learning partner's DEC tracker

DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION (SEE AUDRA GUIDANCE)

TASKING CLOSE-OUT

- The learning partner should do the following as part of close out. The tasking manager should ensure these steps are completed and report to the COR if any steps are not completed.
    - 508 compliant version of final products (reports and two pagers) posted to the DEC and sharing of DEC links
    - Posting to DRG Links if applicable
    - Update D&U Database
    - Update D&U Calendar
    - Update Learning Harvest
    - Seek action plan from commissioning entity
    - Anonymize and post any quant/survey data to the DDL
- The tasking manager and COR should determine what products should be posted to the DEC and of these which should be posted to DRG Links.
- The LP should send a close out email documenting the final deliverables, updates to trackers, and provide a financial summary.

> Dear Matt,
>
> We are writing to officially close out the LER III S3-03 Addressing Learning and Evaluation Challenges (ALEC) tasking.
>
> We confirm that this tasking is complete, all deliverables have been approved, and all trackers have been updated. Below is a final summary of the tasking:
>
> - Deliverables with hyperlinks
>   - Work Plan – Approved on 1/18/2024
>   - Validation and Consensus-Building Workshops – 4/30, 5/3, 5/6
>   - Presentation of Findings to USAID Stakeholders – 9/25

- Final Report and Guidance – Approved on 9/11/2024
- Two-Page Brief – Approved on 9/11/2024
- Broader Dissemination Event – 10/25/24

- Trackers
    1. Closeout Tracker
        1. All cells complete
    2. DEC/DDL Tracker
        1. Link to report here
    3. Learning Harvest
        1. Link to report here

- Financial Summary
    1. Total Cumulative Spend: $74,884.38 out of $74,919.00 total budget ceiling
    1. Burn rate for this tasking was 99.95%
    2. Remaining budget leftover: $34.62

Thanks,
Catherine

Evidence to Action Training

Introduction

In 2013 USAID's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Center created its first Learning Team. Renamed in 2019 as the Evidence and Learning Team (E&L), the team has sought (1) to provide USAID's DRG cadre with access to high quality data, evidence, and learning products, and (2) to motivate the DRG cadre to use such data, evidence, and learning in their programmatic decision-making. In short: generate evidence; share evidence; use evidence. This knowledge management system intends to capture the knowledge, tools, and processes that have been generated to further these goals. This volume focuses on the Evidence-to-Action training (E2A).

This training provides you with new concepts, resources, and tools to aid in incorporating evidence in activity design, learning throughout the program cycle, generating new evidence through rigorous evaluation, and incorporating social and behavioral change approaches. The training is organized into four sessions:

Session 1: Why do we think it will work? In part one of this interactive session, we will introduce a framework for thinking about the role of evidence in activity design and discuss examples where USAID has improved its DRG programming by incorporating research evidence into its designs.

Session 2: What do we need to learn to make it work? In the second session, we will introduce a framework for thinking about the role of monitoring and learning in activity design and implementation and explore examples where USAID has improved its DRG programming by incorporating high quality monitoring and learning approaches.

Session 3: How will we know if it worked? In the third session, we will explore evaluation options to generate evidence and determine if our programming is effective. We'll focus on two categories of evaluation: (1) impact evaluations and (2) rigorous outcome performance evaluations (ROPES).

Session 4: Using a Social and Behavioral Change lens to answer the questions above. In the fourth and final session we'll introduce a social and behavioral change approach and how it can improve DRG programming effectiveness.

Learning objectives:

Identify tools and measures to facilitate the incorporation of research evidence, learning, evaluation planning, and social and behavioral change into DRG activities.

Recognize the value of research evidence, ongoing learning, rigorous evaluation, and a social and behavioral change approach to improve DRG programming.

Incorporate research evidence, a learning agenda, rigorous evaluations, and social and behavioral change into future DRG activity designs.

The modules can be offered as standalone trainings or as part of the full E2A training. Modules 1 and 3 were offered in Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, and DC. Modules 2 and 4 were only implemented once in a DC based training.The training was in the process of being expanded to four days and revised for a February 2025 delivery that was cancelled and ultimately not rescheduled.

Agenda

	DAY 1 Tues June 18	DAY 2 Thurs June 20	DAY 3 Friday June 21
	Brief overview of the day: Welcome, Evidence, Learning Agenda	**Brief overview of the day:** Learning Agenda and Evaluation Planning	**Brief overview of the day:** Evaluation Planning, SBC, Training Conclusion
8	*Training room set up;*	*Training room set up; participants*	*Training room set up;*

:00	*participants arrive*	*arrive*	*participants arrive*
8:30	(8:30 - 9:15) 1.1 Agenda overview, participant introductions. Grounding the training in activity design/USAID's work	(8:30 - 9:00) 2.1 Welcome back; reflections on Day 1 and preview of Day 2	(8:30 - 9:00) 3.1 Welcome back; reflections on Day 2 and preview of Day 3
9:00		(9:00 - 10:00) 2.2 Developing Robust Indicators	(9:00 - 9:30) 3.2 Making Sure Evaluation is Useful (slides 63-67)
9:30	*(9:15 - 10:00)* 1.2 What do we mean by evidence-informed (slides 1-13)		(9:30 - 10:00) 3.3 Conclusions, Next Steps, and Resources (slides 67 - 77)
10:00	*15-minute coffee break*	*15-minute coffee break*	*15-minute coffee break*
10:15	*(10:15 - 10:45)* 1.3 Showing the Value of Research Evidence (slides 14 - 19)	(10:15 - 11:45) 2.3 Integrating Learning Activities	(10:15 - 10:30) 3.4 What is SBC?
10:30			
11:00	*(10:45 - 12:00)* 1.4 Addressing the Problem of Time plus Capacity & "Recipe" (slides 20 - 31)		(10:30 - 12:00) 3.5 SBC for Evidence
11:30		(11:15 - 12:00) 2.4 Next Steps	
12:00	*60-minute lunch break*	*60-minute lunch break*	*60-minute lunch break*
1:00	*(1:00 - 2:15)* 1.5 Exploring on our own/Working through an Example (slides 32 - 52)	(1:00 - 1:30) 2.5 Introduction and Framing (slides 1-14)	(1:00 - 2:00) 3.6 SBC for design
1:3		(1:30 - 2:15) 2.6 The Right Evaluation: **RCT**	

0		(slides 15-24)	
2:00	*(2:15 - 2:30)* 1.6 Conclusions, next steps, and resources (slides 52 - 57)	(2:15 - 2:30) 2.6 The Right Evaluation: **Quasi-experimental** (slides 25-45)	(2:00 - 2:30) 3.7 SBC for design
2:30	*15-minute coffee break*	*15-minute coffee break*	*15-minute coffee break*
2:45	(2:45 - 4:00) 1.7 Using Evidence to Inform Theories of Change	(2:45 - 3:30) 2.6 The Right Evaluation: **Quasi-experimental** - continued (slides 25-45)	(2:45 - 3:15) 3.8 Measurement in SBC
3:00		(3:30 - 4:15) 2.6 The Right Evaluation: **Rigorous Performance Evaluation** (slides 46-62)	(3:15 - 3:30) 3.9 SBC Questions and Wrap-Up
3:30			(3:30 - 4:00) 3.10 Bringing it all together/action planning/Additional Resources
4:00	(4:00 - 4:30) 1.8 Day 1 Review, Plus/Delta feedback, Closing thoughts	(4:15 - 4:30) 2.7 Day 2 Review, Plus/Delta feedback, Closing thoughts	(4:00 - 4:30) 3.11 Final evaluation, call to action, final thoughts
4:30	*Day 1 ends (4:30)*	*Day 2 ends (4:30)*	*Day 3 ends (4:30)*

Slides

The slides can be found here as a google slide deck and here as printable handouts

The Learning Digest

Introduction

The Learning Digest aims to provide comprehensive support for designing and implementing programs that effectively align with USAID development objectives. By curating the latest research and insights within Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programmatic areas, these digests serve as valuable resources for our audience, which comprises a diverse range of stakeholders.

The Learning Digest Process

To create an effective Learning Digest, follow these steps:

1. **Identify Objectives**: Focus on how to design and implement programs that achieve specific DRG development goals.
2. **Understand the Audience:** Our primary audience comprises non-academic stakeholders, including USAID's global DRG cadre, external partners such as implementing partners (IPs), think tanks, and academic communities, as well as US domestic participants and host and third country nationals. The central question driving our audience's engagement is, "How can I design and implement programs that effectively achieve DRG development objectives?"
3. **Thematic Focus:** Each Learning Digest is anchored by a specific theme or topic, often linked to current events or notable observances, enhancing reader connection and interest.
4. **Content Structure:**
    a. Outline Template : The content is organized into a structured format, restricted to a maximum of five pages in Google Doc format, inclusive of images.
    b. Main Headlines : Keep headlines concise and impactful (under 10 words) to effectively convey key messages and findings rather than simply detailing topics.
    c. Introduction & Table of Contents : Start with a paragraph introducing the edition's theme and salient messages, accompanied by an auto-generated table of contents based on key message headlines.
    d. Key Message Sections : Present a maximum of three key messages, structured as:
        i. Headline : Craft a captivating title for each section.
        ii. Body Paragraphs : Develop the content cohesively around one primary source or multiple sources that collectively support a central message, limiting the number of references to three links per paragraph.
        iii. Quote/Image : Enrich the sections with at least one quote, image, chart, graph, or infographic that provides deeper insights or clarifies complex subjects.
5. **Events and Resources:** Each edition should conclude with a brief overview of relevant upcoming events associated with the theme. This should include the event title, date, URL, and any available visuals or flyers to provide additional context to the audience.

By following these steps, the Learning Digest can effectively convey meaningful and timely information to its audience, ultimately supporting the realization of USAID's DRG development objectives.

Example Learning Digests:

- **Learning Digest:** An early deliverable

Learning Agenda Development

KEY DOCUMENTS:

DRG Learning Agenda Action Plan_January 2021

DRG Learning Agenda Analysis - 23

2024-2026 DRG Bureau DRG Learning Agenda

Introduction

The Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Learning Agenda was established by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to enhance the evidence base for democracy assistance. The initiative systematically generated and disseminated knowledge through a structured process involving consultations, evaluations, and academic partnerships. The DRG Learning Agenda was developed to address critical questions in governance, human rights, and democratic processes, ensuring that USAID's strategies were informed by rigorous evidence and best practices.

Detailed Description of the Process

2016-2017 Learning Agenda

The first DRG Learning Agenda was developed through a highly consultative and participatory approach:

- Concept Note Development: The initiative began with a concept note to align the Learning Agenda with DRG strategic goals.
- Thematic Team Formation: In 2015, USAID assembled theme-based teams focusing on participation, inclusion, transparency, accountability, human rights, and governance theories.
- Stakeholder Consultation: Approximately 400 stakeholders, including USAID field missions, academics, and practitioners, participated in refining the learning questions through online surveys, focus group discussions, and expert panels.
- Prioritization and Refinement: The Learning Division prioritized and refined key questions based on their relevance, feasibility, and potential impact through a series of iterative reviews and validation workshops.
- Technical Areas of Focus: The primary focus areas included strategies for civic engagement, mechanisms for promoting transparency and accountability, and approaches to strengthening human rights and democratic institutions.
- Implementation: Evidence reviews, field research, and impact evaluations were conducted, with findings disseminated through public reports, webinars, and infographics.

2021-2023 Learning Agenda

The DRG Learning Agenda is a set of learning questions in strategic areas for which the DRG Center intends to organize existing data, generate new evidence, and produce conclusions and recommendations through academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of the assumptions and theories of change that guide DRG programming. The current 2021-23 Learning Agenda builds upon the 2016 and 2017 Learning Agenda. A retrospective study of the learning agenda found 16 of the 20 learning questions were categorized as completed, identified more than 100 documents that addressed the learning questions[1] and produced a series of infographic summaries of the findings. Process findings from the learning agenda initiative were integrated into the formulation process including decreasing the number of learning questions, increasing the length of time for the learning agenda and ensuring multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

[1] This includes research that may not have been explicitly commissioned for the learning agenda and includes the full range of documents produced including derivative learning products such as executive summaries or infographics.

Formulation Process

The agenda has three tracks: cross-cutting, process and DRG Center Team. The cross-cutting track addresses questions related to topics that apply to multiple DRG program areas (such as civil society and governance). Process track questions will address questions on how we learn and apply evidence within the DRG sector and DRG Center Team specific questions will address topics within specific DRG Program Areas.

Questions were formulated through a robust and inclusive four-phase process: (1) identify the most strategic areas of inquiry, (2) develop questions, (3) refine the questions and (4) deliberate and select the most relevant questions.

Cross-cutting questions were formulated through a set of Theme Teams. Each theme team is composed of a Theme Team Lead and members that include DRG Center and DRG Cadre staff and averages around 10 individuals. Each team has included team members from DRG Center teams, Mission staff that expressed interest and the Agency Anti-Corruption Taskforce as appropriate. First, we solicited from within the DRG Center topics of potential inclusion under the cross-cutting track. Following this, each Theme Team developed a User Canvas to identify the main area of inquiry and user and use case. Each Theme Team then underwent a process of deliberation using previous evidence as a reference point to come up with potential questions.

Following this, a series of conversations took place to refine and prioritize the ideas, including opportunities for live and asynchronous feedback. We engaged the DRG Cadre and received 49 responses across the draft learning questions. The Theme Teams reviewed and addressed the comments. For example, the Opening up Democratic Spaces Theme Team revised the question and rationale to better specify the connection with civil society and media and refine the question to be more succinct and clear. Each question has been developed to be at the 'middle-level' addressing key assumptions and elements of our generalized theories of change about DRG programming under each respective theme. Additional context is provided in the DRG Learning Agenda Brief.

Learning Questions

Below are the learning questions developed for the Cross-cutting and Process tracks.

Cross Cutting Questions				**Process**
Opening up Democratic Spaces	**Information Ecosystem**	**Anti-Corruption**	**Integrating Inclusion**	
What are the most effective interventions focused on public institutions to reverse democratic backsliding and/or support greater democratization?	What factors and dynamics foster -- and build resilience to -- the proliferation of disinformation, misinformation and/or malinformation?	How should USAID foster anti-corruption reform in contexts where "political will" is weak?	What donor-assisted interventions can we use to change entrenched norms holding individuals and groups such as youth, women and girls back from engaging politically and why?	How do Missions integrate DRG evidence into programming and how can evidence use be supported?

2024-2026 Learning Agenda

Background

The DRG Learning Agenda is a set of learning questions in strategic areas for which the DRG Bureau intends to organize existing data, generate new evidence, and produce conclusions and recommendations through academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of the assumptions and theories of change that guide DRG programming. The proposed 2024-2026 Learning Agenda builds upon past work of the 2021-2023, 2016 and 2017 Learning Agendas. Learning Agenda priorities and questions will focus on topics and issues that apply to multiple DRG program areas (such as civil society and governance) or represent new or emerging opportunities or challenges affecting the DRG field and align with areas of focus contained in the forthcoming DRG policy.

Past Learning

The past learning agendas had a number of priorities, questions, and activities over the years and attempted to address big-picture questions that touched on multiple DRG Program Areas. The topics have evolved over time but have focused on themes such as Participation/Inclusion, Transparency and

Accountability, Human Rights, Theories of Democratic Change to our most recent questions on Information Integrity, Countering Corruption, Inclusion of Women in Political Processes and Opening Up Democratic Spaces.

We know from our own research published in 2018 that our effectiveness has declined during this period of democratic backsliding. We also know that there are diminishing marginal effects for larger levels of DRG assistance. The research also demonstrated democracy aid has a small but statistically significant impact: $10 million in aid raises democracy score by 0.3 points (out of 100); this effect has attenuated over time, democracy aid was more effective before 2001 (7 point increase) compared to the period up to 2017.

But at the same time, research suggests that DRG investment has a greater effect when: levels of prior investment are lower, investments are stable, and investments are concentrated in one or two DRG program areas. An additional million dollars produces greater impact when it is allocated to a single area than when it is spread across multiple program areas. While Good Governance programs had positive effects on democracy outcomes, Political Competition and Electoral programs had a negative impact. We also know context matters: democracy aid works better in contexts with low security aid, moderate democracy levels, stable countries, and places that are ethnically homogenous. DRG support must therefore be strategic in scope and built with long-term goals in mind. We know from our theories of change work that democratic change is a complex process influenced by multiple factors. These include political leadership, culture, institutions, economy, social structure, international relations, and triggering events. Apparent democratic reforms can sometimes be a facade for maintaining authoritarian control.

Past DRG Learning Agenda learning has revealed the importance of forming domestic alliances as the lowest-risk strategy, the limitations of political information which alone may not be sufficient to spark citizen participation, the importance that awareness campaigns use targeted framing and the combination of traditional and new media, how grassroots reforms are considered more likely to succeed when defended by broad coalitions with autonomy from state authorities, and that parliamentary systems often provide a better foundation for post-conflict or authoritarian settings due to their emphasis on power-sharing.

More recent work on the 2021-2023 DRG Learning Agenda has focused on how to resist democratic backsliding, effective information integrity interventions, and successful approaches to reducing corruption in low political will environments. A summary of this recent learning is below:

Learning Theme	**Main Findings**
What do we know about how to resist democratic backsliding?	Recent democratic declines are increasingly driven internally by elected leaders consolidating power rather than external threats. Researchers identified three primary types of backsliding: executive aggrandizement (most common), exclusionary nationalism, and elite collusion. Different tactics - using either societal resistance, institutional resistance and/or electoral contestation - are needed to counter each type. DRG program designers must accurately diagnose

	the specific threat to tailor effective responses and prevent unintended consequences. Check out the Literature Review, Executive Summary of Case Study Report, and the Full Case Study report.
What interventions are effective at addressing Information Integrity	Strong evidence in the Global North and South for certain interventions such as prebunking and inoculation, mixed evidence for media literacy, and opportunities to integrate frictions/reflection prompts in programming. The review also identified promising practices on how to improve the effectiveness of media literacy interventions, noting that: • Interventions are more effective for individuals with more education and digital literacy, when coupled with interventions that appeal to emotions, norms, group attachments. • Intensive interventions are not more effective than light-touch interventions, and both types of interventions rarely produce longer-term or durable outcomes. Check out the full Literature Review and the Research Database. In addition, the IIR Program Review and the NPI IIR Mapping Study (forthcoming)
What works to address corruption in low political will environments?	Using a political economy lens tied with a sectoral strategy was recommended. This includes identifying and exploiting opportunities within a specific sector with the end goal of improving sector-level policy outcomes championed by the country's leadership (e.g., improved education or health) while in the process also reducing corruption, rather than pursuing anti-corruption as an end in itself. Four programmatic approaches are particularly attractive for these sectorally-focused efforts: transparency initiatives, social audits, e-governance reforms, and procurement reforms. In addition, a study of four cases finds that even when little political opportunity exists in the present, building a reform coalition with access to information and resources may enable reformers to exploit future windows of opportunity. Check out the infographic and full report.

Alignment with DRG Policy

The DRG Policy identifies three main "Focus Areas" for prioritizing the Bureau's evidence and learning efforts that were

incorporated into the initial draft learning priorities. These Policy Focus Areas are addressing needs and filling gaps, understanding dynamics beyond why an intervention works and for whom and understanding what contributes to democratic resilience. Please see Annex 1 below for more details on how the learning priorities align with the DRG Policy.

Overall Process

The 2024-2026 DRG Learning Agenda will be conducted with three phases over three years.

Beginning in December 2023, the Evidence and Learning (EL) team launched a strategic engagement phase to solicit feedback from implementing partners, bilateral donors and philanthropies. The strategic engagement phase informs the development of learning priorities, questions, and activities and involves other internal and external stakeholders. We held three sessions with implementing partners attended by more than 115 non-USAID participants, held more than ten meetings with bilateral donors and philanthropic foundations and conducted an analysis of themes in stakeholder reports and notes, CDCS learning priorities and analysis of evidence gaps. During the 2024 Annual Learning Forum, the EL team held a consultation session with a mixed audience of USAID and implementing partners. Following an internal process of sharing back the learning priorities during a session on May 1, 2024, with DRG Bureau staff members and DRG Cadre, the EL team developed a set of relevant learning questions taking into account feedback received.

Following finalization of the learning priorities and questions, the EL team will pivot to an implementation phase, when the research will be commissioned and conducted. Implementation will run from Summer 2024 to Fall 2025.

In late 2025, the learning agenda will enter a dissemination phase designed to strategically disseminate findings and integrate the new evidence into Bureau learning products and trainings. Dissemination of individual products will be rolled as the deliverables are completed. But this period running from late 2025 to the end of 2026 will provide an intentional and systematic way to roll out and share the learning agenda products.

The EL team will also support the dissemination of these learnings through a variety of channels, including:

- Interagency Learning Workshop in Fall 2024
- Annual Learning Forum in 2025 and 2026
- Integration into existing communication channels including Facty Fridays, Learning Digests, Fireside Chats, and DRG Bureau-level communications along with social media
- Curation on DRGLinks and other platforms
- Integration into DRG Bureau trainings, including EL specific sessions
- Additional convenings with external stakeholders identified through the strategic engagement phase.

Strategic Choices:

The DRG Bureau, including PLI, is not bound by the learning agenda; we can continue to conduct evidence, evaluation, and learning around sub-sector, specific activity evaluations, special studies or analyses outside the scope of the learning agenda. This work ideally, where relevant, can be integrated into the learning agenda and be presented as such. For example, evidence, learning and research conducted under the auspices of the ACC Learning Agenda, PIDR Learning Activities and other DRG Bureau efforts funded separately can be integrated into the DRG Bureau 2024-2026 Learning Agenda. For more information on how the learning priorities and questions relate to other learning and evidence, refer to this rack-up.

We chose to prioritize:

- **Policy-focused**: We focused on priorities and questions that address specific focus areas contained in the DRG Policy. The draft DRG Policy identified three main "Focus Areas" for prioritizing the Bureau's evidence and learning efforts which were incorporated into the initial draft learning priorities. These Policy Focus Areas are[2]:
    - **Address Needs / Fill Gaps:** *Align its investments in learning with new and emerging DRG topics and fill critical gaps in knowledge*: "Emerging focal areas for DRG work, such as information manipulation, democratic climate action, and transnational corruption, require accompanying investment in learning…"
    - **How, Why, and Whom?:** *Move learning beyond "what works" to "why it works" and "for whom."*: "...DRG learning will seek to understand why an intervention worked (or did not) in a particular context, and identify the key programmatic and contextual factors to its effectiveness."
    - **Democratic Resilience***: Learn about contributions to democratic resilience over time, from all development sectors*: "...we do not know enough about what factors underpin democratic resilience, or which investments across sectors translate over time into a stronger democracy."
- **Data-driven**: Wherever possible, understand where the evidence gaps are and use existing data including Operational Plan data to select where we should be funding learning investments.
- **Leverage existing evidence**: Following the commissioning of six evidence maps, we understand what high quality quantitative and qualitative research exists, but we are not harnessing and applying it. PLI plans on focusing on where the existing evidence is present but not well understood or well applied. We aim to summarize and synthesize it in formats that promote its use in DRG programming.

However, consciously chose **NOT** to prioritize:

- **Democratic Backsliding**: We are focusing on openings not backsliding. Recent work on democratic backsliding has included the DRG Learning Agenda work from 2017 and DRG Learning Agenda work from 2021-23. In addition, work funded by the UK FCDO on backsliding and Swiss SDC focuses on operating in such contexts. Work from the Democratic Erosion

[2] For a complete rationale of how each of these learning priorities align with these focus areas, please see Annex 1 below.

Consortium includes a set of briefers that are forthcoming on topics including polarization. Additional academic work is increasingly focused on this topic. However, we know based on recent research that there is an "asymmetric relationship between democracy aid and the dynamics of political processes. Democracy aid appears to be more effective at supporting ongoing democratization (upturns) than at halting ongoing democratic backsliding (downturns)."[3] We know from our own research that our effectiveness has declined during this period of democratic backsliding. Given these reasons, USAID/DRG's comparative advantage is focusing on the topic not receiving much current focus—openings–-not democratic backsliding.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Under the last DRG Learning Agenda, we explored the use of digital tools by autocrats. Now, the Agency has a separate AI Action Plan and AI Research and Learning Agenda and there is a training session focused on the topic by GTT. In addition, the field is evolving and a plethora of research and analytical content is likely in the profit and non-profit sectors and as such USAID/DRG does not have a comparative advantage in the space.
- **Information Integrity:** Information integrity and resilience or information manipulation is considered one of the core challenges for DRG work. Lack of trustworthy information creates challenges for free and fair elections, threatens social cohesion, exasperates polarization, and foments conflict through hate speech and other types of harmful speech directed at women and marginalized populations. Recent work on this topic has included the DRG Learning Agenda work from 2021-23 that produced an extensive research database and evidence review. This work has already led to independently produced briefers on media literacy. There remains some uncertainty about what works and how to best design programs and activities that will make a difference. USAID should increase resources for a broad set of monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning approaches for information integrity related activities to expand the evidence base on what works, and consider funding multi-project evaluations to expand the evidence base for priority activity areas. However, this remains outside of the scope of the learning agenda. In addition, more formal research on the topic is an active area of interest among academic institutions and continued focus among the private sector, USAID/DRG does not have a comparative advantage in the space.

Learning Questions and Illustrative Activities

The learning questions are intended to focus on areas of work where we can maximize the impact of our learning investments by ensuring they have broad applicability across a range of DRG Program Areas. Below are the draft learning priorities, questions, and activities developed for the DRG Learning Agenda. To review the overlay between these specific DRG Learning Agenda priorities and questions, ACC learning agenda questions, PIDR learning activities, and the Agency Learning Agenda, see this rack up.

[3] Niño-Zarazúa, Miguel, Ana Horigoshi, and Rachel M. Gisselquist. "Aid's Impact on Democracy", WIDER Working Paper 2022/15 Helsinki: UNU-WIDER, 2022. https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2022/146-4.

Priority	Question/s	Next Steps	Illustrative Learning Activities
What works: What works and what doesn't work in commonly implemented DRG interventions?	What works and what doesn't work in commonly implemented interventions? For whom do they work? How do they work and what contextual and programmatic factors contribute to effectiveness? To what extent do different training modalities (e.g., in-person workshops, online modules, blended learning) impact the knowledge acquisition, skill development, and	The EL Team has preliminarily identified and prioritized the four themes present across all six DRG program areas based on its analysis of Mission learning priorities, evidence clusters in the six DRG Evidence Maps, and qualitative feedback from internal and external stakeholders. For more information on the themes see Annex 2. Common interventions that emerged included: reforms of state institutions, monitoring and oversight of government, provision of direct support to CSOs, community	Commission approx. four evidence reviews

	self-reported preparedness of potential DRG recipients, considering factors such as prior experience, learning styles, and access to technology?	engagement, and participatory processes. The next step would be to validate this analysis and select the exact topics for the evidence reviews. In addition, the widespread use of training modalities validated by stakeholder feedback presents an opportunity to inform a wide swathe of DRG activities.	
Democratic Resilience: What activities across development sectors work to contribute to democratic resilience?[4]	How do activities across non-DRG development sectors positively or negatively influence democratic outcomes,	We will commission a literature review focused on evidence in certain other development sectors driven by where there is the greatest overlap with DRG outcomes.	DRG Policy Cross-Sectoral Literature Review and Case Studies Democratic Innovations Lab Study: A comparative study of democratic

[4] In the absence of a USAID definition to the term democratic resilience, we draw on the work by International IDEA that states that democratic resilience is the property of a society to adapt to, withstand and recover from democratic backsliding; this process often involves flexibility, recovery, adaptation and innovation.

	institutions, and processes? What are key contextual and programmatic factors that mediate this relationship? How do emergent democratic practices and innovations vary in their design, implementation, and effectiveness in promoting citizen participation, political inclusion, and government responsiveness in different social and political contexts? What types of influence do external authoritarian powers exert on democratic	We will also explore using the same tools to achieve our goals but what systems level levers exist to alter the course of a country's democratic trajectory. The next step would be to determine the appropriate study methodology and specific research questions This question will explore the types of influence that are distinct from capabilities and refers to actual impact on target states behavior. This question may explore topics including the contrast between authoritarian learning from authoritarian influence and their	innovations Individual study focused on both academic and gray literature along with qualitative case studies or alternatively weaving topic into other planned learning activities.

	processes and institutions? How can this be identified, mitigated and addressed through our programming?	intersection including alternative models of development such as the PRC. The question will consider whether the PRC model requires specific analytic and programmatic attention	
Democratic Openings: What opportunities and challenges do democratic openings present and how can USAID best respond to them?	How can USAID collaborate with local actors and institutions including governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to maximize the impact of their efforts in response to democratic openings? How does this differ by social, economic and cultural context? To what extent do external actors, such as international organizations or foreign governments, influence democratic transitions during periods of opening?	We are more effective in openings than backsliding, running with the grain not against it. But we do not really understand how best to leverage democratic openings even when they happen. We need to learn the lessons of the past to ensure that democratic openings in the future occur on more solid footing and can endure. The next step would be to determine the appropriate study methodology and	Two literature reviews / studies with one activity starting in late 2024 and one in late 2025. The second question may be combined with the question under democratic resilience to take advantage of overlaps. Additional focus could be on the role of supporting key actors during closed/closing spaces and political polarization to support openings.

	How have past USAID interventions addressed democratic openings in various countries, and what lessons can be learned from these experiences?	specific research questions.	
Improve Evidence Use: What are the most effective approaches and modalities to deliver DRG assistance?	How can non-traditional modalities to DRG programming including co-creation, G2G, and multi-donor funded approaches be leveraged to develop localized and culturally appropriate modalities for delivering DRG assistance that effectively address the specific needs and capacities of different communities?	The Agency has continued to explore a wide variety of modalities and these have been increasingly used to design and implement DRG programs. Understanding how to conduct development diplomacy will require DRG officers going beyond our current model that commonly forms the bulk of our DRG activities. This work would likely build on the contextual and experiential evidence available along with any relevant research	Localization & Co-Creation Outcomes / Process Study / DRG Learning Agenda Outcomes Study

	For three most significant learnings identified by DRG MEL Experts, what results have been achieved, how many learnings have been implemented at scale, why or why not, what needs to be done to replicate these best practices?	evidence. The next step is identifying the appropriate modality whether one-off study or learning activities. USAID has had a DRG Learning Agenda for almost a decade. While it has produced a number of significant evidence and learning, the uptake and use of evidence and learning requires proactive outreach, dissemination and support to ensure that DRG practitioners inside and outside the Agency apply and benefit from the evidence and learning from the learning agenda.	

Next Steps

We will conduct the following next steps:

- Integrate any feedback from the Front Office
- Send questions to bureau for feedback and brief at an all staff and share the questions broadly in the bureau
- We will share the final learning priorities and questions with the DRG Bureau, DRG Cadre, and others engaged with the strategic engagement phase to influence others' agendas as well
- We will initiate taskings to begin work via LER III with FY23 obligated funds; if fall out funds are available, additional work could be commissioned such as evidence reviews.
- Following the finalization of the DRG Learning Agenda, we plan on developing an infographic to detail the DRG Learning Agenda priorities and questions and host an interagency session to share our priorities and questions.
- In early 2025, we plan on using these learning priorities and questions to inform the structure and agenda of the next Annual Learning Forum.

Annex 1: **DRG Policy Learning Alignment**

These areas are aligned with a set of higher order learning priorities. Below you will find the rationale for how each learning priority relates to the DRG Policy Learning Focus Areas.

Learning Priority	**Address Needs / Fill Gaps**	**How, Why and Whom?**	**Democratic Resilience**
What works in key, commonly implemented DRG interventions? How does it work? What factors contribute to the effectiveness?	This will build on past DRG Learning Agenda work including the Evidence Maps to understand what evidence exists and potentially fill gaps in knowledge	Work under this priority will aim to address how the intervention achieves the outcomes and untangle differing effects of interventions by groups	This work will build on understanding the role DRG outcomes have on the broader theme of democratic resilience.
What works to contribute to democratic resilience across development sectors? How does it work? What factors contribute to the effectiveness?	This will address a key gap in knowledge following the pivots articulated in the DRG Policy focused on the role of other development sectors in DRG outcomes.	This question explicitly aims to uncover the modalities and ways that mechanisms between development sectors work and will include the end stakeholder involved.	This question focuses exclusively on the theme of democratic resilience
What opportunities and challenges do democratic openings present and how can USAID best respond to them?	This priority will aim to build evidence and learning on democratic openings that will influence DRG programs	This will address "what factors" influence the topics covered under this learning priority. It will also aim to understand the dynamics at play in openings.	The question addresses democratic resilience through trying to understand what works in democratic openings.

What are the most effective modalities to deliver DRG assistance?	This will focus on addressing the ways that DRG programming is conducted across multiple Program Areas and aim to identify niches that meet multiple themes and topics identified during the formulation process.		While not explicitly covering democratic resilience, the learning questions under this priority will aim to focus on topics of strategic concern that support democratic resilience.

Lessons Learned

1. Positive Culture Changes

The Learning Agenda fostered a culture of reflection, encouraging staff to integrate evidence-based approaches into program design and implementation.

2. Importance of Leadership Support

Sustained leadership commitment was critical in maintaining momentum and ensuring that findings were translated into action.

3. Challenge of Consistency

Ensuring consistent engagement and follow-through over multiple years required dedicated institutional support and adaptable frameworks.

4. Active Staff Engagement

Regular interaction with USAID staff and stakeholders led to higher ownership and application of learning insights in program design.

5. Bridging Academia and Practice

By involving scholars from diverse disciplines, the initiative successfully connected academic research with practical implementation strategies.

6. Interdisciplinary Approach

Utilizing insights from political science, sociology, economics, and psychology enriched the depth and applicability of research findings.

7. Managing the Number of Questions

Streamlining learning questions and extending the timeline for addressing them allowed for more in-depth exploration and better resource allocation.

8. Effective Use of Mixed Methods

Combining qualitative and quantitative research enhanced the robustness and applicability of findings.

Annual Learning Forum

The DRG Annual Learning Forum is a crucial gathering where practitioners can connect, learn, and ultimately enhance the impact of their work. We'll examine the latest evidence, share best practices, and collectively refine our approaches to ensure our DRG programming is data-driven, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

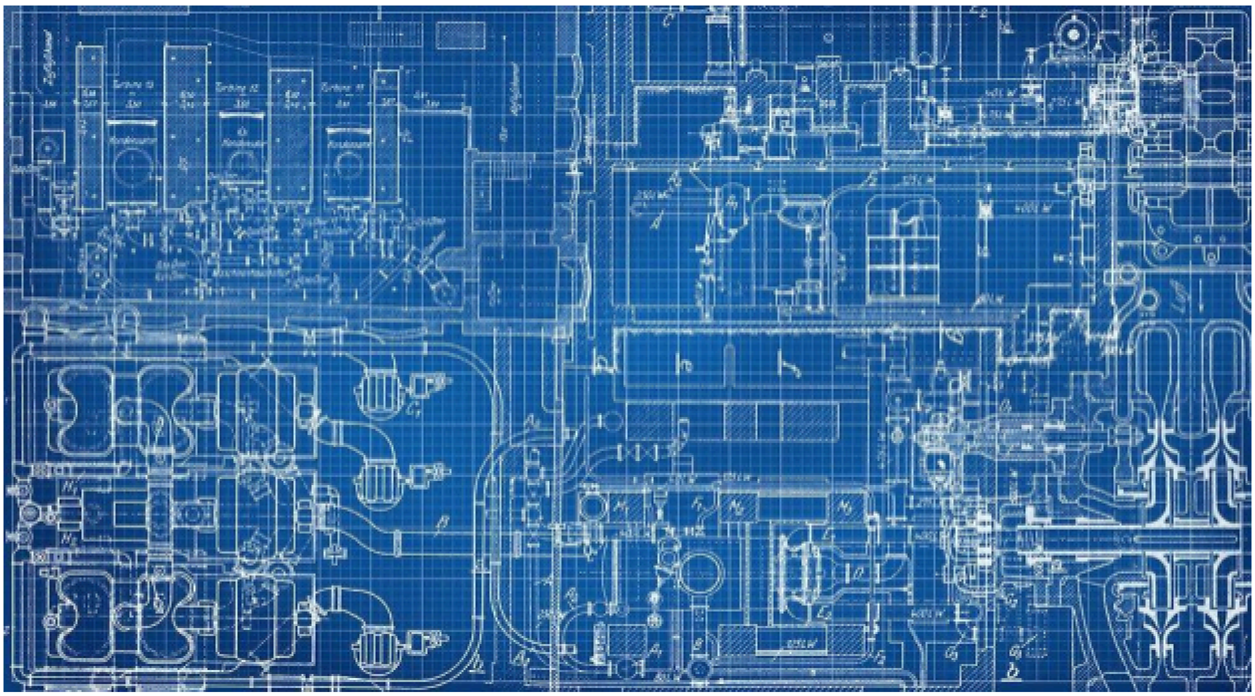
We have conducted this every year.

We developed a Findings and Process Track to share the key evidence and learning

Intra Agency Convening

APPENDIX:

LEARNING AGENDA INFORMED DOCUMENT



INFORMED:
Learning Question Formulation
in Eight Steps

Purpose

Why read me?

This document provides an overview of the eight steps that comprise the INFORMED approach to formulating learning questions and provides detailed instructions and resources on how to operationalize these steps. It is a step by step guide to help users formulate learning questions in a systematic and intentional way via three options for tailoring your formulation process to your needs and resources.

What is a learning question?

According to the ADS 201: "Learning questions are specific, answerable, need-to-know questions that can be answered through monitoring, evaluation, research, or other analysis to address learning priorities incrementally. Several learning questions can cluster under a single learning priority and can contribute to a broader Learning Agenda or plan."

What is a Learning Agenda?

According to the ADS 201: "A systematic plan for identifying and addressing critical learning priorities and knowledge gaps through answering priority questions relevant to the programs, policies, and regulations of an Agency or at the sub-agency level. Learning agendas should articulate critical questions, how to address them, and how to use the resulting evidence. More broadly, a Learning Agenda is a coordination tool for engaging stakeholders in evidence planning and building."

Learning agendas can be developed at different levels: activity, project, technical office, across a Mission, region, sector, or USAID. While there can be considerable overlap in questions, activity, project, and Mission-level Learning Agenda questions should be more embedded in and related to a specific context, while regional, sector, and agency level questions should be generalizable. Missions, for instance, could ask broad questions like what interventions are best suited to address a given DRG challenge, but ideally they would coordinate with sector and regional counterparts in asking and answering these questions to ensure learning is shared.

Overview

The INFORMED approach consists of eight simple steps grouped into three phases of work which can often be completed together and concurrently if necessary.

Phase	Step
DIAGNOSE	**I**dentify the learning priorities or gaps that learning questions will address.
	Narrow down which type of learning question is applicable and appropriate.
	Figure out who will use the information and evidence generated.
DEVELOP	**O**rganize and take stock of existing learning questions and organize ideation sessions to brainstorm additional learning questions if appropriate.
	Review and reduce your learning questions by grouping/categorizing them to consolidate overlapping areas, simplifying their focus and prioritizing their importance.
	Make sure to validate and quality check the prioritized, grouped and/or short-list of learning questions.
DECIDE	**E**lect final learning question/s and revisit and/or develop a formal use case for final selected learning question/s
	Determine an appropriate learning or research activity and draft a short action plan to address learning question

Each step of the INFORMED approach has a distinct question and related resource.

I	**Identify learning priorities**	What do we need to know more about?	Learning Inquiry Source Worksheet

N	**Narrow the user and use case**	Who and how will they/we use information and evidence generated?	Use Case Summary Template
F	**Figure out learning question type**	What type of question would be most useful?	**Question Type Resource and Decision Chart**
O	**Organize brainstorming for new questions**	What learning questions address our needs?	Use Learning Question-1 of Learning Question Workbook B
R	**Review and reduce by simplifying, consolidating and prioritizing learning questions**	What are the most critical learning questions to address our needs?	Use Learning Question-2 of Learning Question Workbook B
M	**Make sure to validate and quality check questions**	How can we improve, validate and vet our learning questions?	**Learning Question Checklist**
E	**Elect final learning questions**	Which learning question/s should we select to address?	Use Learning Question_4 of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook B
D	**Decide and determine appropriate learning activities and related action plans**	How will we address the learning question?	Question Action Plan Template

Read the following guide that details the key question each step addresses, the task that the step is achieving, related resources and tips.

While each distinct step can be handled in the proposed sequential fashion, in practice it may make sense to address multiple steps concurrently in order to account for changing information and context. This can be particularly useful as plans are shared with colleagues and leadership which could necessitate changes across more than one step. If steps need to be consolidated and merged into concise convenings, please see these suggested facilitation ideas.

When do I use this?

These steps can be used in a myriad of ways to tailor the resources and needs of a team or Mission. This document outlines a comprehensive way to formulate learning questions as a part of a Learning Agenda initiative. But the steps can also be condensed to produce learning questions for a learning plan or while developing learning questions or a Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning Plan for a strategy, project or activity.

How do I do this?

The table below provides an overview of the eight steps that comprise the INFORMED approach to formulating learning questions and provides examples of how to operationalize each step based on low, medium and high levels of complexity. These roughly correspond to the level of effort required. The document divides up options between low complexity/level of effort, medium complexity/level of effort and high complexity/level of effort. However, the exact formulation process should be tailored to your specific needs and could combine elements from these three tiers depending on the specific needs and use case of the learning questions. The table flags two important tools to improve the quality and utility of the learning questions you are developing that occur during the Diagnose and Develop stages.

Table 1: Options to Implement INFORMED approach

Phase	Step	*Low*	*Medium*	*High*
DIAGNOSE	**I**dentify the areas of inquiry to focus on generating learning questions.	Confirm and document the area of inquiry and the use case	Conduct consultations / preparatory work to identify and confirm learning priorities Use this Learning Inquiry Source Worksheet to document as appropriate.	Conduct formal meetings to identify and confirm learning priorities. For instance, facilitate a meeting/convening to ideate and identify areas of inquiry, identify appropriate learning question type and use case. Following meeting/convening, share and validate with relevant stakeholders Use this Learning Inquiry Source Worksheet to document
	Figure out who will use the information and evidence generated.		Use the Use Case Summary Template to document if appropriate. Share and validate with relevant stakeholders as needed.	Use either the Use Case Summary Template, a more detailed spreadsheet addressing key user design questions, or the User Canvas to complete and document a comprehensive user case. Share and validate

				with relevant stakeholders as needed.
	Narrow down which type of learning question is applicable and appropriate	***Review the Question Type Resource and Decision Chart and select the most appropriate type of learning question***		
		Complete above step.	Following the above step, share with a small group of stakeholders for validation.	Following the above step, validate the question type/s through a meeting, survey or other modality. Use Learning Question_3 tab of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook
DEVELOP	**Organize** brainstorming for new questions and if applicable collate existing sources of learning questions	Generate new questions and review existing sources as needed.	Individual work to review existing sources, reach out to relevant stakeholders to identify relevant sources. Facilitate a meeting or convening to review and group existing sources, and/or ideate, identity and group new areas of inquiry. There may need to be multiple meetings to complete this step.	Individual work to review existing sources, reach out to relevant stakeholders to identify relevant sources. Facilitate a meeting or convening to review and group existing sources, and/or ideate, identity and group new areas of inquiry. There may need to be multiple meetings to complete this step. Use Learning Question-1 of Learning Question Workbook to document the process and outputs.

	Review and reduce your learning questions by grouping/categorizing them to consolidate overlapping areas, simplifying their focus and prioritizing their importance.	Individual work to consolidate and simplify learning questions.	Individual work to consolidate, simplify and prioritize learning questions. Share with relevant stakeholders for feedback and comment.	Individual work to consolidate, simplify and prioritize learning questions. Share with relevant stakeholders for meeting preparation. Facilitate a meeting or convening to review preliminary categorization, validate and consolidate. Additional meetings may be needed to determine a final prioritization of learning questions. Use Learning Question-2 of Learning Question Workbook to document the process and outputs.
	Make sure to validate and quality check the prioritized, grouped and/or short-list of learning questions	***Use the Learning Question Checklist to review, refine and improve the learning question wording***		
		Complete above step.	Following the above step, work to review and quality check the learning questions with relevant colleagues. Share with a small group of stakeholders for validation.	Facilitate a meeting or convening to workshop and refine learning question by applying the learning question criteria. Use Learning Question_3 of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook to document process and record outputs.

DECIDE	**E**lect final learning question/s and revisit and/or develop a formal use case for final selected learning question/s	Select learning questions and share for review / clearance as appropriate.	Select learning questions and share with a small group of stakeholders for validation and feedback.	Organize and facilitate a leadership meeting / consultations to choose learning question. Use Learning Question_4 of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook to document process and record outputs
	Determine an appropriate learning or research activity and draft a short action plan to address learning question	Select an appropriate learning activity and task.	Individual work to determine relevant activity and share final action plan with a small group of stakeholders for comments and validation.	Individual work to determine relevant activity and draft final action plan. Facilitate a meeting or convening to review the action plan document/s. Use the Question Action Plan Template to document and detail plan. Consider a learning plan product that details the process used, final learning questions, associated learning activities and/or products. The document could include a change log to note changes. Share final products with relevant colleagues.

The resources listed in this document can be found in Workbook A and Workbook B.

Formulation Steps

The following section presents the eight steps involved in the INFORMED approach.

Identify learning priorities

? **Key question step addresses**

What do we need to know more about?

Task

Clarify the areas of inquiry and learning priorities that you intend to focus on when generating learning questions. Areas of inquiry can draw on emerging patterns, cross cutting themes, critical assumptions and risks and knowledge gaps in the existing evidence base. It is critical at this point and throughout the formulation process to scan the literature to ensure that your questions are not addressed by existing work. If learning questions are addressed already, there is still a role for dissemination and utilization focused products and convenings.

Areas to focus on at the strategy, project and activity level could be the following:

Diagnosis

- Important sectoral knowledge gaps related to your programming

Design

- High probability/high risk assumptions that we need to pay attention to within your theory of change or theory of action

Implementation

- Context shifts that may influence achieving our results or creating new opportunities for impact
- Feedback from end users on our performance
- Negative consequences - intended and unintended - of your work

Evaluation

- Processes behind programming that contribute to achieving results
- Feedback from end users on our performance
- Negative consequences - intended and unintended - of your work

This is especially important for Learning Agendas that are cross-cutting, involve multiple teams or equities and/or are focused on addressing a question that is focused not on a specific intervention but on a type of intervention or group of similar interventions.

It is often useful to validate and vet learning priorities with external stakeholders including end beneficiaries in order to ensure that the learning priority is appropriate, relevant and actionable.

Resources

Learning Inquiry Source Worksheet

Tip

If designing a project or activity the area of inquiry would be the specific intervention or set of interventions

Narrow the user and use case

? **Key question step addresses**

Who and how will they/we use the information and evidence generated?

Task

Narrow and define who and how will the information and evidence generated be used and/or applied. It is useful to understand and explicitly articulate the purpose and use of information generated by any learning questions. This can drive the way a learning question is formulated or the way a learning activity is implemented and how and with whom information and evidence is shared and disseminated.

The key questions to address are:

- Who is the information for?
- What are you/they trying to learn?
- How will the information be used/applied?
- Who should be involved in this process?
- In order to be useful, by when would this information be needed?

Resources

Use Case Summary Template - a simple and short template to detail use cases

User Canvas - a comprehensive document to detail information regarding the use case; this is a complementary resource when there are potential obstacles to learning use.

Tip

If you are struggling to identify a use case, consider dropping the question.

Figure out learning question type

? **Key question step addresses**

What type of question would be most useful?

Task

Review learning question type and determine which one is appropriate and relevant to your needs.

Resources

Question Type Resource and Decision Chart - to understand the different learning question types and how to decide which one is appropriate

Tip

It is beneficial to often have a mix of different types of learning questions to address multiple needs.

Organize ideation sessions for new questions

? Key question step addresses

What learning questions address our needs?

Task

If applicable and appropriate, compile and review existing learning questions

Compile a list of potential questions from existing sources. This can take the form of taking stock of previous questions that may have already been asked. Often there exist questions from evaluations, learning events or reports that can be used as a starting point to identify and cluster areas of interest. Theories of change can be a useful starting point to understand gaps in knowledge or assumptions that are made that can be rewritten as learning questions. In other cases, new knowledge exists but is not well known or internalized by stakeholders.

Brainstorm learning questions

Decide on how to structure and sequence brainstorming sessions. Either remote or in-person sessions such as brainstorming, surveys, or ideation workshops can be held with key stakeholders to produce a list of questions. These sessions can validate an existing list of questions but also allow space to generate new learning questions.

Define key terms and learning question rationale

In order to avoid multiple or conflicting interpretations of learning questions, it can be useful to define key terms and supplement a learning question with a short narrative explaining its rationale and what it is trying to address.

Resources

Learning Agenda Inventory; Learning Question Formulation Spreadsheet; See CLA Toolkit section on Engaging Stakeholders for methods and approaches to engage with stakeholders.

Tip

It can be useful to offer multiple and different opportunities to engage in validation and question development. Examples include providing for a remote solution through a Google Document or survey or holding in person facilitated workshops. This allows for the need to accommodate others' schedules and provide ample entry points. During the course of these sessions, learning questions may be rewritten or reframed; often it is best to leave wordsmithing to last and ask users to focus on the area of inquiry rather spending time on the particular question wording; however, sometimes wordsmithing is a necessary evil in order to obtain participation.

Review and reduce learning questions by grouping, simplifying and prioritizing

? **Key question step addresses**

What are the most critical learning questions to address our needs?

Task

Review and reduce your learning questions by grouping/categorizing them to consolidate overlapping areas, simplifying their focus and prioritizing their importance. Following these steps, it is helpful to produce a list of initial questions. Since the number of questions can be quite large, it can be helpful to categorize and cluster questions by a shared topic or theme. This can help to identify gaps of areas of inquiry as well as which topics are of most interest to users and decision-makers. In order to group, it can be useful to define any key terms and the interpretation of questions so that there is clarity around what the learning question is intended to address. If time permits, it can be useful to review the user and use case to ensure the learning questions address their needs.

Resources

Learning Question Coding Matrix - to identify common or overlapping learning questions

Tip

It can be useful to review your use case in order to inform the grouping and prioritization process to ensure that critical needs are addressed.

Make sure to validate and quality check learning questions

? Key question step addresses

How can we improve, validate and vet our learning questions?

Task

Review the appropriateness of each learning question based on utility, focus, feasibility, and inclusivity. See the Learning Question Checklist for more details.

When determining the feasibility of the learning question it can be helpful to preliminarily identify the learning activity or activities that could address the question. For example, the learning activity could entail a literature review, systematic review, gap map, evaluation, assessment, etc. Check out the DRG L menu of services.

Restate, if necessary, learning questions to capture overlapping or similar areas of inquiry.

If necessary, prioritize learning questions again.

Quality check the learning questions using the Question Checklist. If necessary, following using the Question Checklist, refine the wording of the learning question using criteria. If appropriate, refine the learning questions using feedback from stakeholders.

It is important to scan the literature again at this point to ensure that your questions are not addressed by existing work.

Resources

Learning Question Checklist - use to assess draft learning questions; Use Learning Question_3 of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook to use in applying Learning Agenda checklist; Learning Question Tip Sheet - A set of tips geared towards strategy level learning questions;

Tip

The most important constraint is time and level of effort to address and then use/apply evidence and learning. Prioritizing the number of questions to no more than three appears useful. Often a learning question may have sub or corollary questions associated with it that can be addressed depending on the methodology used to address the questions.

Elect final learning questions

Key question step addresses

Which learning question/s should we select to address?

Task

Elect final learning questions and revisit and/or develop a formal use case for final selected learning question/s. Select final learning questions. This may necessitate prioritizing questions, if necessary.

Before prioritizing questions, establish the screening criteria. For example:

- How much time will it take to address it?
- How critical is the question to our learning purpose or use case?
- How important is the question to key stakeholders?
- How well aligned is the question with high-level priorities (e.g. USAID Policy Framework, Strategies, Presidential Initiatives)?

Following finalizing the criteria, apply the criteria to learning questions. Consider having more than one individual apply the criteria to validate the process. Following this, it may be necessary to refine the learning question to better address criteria. Consider re-applying the original criteria of learning questions if it makes sense.

The learning questions can then be ranked and a cut-off determined if appropriate before selecting the final learning questions. At this juncture, it may be necessary to share and obtain approval for the final questions.

Resources

Use Learning Question_2 of the Learning Question Formulation Workbook

Tailor and use Criteria Application Spreadsheet and/or Question Alignment Grid to rank and prioritize learning questions by important factors or priorities.

Decide and determine appropriate learning activities and action plans

Key question step addresses

How will we address the learning question?

Task

Determine an appropriate learning or research activity and draft a short action plan to address the learning question. Revisit and/or develop a formal use case for final selected learning question/s. For each learning question, develop an action plan. The action plan would plan implementation with a focus on use and seek to assign responsibilities, identify a timeline, and plan an appropriate monitoring approach. The plan could also include short-term activities to maintain user buy-in/engagement and long-term activities to ensure use over time and allow for more comprehensive methods to be used.

Resources

Question Action Plan Template, Question Finding Template

Tip

The plan to implement learning activities should include a range of tailored and integrated dissemination activities and look to distill findings into accessible and short products. The learning questions would ideally also look to have a range of activities including those that could be conducted on a short term basis to maintain user buy-in and engagement while also conducting longer term activities to ensure use.

Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Community of Practice Standard Operating Procedures

Introduction

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) has been the home for the Social and Behavior Change (SBC) community of practice, a collection of people working for the Federal government, Implementing partners and practitioners, and academics, who want to discuss key questions for the work of applying a Social and Behavior Change lens to DRG programming. The meetings tend to happen either monthly or every two months, and sometimes have presentations of findings from programs or evaluations, other times offer a space for people to brainstorm on a topic that they're working on, and sometimes have presentations from academics. Some of the best sessions have been ones where the community collectively discusses and brainstorms about difficult questions of applying an SBC lens to our work.

SBC DRG Community of Practice: Standard Operating Procedures

Resources and key documents

- KM document: List of SBC DRG presentation, summaries, and resources
- Google sheet with participants and calendar
- Non-substantive meeting notes
- Reading list
- Email listserv: cop-sbc-drg@googlegroups.com

Blurb on the COP

The Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Social and Behavioral Change (SBC) community of practice is a forum for practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers to learn from one another and improve the use of behavioral insights to better achieve DRG outcomes. The community is convened by USAID's DRG Center and includes participation from a wide range of global SBC practitioners. The group has a monthly virtual meeting, typically led by a member of the community and focused on a DRG SBC issue. Recent topics have included changing narratives, combating violent extremism, countering misinformation, increasing tax compliance, changing gender norms, and addressing corruption in government bureaucracies. If you would like to join the community or would like more information or to join the community of practice, please reach out by filling out our Google Form or by contacting Contact Name (contact email here).

SOP for Onboarding new members

1. Have them fill out the Community of Practice Interest form. (This is useful if you want to send a link out to people that might be interested. If you have people that you know what to join, you can skip this step. Responses show up here.)

2. Add them to the Google Group: https://groups.google.com/d/forum/cop-sbc-drg. You can add a message like the following. (Unfortunately, you can only use plain text here and no hyperlinks)

    Welcome to the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Social and Behavioral Change Community of Practice!

    You have been added to our listserv and will receive occasional emails with updates about upcoming activities, including our monthly gathering. Members are also welcome to email the listserv with questions, thoughts, announcements, or resources.

    We will send a follow-up email with access to our shared Google folder.

    Best,

    Name(s) here

3. Add their information to the Google Sheet

4. Welcome email and access to the Google Drive.

Dear [new member]

Welcome to the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Social and Behavioral Change Community of Practice!

You should have received a welcome email from our google group listserv, but I just wanted to welcome you personally and share a few resources with you. Our resources are available in a shared Google folder, which includes (1) our working google sheet, (2) a list of past presentations with summaries, recordings, and links, and (3) a preliminary list of DRG related SBC resources.

[We like to have a short preliminary call with new members to find out more about their interests and how the group could be helpful. If you are interested and available, let me know a few windows that work with your schedule in the coming weeks].

SOP for session planning and follow-up

Prior to the session

- Meet with leads 3-4 weeks in advance to plan the session.
- Make sure invite is updated and send out with short paragraph at least two weeks in advance. Send out both through an email to the listserv and through the calendar invite.
- Send a reminder the day of the presentation.

During the session

- Turn on attendance tracking.
- Read any guidance necessary for public recording.
- Record the session.
- Keep the participant list open to remind you who people are.

After the session

- Not doing anything with the attendance tracking now but could at some point. Save them to this folder.
- Set up a folder for the session in the shared folder and populate with (1) the recording, (2) presentation, any (3) other content
- Add a short paragraph to include in the KM document and include links to the recording, presentation, and any other links.
- Send out an email to the group thanking the speakers, saying it was a great session (assuming it was), and including the short paragraph with links for those that could not attend.
- (USAID specific) Draft a short paragraph for front office reporting.

Learning Events

Introduction

In addition to its communities of practice and fireside chats, the E&L team coordinates a large number of learning events, including the DRG Annual Learning Forum, the E&L Talk Series, the Tuesday Group, and the one-off presentations. A somewhat incomplete list of past events can be found here and in the Annex. This includes 85 events conducted between 2022 and 2024.

Evidence and Learning Talk Series

The Evidence and Learning Talk Series is a monthly talk series started in 2020 as an internal talk series designed to create a space to share mostly academic evidence and learning with the DRG Cadre. In 2023 it became an external talk series, was posted publicly on DRGLinks, and invites were sent to a large list of partners. Attendance ranged between 50 - 150 depending on the session and time of year. The following template was used to plan the event:

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
Initial outreach 3 month prior	Potential invitees/topics E&L around what works • Body of work based on multiple IEs/field experiments	**Email**: We have a monthly Evidence and Learning Talk series for our global USAID staff working on democracy, human rights and governance issues where we invite researchers and academics to present

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
	• Interesting individual impact evaluation of field experiment. • Evidence review of what works to achieve a given outcome E&L around a high priority DRG problem • Summary findings from major study	valuable research relevant to our work. We were excited to see [the Democracy in Hard Places volume come out (congrats!) and learn about the initiative more generally]. Obviously, this is an essential topic for our staff and we would love it if you would be willing to present some of the findings. The sessions are virtual, one hour long and typically entail about 20 minutes of presentation and the remainder of the time is a moderated Q&A. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide remuneration but our speakers generally find it to be a valuable exchange. We would love to host you for a session in [January,] but can certainly do it at a later time as well. Please let us know if we can convince you to join us for a session.
Initial meeting: Substance 2-3 months prior	Define topics/focus. Prompts: • What do you think practitioners should know from your research? • Our audience always wants to know what are the practical implications of your research for USAID programming. You can either think about how to weave that into the presentation or be prepared to discuss it during the Q&A. • For our audience it is important to not just know if an approach works or doesn't work but to dig deeper into (a) the theory of change or causal mechanism and (b) key intervening variables (design, implementation, context)	**Notes/summary** **Report here**
Initial meeting: Logistics 2-3 months prior	• Review the information for presenters • Confirm date and time • Request title, blurb, and bio. • Confirm recording/public preference: (1) recording, (2)	**Notes/summary:**

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
	slides share in PDF, (3) public posting on DRG Links ● Confirm social media outreach ● Confirm who will manage the slides ● Determine audience and if there are specific groups to reach out to in promoting ● Schedule meeting with producers 1-3 days before **GROWTH** to schedule rehearsal + early tech check	
Date and time 2-3 months prior	● Check DRG Events Calendar for conflicts . ● Place a hold on the DRG Events Calendar by adding DRG Events Calendar as an invitee to a google meeting.	**Date**: **Time**:
Audience	**USAID:** The core audience includes DRG Staff, DRG Cadre, external partners (drgglobalcadre@usaid.gov; ddidrgsct@usaid.gov; ddi.drg@usaid.gov; actf@usaid.gov) **Partners:** GROWTH to send initial invitation, invitation to non-responders every 2 days and reminder day before talk **DRG Staff+ Cadre:** USAID to send initial calendar invite, reminder midway and/or day before talk	**Note additional audience or changes to the audience**
In-person	● Add in GROWTH in-person support staff ● Room: This file list the various conference rooms. See also this agency notice from 2022 with not very helpful guidance	

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
	information. Rooms can be added from the invite. 7.08.450-460 is the nice Mandela Room but not clear if we can be bumped by leadership. (Wrote facilities@usaid.gov to confirm) Also used 6.10.102 LPA room but there is a request to email Cynthia Covington ahead of time. ● Cookies and coffee!	
Invite Obtain info 4 weeks prior. Invite to go out 3 weeks prior	**Invite title/blurb/bio:** Each talk should have a (1) Title, (2) short blurb, and (3) short bios of speakers at least 14 calendar days before the talk. If the title isn't catchy (4) add a catchy initial sentence. Invitation template. As a default, invites should go out 3 weeks prior to the event and no later than 2 weeks before the event **USAID** to share content with GROWTH **USAID** to send calendar invite internally and update with zoom link when available **GROWTH** to set up zoom session with panelist links **USAID** to add zoom link to calendar invite **GROWTH** to send invitation to partners, monitor registrants and send list daily; send reminders **USAID** to add new registrants to calendar invite and send internal reminder	**Title**: **Catchy sentence:** (If not a catchy title) **Blurb**: **Bios** — **Recording disclaimer** **Zoom session + panelist links:**

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
Production and rehearsal 1-3 days before	**GROWTH** to create a production guide **USAID** to provide speaker intro content for PG **GROWTH** to confirm receipt of presentation with speaker **GROWTH** to setup Whatsapp backchannel **GROWTH** to confirm speaker access to Whatsapp and their phone number ● Re-confirm recording/public preference: (1) recording, (2) slides share in PDF, (3) public posting on DRG Links ● Re-Confirm who will manage the slides	**Rehearsal + early tech check:** **Production Guide:** **Presentation:** **Whatsapp and phone #:** **Whatsapp backchannel:**
The session	**Defaults** ● Music ● Start at 2 minutes past the hour ● USAID moderator intro and recording disclaimer ● GROWTH: Record and produce YouTube video ● Presentation ● Q&A	**Moderator intro (See below)** **Host**: Welcome everyone, we'll get started in just a few minutes **Host**: Hello everyone and welcome. Thanks to you all for joining today. I'm Daniel Sabet from the Evidence and Learning team of USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. We are very excited to welcome today Jonathan Fox and Rachel Robinson from American University. Today's presentation is part of our DRG Evidence and Learning Talk Series, which provides a forum for sharing evidence and learning related to our work. We have been running this series for almost two years as an internal talk series and we are very pleased to be opening this series up to the

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
		broader DRG community. So thank you for joining today and we look forward to future sessions with you. After the presentation we will have some time for questions and answers. We ask that you please use the Google Meet Question and Answer function rather than the chat to pose questions. You can find this by clicking on the shapes icon in the bottom right of your screen. We also encourage you to upvote questions that you also would like to hear the answer to. The talk will be recorded. In a few months these videos will be posted on a shiny new forthcoming DRG Links site but for now you will be able to find it on the calendar invite. I have a little disclaimer that I'm going to read verbatim. The DRG Center advises participants that the meeting will be recorded and will be made publicly available. As a reminder to all USAID participants, no internal Agency deliberations should be discussed in this talk and no classified, sensitive but unclassified (SBU), or procurement sensitive information should be shared. To avoid or minimize the collection of personally identifiable information (PII), all participants are asked to refrain from providing PII when coming off mute to ask questions or make comments. Any PII shared will be handled in accordance with USAID's Privacy and Security policies and applicable Federal law. Attendees who do not want to be recorded should remain muted. Attendees can also participate by posting any questions for the speakers in the Q&A feature.

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
		I want to welcome Jonathan Fox and Rachel Robinson. Jonathan Fox directs the Accountability Research Center in the School of International Service at American University. He collaborates with public interest groups, social organizations, private foundations and policymakers to learn from transparency, participation and accountability initiatives and has published extensively on these topics. Rachel Robinson is Professor and Assistant Dean in the School of International Service at American University. She is a well published sociologist and demographer and in addition to her work on citizen oversight, studies global health interventions in sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on reproductive health and sexual and gender minority populations. Jonathan and Rachel will be presenting today on “sandwich strategy” reforms, which entails reform pressure from pressure from above and below. Policy reformers often make bold promises to improve government responsiveness to citizen voice. Yet such proclaimed openings from above often fall short, get diverted, or are blocked. This study compares a set of 19 diverse reform initiatives that delivered tangible openings to enable collective action for socially excluded groups. Half of the cases led to at least incremental pro-reform shifts in the balance of power - often below the radar and in spite of obstacles, backlash or partial rollback. Donors often played key

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
		enabling roles, bolstering reform innovation as convenors and brokers as well as funders. Lessons for donors include: providing flexible funding targeted to reform openings; investments in broad and intensive frontline field presence for reform agencies; and support for the organization and institutionalized representation of the socially excluded. Donors can mitigate effects of likely backlash and reformists' loss of power by investing in hybrid, state-society institutions with subnational foundations. Without further ado let me turn it over to Jonathan to kick us off
KMOL	**GROWTH** will schedule AAR **USAID** will send content for thank you email and link to speakers presentation **GROWTH** will provide the YouTube recording link **GROWTH** will send a thank you email to all participants, internal and external. Thank you template. **USAID** will add event to the DRG Center's Event Registry **USAID** FO update	**Thank you email**: Thank you to those that were able to join our latest **Evidence & Learning Talk: V-Dem Institute's Democracy Annual Report 2023: Defiance in the Face of Autocrazation** with Professor Staffan Lindberg and Dr. Evie Papada from V-Dem Institute. They presented the latest trends for democracy and autocracy in the world and across regions, based on the latest Democracy Report from the V-Dem Institute. Among other things, the speakers showed evidence that the wave of autocratization is still accelerating, engulfing 43% of the world population; that the number of closed autocracies now surpasses that of liberal democracy for the first time since 1995; and that autocratization often continues after breakdowns, taking countries further into more harsh dictatorships. Rising polarization and disinformation, growing threats on freedom

Step/time	Instructions	Example / To be filled in
		of expression, coupled with shifting global interdependencies on global trade and energy sources make for a worrying picture. At the same time, the talk focused on eight countries that had reversed their downward trends over the past 20 years and noted that mobilization, popular protests, judicial autonomy, and critical elections are some of the elements uniting these cases of democracy "bouncing back." You can access the recording here and the PowerPoint slides here. If you attended the event, we would love to hear your feedback. Please click here to answer two short questions. If you have questions please feel free to contact us! Best regards, Daniel Sabet (dsabet@usaid.gov) Christopher Grady (cgrady@usaid.gov) **Speakers presentation:** **YouTube recording:**

The Tuesday Group

Overview

Objective: To provide the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) staff (and potentially the full DRG cadre) a shared opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss core questions and issues in the sector.

Coordination: Tuesday Group is coordinated by the Evidence and Learning (E&L) Team and run by teams on a rotating basis. E&L checks in with teams to ensure that a speaker is lined up for each Tuesday Group session and takes care of administrative matters such as sending out the calendar invitation and knowledge management. DRG Center Teams take turns identifying and inviting speakers and leading Tuesday Group sessions as per a rotational schedule. Once a topic and speaker have been selected, the lead Team provides a brief blurb and any links to be used in the invitation. Complementing the Tuesday Group sessions, E&L organizes other convenings for the purpose of disseminating DRG evidence and/or improving communication and coordination among DRG research and learning practitioners. DRG Center staff members are welcome to organize other events, such as brown bags or informal presentations, at different times on an ad hoc basis.

Time and place: Tuesday Group takes place on the third Tuesday of every month from 9-10am, although there can be some flexibility in the specific Tuesday.

Audience: The Tuesday Group is primarily an internal forum for DRG Bureau staff to exchange ideas and discuss common interests and concerns related to the DRG sector and sub-sectors. However, some topics may lend themselves more naturally to a broader audience. When this occurs, and based on the recommendation of the lead Team for a particular Tuesday Group session, some Tuesday Group conversations may be opened to the Sector Council, DRG cadre, implementing partners or others on a case by case basis.

Format: Sessions will vary in their format. Innovative formats will be encouraged, but in all cases there should be opportunities for interaction with the speaker and an exchange of ideas. Presenters will be asked to present for no more than twenty minutes, so as to leave ample time for Q&A and discussion. The Evidence and Learning Team will introduce the topic of each session, then ask someone from the hosting Team to introduce the speaker.

Choice of Topics: Tuesday Group topics will be suggested by Teams and validated during Senior staff meetings. In thinking about potential topics, Teams should ask themselves, "what should other sectors know about what is happening in my sector?" Teams are encouraged to apply the following criteria when selecting an individual to invite:

- The speaker is an expert in a particular area of relevance to DRG;
- The speaker can address issues related to Center/Administration priorities and/or speak on timely or controversial topics;
- The presentation is thought-provoking and highly interactive.

This document provides some helpful information to share with speakers. We recommend that Teams have a short meeting with potential speakers to discuss content and review this information.

Knowledge management: While recording should be avoided if it risks undermining a robust exchange, sessions may be recorded and preserved along with presentations, relevant links, and other information in the Events Registry. This will be discussed and agreed upon in advance.

Past sessions

More details can be found in the [event registry] and in the annex.

Monthly Assignment	Team	Team POC	Title/topic	External Speaker/Institution
2024				
Jan 16	PLI	Jon	Demography and democracy	Loretta Bass
Feb 20	CLM	Ben	PxP Activist Help Desk	Guardian Project
March	GOV	Anton	Parliaments and Debt	NDI
April	JRS	Mike	World Justice Project ROL Index	World Justice Project
May	No session		Cancelled - Agency learning month	
June	EPP/Gender	Meg	Advancing women's political empowerment	Carniege
July	No session			
August	No session			
Sept.	ACC	Amy and Amelia	Transnational corruption and political finance	Richard Nash - IFES
Oct.	PLI	David	Inside the Political Mind	Greg Power
Nov.	GTT	Bea and Susan	IIR Mapping -- Global Review and a Directory of Information Integrity and Resilience	Bea and Susan
Dec.	E&E	Melissa Hooper	Poland's Redemocratization	
Monthly Assignment	**Team**	**Team POC**	**Title/topic**	**External Speaker/Institution**
2023				
Jan 10	CSM	Ben	Dollars and Dissent	Ben Naimark-Rowse
Feb 14	GOV	Colin	Audits	International Budget Partnership
March 7	DRI	Bea	Narratives, Values and How	Metropolitan Group

			They Stick	
April 18	PCI	Jon	National Development	Lant Pritchett
May 16	JRS	Kim	Human rights documentation	Videre
June 13	GWG/E&L	Caroline	Gender misinformation	Kristina Wilfore and Lucina Di Meco of #ShePersisted
July	No session	.	.	.
August	No session	.	.	.
Sept.	CCD - DRI filling in	Gretchen	Democracy Perception Index	Olaf Böhnke, Alliance of Democracies Foundation
Oct.	DEPP	Stacie	Civil society oversight of political finance	Xavier Lezcano from Semillas para la Democracia (Seeds for Democracy)
Nov.	GTT	Bea	Information Integrity	Bea and Susan
Dec.	No session	.	.	.
2022				
January 25	PCI		PEA	Alina Rocha Menocal, ODI
February 22	JRS		Adaptive Management in HRSM Rapid Response	Freedom House/Pact
March 29	E&L		Social and Behavior Change	Levi Adelman
April 26	GOV		Governance Approach to Climate Action	GOV team
May 31	FO + EL		The Four Approaches	Larry Garber & Gretchen King
June 28	No meeting			
July 26	No meeting			
August 30	No meeting			
September 27	CCD		Non-Violent Communication	Eze Sanchez
October 25	DEPP		Cybersecurity and elections	IFES
November 29	CSM		Dollars and Dissent	Ben Naimark-Rowse
December 27	No Tuesday Group (holidays)			
2021				
March 30	No Tuesday Group			
April 27	G/FSR		IMPROVING SUBNATIONAL DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION	Urban Institute

May 25	CAT		Digital Repression	Steven Feldstein
June 29	No Tuesday Group (DRG Conference)			
July 27	CAT (again)		Political Will Building	Metropolitan Group
August 31	CSM		Can Online Civic Education Induce Democratic Citizenship? Experimental Evidence from a New Democracy	Steven Finkel (University of Pittsburgh), Anja Neundorf (University of Glasgow) and Ericka Rascon Ramirez (Middlesex University)
September 28	DEPP		Violence against women in politics	Mona Lena Krook, a professor at Rutgers
October 26	CCD		Using Knowledge to Build a Learning Culture (KMOL)	Dr. Moses Adoko, Chief Knowledge Officer of the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
November 23	--		(PCI cancelled and switched to January)	
December 28	No Tuesday Group (holidays)			

Tuesday Group Planning Template

Team-led event: I'll send out the invite and pester you from time to time, but this should be a team-led event. Someone from the team should serve as the main coordinator, communicate with speakers, and moderate/chair the session. I do like to have a short touch base with the coordinator to go over this and answer any questions.	**Coordinator**:
Invite title/blurb/bio: Each talk should have a (1) Title, (2) short blurb, and (3) short bios of speakers at least 12 calendar days before the talk. As a default, E&L will send invites at least 10 calendar days before the talk and will send one reminder the day before, but let us know if you have other thoughts.	**Title**: **Blurb**: **Bios**

Date/time: We are in theory supposed to do the Tuesday Group on the third Tuesday of the month but we've been deviating from that so there is some flexibility if that date doesn't work. It does need to be a Tuesday at 9:00-10:00am ET.	**Date**:
Prepping the speaker(s): Please share this information for presenters document and discuss. There should be at least one short meeting with the presenters prior to the Tuesday Group. Some groups may opt to do a dry run. Make sure they join 10 minutes early to test audio, video, and any screen sharing. Don't forget to send a thank you afterwards.	
Audience: Talks are internal. The default invitee list is the DRG Bureau, Sector Council, and DRG Cadre but you can elect for a smaller audience.	**Audience**
Recording: We do have the option to record the event for those that can't attend but it is entirely up to you. Recording is not recommended if you want a conversation about USAID strategy among participants but preferred if it is more of a presentation of publicly available information. If you do want to record, you just need to get consent from the speaker and you have to read a little statement at the beginning of the session (see run of show).	
KMOL: After the session, (1) I'm happy to send out a thank you note with any resources. Just write something up and I'll send it along. (2) Please write up a blurb to include in the FO updates and submit through your regular team submission. (3) Please add your event to the DRG Center's Event Registry.	

TUESDAY GROUP RUN OF SHOW TEMPLATE

10-15 minutes before start	Moderator and speakers log in and check audio, video, and screen sharing	
Intro	**Host**: Welcome everyone, we'll get started in just a few minutes **Host**: Hello everyone and welcome to this month's Tuesday Group. Thanks to you all for joining today. I'm XXXX from the XXX Team, which is coordinating this month's session. We are very excited to welcome X for a talk entitled Y. After the presentation we will have some time for questions and answers. We ask that you please use the Question and Answer function rather than the chat to pose questions. You can find this by clicking on the shapes icon in the bottom right of your screen. We also encourage you to upvote questions that you also would like to hear the answer to. Please feel free to use the chat for any comments. Today's talk will be recorded and the links to recordings will be available in the calendar invite. I have a brief statement that I'm going to read verbatim *NOTICE: The DRG Center advises participants that the meeting will be recorded and that the recording could be released to members of the public (e.g., if subject to a FOIA request). As a reminder to all participants, no internal Agency deliberations should be discussed in this talk and no classified, sensitive but unclassified (SBU), or procurement sensitive information should be shared. To avoid or minimize the collection of personally identifiable information (PII), participants are asked to refrain from providing PII when coming off mute to ask questions or make comments. Any PII shared will be handled in accordance with USAID's Privacy and Security policies and applicable Federal law. Attendees who do not want to be recorded should remain muted. Attendees can also participate by posting any questions for the speakers in the Q&A feature. [Insert as applicable: There will also be an unrecorded question and answer session after the presentation where USAID staff can ask questions].* **Host or other: HIT RECORD** I want to welcome our speakers today ● *Couple sentences on speaker*	5 min

	S/he is going to be presenting today on Y. ● *Couple of sentences on presentation and why it is important* Without further ado let me turn it over to X	
Presentation		20 minutes
Post-Presentation Q&A	**Host**: Many thanks…. We have some time remaining for questions, answers, and discussion. Just a reminder to please use the Question and Answer function rather than the chat to pose questions. You can find this by clicking on the shapes icon in the bottom right of your screen. We also encourage you to upvote questions that you also would like to hear the answer to. Please feel free to use the chat for any questions. Let me start with an initial question …. ● *Recommend having a question prepared in case there are not any immediate questions*	30 minutes
Wrap-up	**Host**: That brings us to time. Many thanks to X for joining us today sharing their knowledge and the learning that has come out of this work. The recording and materials will be linked to the invitation for those that couldn't join.	1 minute

Information for USAID DRG Tuesday Group Presenters

Thank you for agreeing to speak as part of our DRG Tuesday Group! Below are a few notes that might be helpful in preparing.

Audience: The core audience is the DRG Bureau staff and DRG experts from other USAID/Washington bureaus and offices. In most cases the audience also includes DRG Mission staff. Participation varies but is typically between 40-60 attendees.

The invite: It would be very helpful if you could send us (a) a title for the talk, (b) a brief blurb about the talk, and (c) a brief bio. Alternatively we are happy to draft something up for your review.

The agenda: The session is one hour. Typically, we ask that presentations be 20 minutes and the balance of the time be used for question and answer. We are very open to alternative agendas (e.g., more participatory approaches) depending on what suits the topic/presenter. The question and answer session will use Google Meet's Q&A feature, which allows attendees to post questions and other attendees to upvote them. The moderate will monitor the Q&A feature and pose questions.

Technology: We use Google Meet, which is similar to other platforms. It allows you to share your screen, change the layout, and includes a chat, poll, and question and answer features.

PowerPoints: The use of slides is at the discretion of the presenter, but most speakers do utilize slides. Presenters are able to share their screens and present or we are happy to project the slides and advance them for you. One limitation of Google Meet is if you are presenting a PowerPoint and only have one screen, you might only see the PowerPoint. Please let us know your preference. We recommend slides with a strong visual appeal and avoiding long text boxes with small fonts (e.g., less than 18pt). We have a USAID template if you would like to use our template, but you are welcome to use your own.

Video presentation tips: We recommend that prior to the event you close out all other applications and tabs. This can avoid sudden technology failings. We also recommend that speakers use headsets or microphones to improve the sound quality. Please give some thought to your background and framing. For the best image, the camera should be at eye level; this might mean raising a laptop. We also encourage you to give some thought to the lighting to make sure that you are not backlit and that you have a light source that illuminates your face.

Sign in early: The day of the presentation, please sign in 10 minutes early for a sound and video check.

Knowledge management: We do like to save and share presentation materials for those not able to attend and for future access. This may include PDFs of slides, links, papers, or a recording of the session. We also like to record the sessions when the content is generally public information and so long as it will not undermine a robust open discussion. Please let us know if you are willing to have the session recorded and/or to share slides.

The Annual Learning Forum

2024 Annual Learning Forum

Thanks for joining the 2024 Annual Learning Forum, check out the sessions along with recordings, slides and related resources below. Continue to use DRGLinks and the Learning, Evidence and Analysis Platform for all your evidence and resource needs. Want to join the DRG Learning Community of Practice, sign up by emailing mabaker@usaid.gov.

Legend

💻	Description, Slides and Recording
📑	Evidence and Learning Products
⚙	Relevant Technical Resources

Session Resources

Findings Track

Session 1: What do we know about how to support democratic openings?, Thursday, February 15, 2024, 8:00 - 9:30 am Eastern

💻	As a third wave of autocratization has unfurled, key questions remain on how to forestall and reverse democratic backsliding. Check out the slides and recording.
📑	Check out the infographic along with the Literature Review, Executive Summary of Case Study Report, and the Full Case Study report. Theories of Democratic Change (2015) Phase 1: Theories of Democratic Backsliding
⚙	Brookings (2019) The Democracy Playbook, Carnegie (2022) Understanding and Responding to Global Democratic Backsliding, Atlantic Council (2023) Fostering a Fourth Democratic Wave: A Playbook For Countering The Authoritarian Threat

Session 2: Interrogating Information Integrity: Insights on What Works, Tuesday, February 20 2024 at 9:30 - 11:00 am Eastern

💻	Information integrity - the accuracy, consistency and reliability of information - has become increasingly critical to the successful functioning of democratic institutions and processes. Check out the slides and recording
📑	Check out the infographic along with the Literature Review and the Research Database.
⚙	Disinformation Primer

Session 3: What we've learned about countering corruption: political will, transnational corruption, and behavioral change, Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern

💻	This session explores what we have learned in the last year from separate studies on (1) how to address corruption in environments with low political will, (2) how to pivot existing approaches to address transnational corruption, strategic corruption, and kleptocracy, and (3) how to incorporate social and behavioral change approaches in preventing and combating corruption. Check out the slides. and recording
📑	• Anti-corruption in low political will contexts (infographic and full report) • Transnational corruption, strategic corruption, and kleptocracy in Sub-Saharan Africa (overview report and sectoral report) • Transnational corruption, strategic corruption, and kleptocracy in the Middle East and North Africa (overview report) • Countering corruption through social and behavioral change (infographic and full report).
⚙	• Dekleptification Guide • USAID Guide to Countering Corruption Across Sectors • Countering Transnational Corruption Innovation Analysis

Session 4: Advancing Gender-Inclusive Democracy: Assessing Barriers and Opportunities for Advancing Women's Leadership and Participation in Politics and Public Life, Thursday February 22nd, 2024, 9:00 - 10:00 am Eastern

💻	A key step towards achieving gender inclusive democracy is women's political empowerment. Drawing on extensive research and expertise, this session details USAID's updated Women's Political Participation and Leadership (WPPL) Assessment Framework, and its special focus on men and elite gatekeepers. Check out the slides and recording.
📑	Evidence

	• This two-pager presents a global snapshot of findings from the assessments conducted to date: WPPL Global Findings • WPPL country assessment results. ◦ Colombia report; Colombia two-pager ◦ Côte d'Ivoire report; Côte d'Ivoire two-pager ◦ Ecuador report; Ecuador two-pager ◦ Honduras report; Honduras two-pager ◦ Kenya report; Kenya two-pager ◦ Kyrgyz Republic report; Kyrgyz Republic two-pager ◦ Nigeria report; Nigeria two-pager ◦ Tanzania report; Tanzania two-pager
⚙	Relevant Resources • Women's Political Participation and Leadership Assessment Framework. • The WPPL assessment framework draws on lessons and approaches from the Social and Behavior Change approach to international development. See more in the Social and Behavior Change Primer and Practitioner's Guide.

Session 5: Reinforcing Our Resilience: Insights on Supporting DRG Practitioner Mental Health, Tuesday, February 27rd, 9:00-10:00am Eastern

💻	How do we better support the resilience of DRG activists and reformers in the midst of democratic backsliding in our work?
📑	Evidence • Re-envisioning Global Mental Health: Evidence Briefs (USAID Research Technical Assistance Center, October 2023) • Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2023) • Extended Executive Summary (forthcoming)

	Relevant Resources • Trauma-Informed Approaches to Development: An Actionable Toolkit for International Development Practitioners (Chemonics, December 2023) • Trauma-Informed Approaches to to Development Checklist (Chemonics, December 2023) • USAID Trauma-Informed Programming Guide (USAID Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention, August 2021) • Trauma Informed Approaches in Global Mental Health (USAID RTAC, September 2023) • Safety/Security-Sensitive and Trauma-Informed Stakeholder-Consultations with Members of Marginalized Groups (USAID Inclusive Development Hub, September 2022) • Understanding Trauma and Trauma-Informed Approaches asynchronous training (Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, January 2024) • U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace for Mental Health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2022) • Doing What Matters in Times of Stress (World Health Organization, April 2020) • Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation and Mindfulness (USAID PIVOT Program) • Practicing Resilience - 25 episodes (USAID) • Resilience Skills and Tools (Department of State Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience, March 2020) • USAID Staff Care • Mindful FED • The KonTerra Group: KonTerra helps ensure groups and people addressing the

	world's most complex have what they need to flourish and specializes in staff care, organizational resilience, and evaluation services to enhance wellbeing and improve performance for those working in high-stress environments or roles. ● Headington Institute: Headington Institute partners with organizations to create high-impact solutions for effective staff care and offers resources on resilience. ● Greenleaf Integrative: Greenleaf Integrative specializes in equipping organizations to better handle trauma in their programs, systems, and teams including resources on trauma-informed design and resiliency as a competency.

Process Track:

Salon 1: Just Learn What? Informing Future USAID DRG Learning Priorities, Thursday February 15th, 2024 11:00am-12:00pm

💻	We are developing the 2024-26 DRG Learning Agenda and would love to hear from you on what you are learning, your priorities and questions along with recent research, evaluation and evidence you have produced. Check out the Padlet results.
📑	● DRG Center 2021-23 Learning Agenda ● Past learning agenda work on DRGLinks
⚙	● INFORMED: Learning Question Formulation in Eight Steps ● Adaptive Management Decision Chart

Salon 2: Did we succeed? All you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask about developing robust outcome indicators, Tuesday, February 27, 2024 9:00 - 10:00pm Eastern and Wednesday, February 28, 2024 9:00 -10:00am Eastern

💻	We want to estimate the impact of our programs, but measuring DRG outcomes is notoriously challenging. In this interactive session you will learn about developing outcomes indicators th2024 Annual Learning Forum Salon 2A: Did we succeed? All you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask about developing robust outcome indicators - DRGLinksat help us understand the impact of our programs. Check out the recordings here and here.

📑	Evidence • DRG ALF Robust Outcome Indicator Resources
⚙	Relevant Resources • DRG ALF Robust Outcome Indicator Resources

Salon 3: Leveraging Rigorous Outcome Performance Evaluations (ROPEs) - Tips, Tricks and Applications, Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 10:00 - 11:00 am Eastern

💻	If I can't use an impact evaluation and a typical performance evaluation will not tell me the impact of my program, what do I do? Try process tracing as part of a rigorous outcome performance evaluation, or ROPE Check out the slides and recording.
📑	Rigorous Outcome Performance Evaluations (ROPEs) in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.
⚙	• Joe Amick (2019) Process Tracing: A Three Part Module. USAID. • Macartan Humphreys (2023) Integrated Inferences: Causal Models for Qualitative and Mixed-Method Research. Cambridge University Press.

2023 DRG Annual Learning Forum

The DRG Learning Forum is an annual event supporting the generation, curation, and dissemination of DRG evidence and technical methods for DRG practitioners. The forum followed two closely related tracks. The Findings track focused on what we have learned from the DRG Learning Agenda and focused on evidence and learning that can inform program design and implementation. The Process track focused on sharing through a series of salons how we learn and share evidence, best practices, skills and resources on key topics of interest in the DRG space.

This event took place over six sessions:

Findings Track: What is the latest evidence?

- Session 1: Making sense of Information Disorder, Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 8:30 - 9:30 am ET
- Session 2: Willing the end of Corruption - What works in low political will environments?, Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 9:00 - 10:00 am ET

- Session 3: What do we know about how to support democratic openings? Thursday, February 16, 2023, 9:00 - 10:00 am ET

Process Track: What are the latest technical methods?

- Salon 1: Guide to Social and Behavioral Change: Theory and Practice, Wednesday, February 22, 2023 10:00 - 11:00 am ET
- Salon 2: Recent advances in non-experimental research, Thursday, February 23, 2023 9:00 - 10:00 am ET
- Salon 3: Is Our Work Evidenced-Based? How to Better Use Research Evidence in Activity Design, Thursday February 23, 2023 at 10:00 - 11:00 am ET

2021 DRG Annual Learning Forum

- Findings Track Session 1: Advancing Civic Spaces and Protecting Human Rights
- Achieving Accountability: From Social Movement to Decentralization
- Learning from Learning Agendas: Improving the Art of Organizational Learning
- Lessons Learned from 27 DRG Impact Evaluations

ANNEXES

IE FRED SCOPE OF WORK

Tasking XXXX XXXXXXXX

1. Summary

This tasking is divided into two phases for a potential impact evaluation of an XXXX in XXXXX. For the first phase, the learning partner will complete an evidence review, evaluability assessment, lead an evaluation workshop, produce an evaluation design memo, conduct scoping activities, and finalize an evaluation design report. The evaluation will be conducted in a second phase. The evaluation team should seek to develop an impact evaluation; however, if the conclusion of the evaluability assessment suggests that an impact evaluation design is not possible, then the evaluation team should propose the next most rigorous evaluation design.

Activity Name	
Implementer	
Agreement number	
Total estimated ceiling of the activity	
Activity start/end date	

2. Background: XXXX

3. Evaluation purpose, use, and questions:

This evaluation aims to (1) produce baseline values for outcome indicators, (2) confidently determine the change or lack of change in intended outcomes overtime, (3) determine the impact of [XXXX] on outcomes, including the impact across key subgroups, and (4) identify key factors in any activity success or explain any null findings.

USAID/XXXX and its implementing partners will use the evaluation to (1) strengthen XXXX's theory of change, (2) improve implementation of existing efforts, and (3) inform design of future efforts.

4. Methodological considerations

Learning from past evaluations: A rapid evaluability assessment provides an initial assessment of the prospects of the impact evaluation. Furthermore, recent retrospective studies of impact evaluations in DRG, in the former Economic Growth, Education, and Environment (E3) Bureau, and a PPL study of IE quality highlight the many potential pitfalls of impact evaluation efforts. The learning partner's work should aim to build on these past lessons learned and ensure evaluation risks and challenges are appropriately mitigated. The approach outlined here envisions strong cooperation, coordination, and communication with implementing partners and other evaluation stakeholders throughout the process.

[Methods]

5. Tasks and deliverables:

This tasking will occur in two phases that are outlined below

Phase 1: Evidence review, evaluability assessment, workshop, and draft design

> **Concept note and budget:** The Concept Note should include any clarifications or additional details on the items below, a timeline for the base tasking and first option, and bios, roles and responsibilities, and CVs of evaluation team members.
>
> **Kickoff meeting:** An initial kick-off meeting will occur following approval of the concept note and budget with the learning partner, evaluation team, implementing partner (pending contract signing), USAID/DRG, and USAID/XXXX. At the time of the kickoff meeting or by an agreed to date, the implementer should identify an evaluation specialist to serve as a point of contact and work with the evaluation team in developing the subsequent deliverables. The learning partner and Principal Investigator will retain ultimate responsibility for the content of the deliverables and for ensuring the objectivity of the evaluation.
>
> **Evidence review:** The evidence review should summarize the evidence on what works (in addition to what doesn't work and key intervening variables) in XXXX. The scope of this may be further refined through consultation with USAID. The review should (1) note divergent theories of change, (2) identify what we know works or does NOT work (if anything) and for whom, (3) identify important key contextual/intervening variables that might explain variation in impact effectiveness, and (4) offer recommendations to USAID/XXXX and its implementing partners on the proposed intervention. To increase

the utility of this review, the document should be short: limited to five pages, although additional pages may be included as an annex. The annex should also include an annotated bibliography of a few key "essential readings." The review should include both experimental and observational research and peer reviewed and grey literature. The evidence need not be specific to XXXX; however, contextual relevance should be considered in presenting the findings. Evidence review guidance is available here.

Evaluability assessment: The primary goal of this evaluability assessment is (1) to ensure that the intervention is a good fit for an IE and (2) to lay a foundation for the IE workshop. Regarding the former, the goal is to ensure that stakeholders can be confident in the IE results and that the IE will be useful to inform decision-making. If an IE is not possible or is not a good fit, then this should be clearly stated, and the evaluation team should suggest directions for the next most rigorous evaluation approach.
There are many approaches to evaluability assessments; however, this assessment should at a minimum (1) confirm that the intervention has an adequately robust theory of change and identify potential challenges with the intervention's theory of change that could affect results, (2) explore outcome variables, feasibility of measurement, and potential measurement concerns, (3) identify the population of interest, feasibility of randomization, adequacy of expected sample size, and challenges in randomization and sampling, (4) explore opportunities for how the evidence generated through the evaluation can be used.

Additional content may be added based on USAID evaluability assessment guidance and a planning guide; however, this is not intended to be a heavy level of effort activity. To increase the utility of this assessment, the document should be short: limited to five pages, although additional pages may be included as an annex. The assessment need not resolve all issues; rather, it should raise issues to be addressed during the IE Workshop. As such, the evaluability assessment is an input and need not be revised.

Evaluation Workshop: The learning partner will host a three day evaluation planning and design workshop with the activity implementing partners, sub-grantees, USAID/XXX, USAID/DRG, and potentially XXXX government partners. In addition to determining a design approach, an equally important goal of the workshop is to build strong relations between stakeholders.

The agenda for the workshop will be developed by the learning partner with input from the IP and USAID. During the workshop, the learning partner will present findings from the evidence review, conclusions from the evaluability assessment, potential impact evaluation design options, and expected challenges and proposed solutions in implementing the evaluation. The IP will likely present on their experience in XXX, their planned interventions, a detailed theory of change, important details from the XXX context, and expected challenges in implementing the evaluation. Additional sessions of the workshop will focus on ensuring an adequately robust theory of change based on the available evidence to warrant an impact evaluation, determining outcomes to be measured, developing a workable design approach that matches evaluation needs with implementation realities, and evaluation questions. The workshop should also clearly identify how the evaluation data and results will be used during and after the evaluation.

Typical evaluation questions include (1) a baseline question around baseline values of key outcomes and an explanation of variation in outcomes across individuals/units, (2) a question focused on impact on key outcome variables, (3) a question exploring heterogeneous effects, and (4) a question exploring why the intervention was or was not effective.

The workshop is expected to be held in-person/virtual/mix.

Evaluation design memo and presentation: As an output of the workshop, the evaluation team should develop a memo outlining the key details of the proposed evaluation design or evaluation design options and the issues to be further investigated or confirmed during scoping activities. The memo is expected to follow a similar structure to the evaluation design report; however, it need not provide the same level of detail. The memo should be presented to stakeholders.

Scoping: Following the evaluation workshop, the evaluation team, including the IP representative, will undertake scoping activities to ground-truth the draft evaluation design and to develop any randomization, sampling, and measurement strategies. For budgeting purposes this is envisioned as no more than two weeks of field work and may include a mix of remote and in-person scoping activities given COVID safety precautions.

Draft evaluation design report and budget: The evaluation design should follow USAID technical guidance. Please note that 2020 revisions to the ADS require the inclusion of cost analysis in evaluation designs (201.3.6.4). The draft will be revised based on stakeholder feedback.

The evaluation design should include the following sections, only subject to change if an adequate rationale is provided. Highly technical content should be shifted to technical annexes to maintain the readability of the evaluation design.

- Executive summary
- Background, evaluation purpose, evaluation use
- Results framework and the theory of change
- Output and outcome indicators
- Identification strategy (design and randomization if possible)
- Sampling
- Data sources
- Monitoring implementation/fidelity and evaluation/IP coordination plan
- Analysis plan
- Dissemination and use plan
- Human subjects protection

- Assumptions and limitations
- Timeline
- Research team
- References
- Annexes: including any technical annexes, an updated evaluability assessment, this SOW, a draft document that lays out the responsibilities of evaluation stakeholders, and draft instruments and data collection protocols.
- Budget (as a separate file)

Presentation of the design report: To aid in obtaining feedback, the learning partners should present findings from the draft design report to core evaluation stakeholders. The presentation should highlight any deviations from the evaluation design memo.

Final evaluation design report: A final evaluation design report should address reviewers comments and include both a clean copy and track changes copy with response to comments. Alternatively, a comment matrix may be submitted. Only one round of revisions is envisioned but a third submission may be required if there are major concerns with the initial draft or, alternatively, to accommodate small edits. Once approved, a 508 compliant design report should be posted to the DEC.

Two-pager: The evaluation team should produce a short, user-friendly summary of the evaluation design.

Phase 2 Evaluation implementation

Baseline data collection and analysis will be implemented in accordance with the evaluation design document. This should entail regular communication and information sharing between the evaluation stakeholders. Changes to the design should be noted with an evaluation change memo, tracker, or pivot log. Major changes may require a revision to the evaluability assessment and design document.

Data collection approaches and tools will be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board.

The evaluation team will aim to maximize the relevance, timeliness, and use of evaluation data and analysis throughout the data collection and analysis process.

The Option period deliverables will include the following for baseline, which will be repeated for future waves of data collection:

Regular coordination meetings: The evaluation team will continue to meet with stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss coordination issues, update on progress, and report out on preliminary findings. Documentation should be shared via a shared drive and shared knowledge management files

Baseline report outline: The evaluation team will submit a detailed report outline, consistent with USAID evaluation guidance for stakeholder comment.

Draft baseline report: The draft and final report should be consistent with USAID evaluation report guidance. Among other requirements, any methodological limitations should be clearly noted, findings and conclusions should be well supported, and any recommendations should be derived from the findings and conclusions. The body of the report should favor brevity; key points should be well highlighted; and content, particularly any statistical content, should be easy for a non-technical audience to understand. Annexes may be used for detailed, technical, or less essential content. A list of individuals to receive and review the draft should be developed with USAID ahead of submission and the draft should be shared directly with those on the list.

Presentation of findings and discussion: To aid in obtaining feedback and foster learning and utilization at the draft stage, the learning partners should present findings from the draft report to core evaluation stakeholders.

Final baseline report: A final report should address reviewers comments and include both a clean copy and track changes copy with response to comments. Alternatively, a comment matrix may be submitted. Only one round of revisions is envisioned but a third submission may be required if there are major concerns with the initial draft or, alternatively, to accommodate small edits. Once approved, a 508 compliant report should be posted to the DEC.

Two-pagers: The evaluation team should produce at least two briefs targeted towards specific audiences to be determined. The briefs should not merely repeat the executive summary of the report. Instead it should provide useful/actionable information to a specific audience.

Dissemination event: At least one dissemination event is envisioned with a larger audience.

DDL data submission: Baseline data will be anonymized and posted to the DDL.

Continuity documentation: At the conclusion of the baseline the learning partner will submit a continuity package. This should include but not be limited to contact information for key informant interviews and survey respondents (if panel data), an evaluation design change tracker or pivot log, data cleaning and analysis coding, survey questionnaire programming files, data collection protocol documentation, including enumerator manuals.

Any midline, endline, or ongoing data collection and analysis will repeat the same deliverables as above. In addition, prior to any data analysis an analysis plan will be registered with open registries network or another similarly reputable registration platform.

4. Personnel

For the base tasking, the impact evaluation team is expected to include at least one Principal investigator (PI) and at least one local researcher. Collectively the team must have:

- Expertise on measurement and survey work related to XXX
- Impact evaluation and other rigorous evaluation methodological expertise.
- A proven track record of successful implementation of rigorous evaluations
- Willingness to work with and coordinate closely with the implementing partner to find a workable design that meets both the needs of the evaluation and matches the implementation realities.
- Expertise in the evaluation topic in the geographic context.

It is expected that there will be continuity in team members throughout the full evaluation process.

5. Base tasking timeline

Deliverable	Timing (Total time)
Concept Note and Budget	2 weeks (2)
Review period	2 weeks (4)
Evidence Review	4 weeks (8)
Evaluability assessment	Same (8)
Impact evaluation workshop	2 weeks (10)
Impact evaluation design memo	2 weeks (12)
Review period	1 week (13)
Revised impact evaluation design memo	1 weeks (14)
Additional scoping trip preparation	3 weeks (17)

Scoping trip	2 weeks (19)
Draft evaluation design draft and presentation	4 weeks (23)
Review period	2 weeks (25)
Revised evaluation design and 2-pager	2 weeks (27)
Estimated total base tasking time	27 weeks

6. Base tasking budget:

At this stage the learning partner should submit a budget for the base tasking. The base budget is not expected to exceed $180,000.

7. Key documents

- Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Cooperative agreement (Forthcoming)
- DRG IE retrospective
- Rapid evaluability assessment

IE FRED TEMPLATE LANGUAGE FOR SOLICITATIONS

USAID/XXX intends to conduct an impact evaluation of the activities under XXXXX. The impact evaluation will be conducted by a third-party evaluator managed by USAID. The evaluation questions, design, and methodology will be developed by the evaluator in collaboration with the Recipient and USAID in the period closely after award. An impact evaluation will likely have several implications for the Recipient's proposed approach.

Selection of beneficiaries: USAID assumes that eligible XXXX will be randomized into treatment XXXX that incorporates XXXX and control XXXX that do not. The Recipient should coordinate with USAID and the third-party evaluator to identify eligible XXXX. At least (100) XXX should be identified as eligible for treatment and the tested intervention should occur in at least (50) randomly-selected XXXX. Some low-level "placebo" activities might be required in control XXX.

Coordination and flexibility: The Recipient will be expected to cooperate and coordinate closely with the third-party evaluator. To ensure effective coordination and communication, a point of contact should be identified from among Recipient in-country staff with adequate technical skills in impact evaluation to serve as a member of and point of contact for the evaluation team, including participating in design, monitoring, and evaluation activities. The Recipient will coordinate with the evaluator in the development of the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP). Coordination is also expected to entail regular meetings, regular sharing of draft and final programmatic documents, and sharing of monitoring and cost data for the activities being evaluated. Some elements of the Recipient's proposed or desired approach may need to be adjusted to allow for a meaningful evaluation, including ensuring an adequate robust theory of change consistent with existing research evidence.

Adaptation and implementation fidelity: The formal impact evaluation is expected to occur in Year Two or Three of the intervention, once the Recipient has had an opportunity to learn from initial implementation and improve the XXXX. It is expected that by Year Two or Three, the implementer will maintain implementation fidelity throughout treatment XXXX, monitor implementation fidelity, and share data with the evaluation team. Implementation fidelity indicators should be developed in cooperation with the evaluation team.

Costs: While the costs of the third-party evaluator will be borne by USAID via the evaluation contractor, the Recipient should recognize that impact evaluations incur additional costs for implementers in coordinating with the evaluator, dedicating staff time to the evaluation, obtaining data on and selecting eligible XXXX, operating in randomly-selected XXX, and collecting robust monitoring and implementation fidelity data, among other activities.

Evaluation use: The Recipient is expected to develop and implement a plan for how it will use data generated by the evaluation, including baseline data, monitoring data, and the final evaluation findings.

Guinea draft language 11/16/2023

4.3. Impact evaluation: USAID/Guinea intends to conduct an impact evaluation of some or all of the activities under GIGA. The impact evaluation will be conducted by a third-party evaluator managed by USAID. The evaluation questions, design, and methodology will be developed by the evaluator in collaboration with the Offeror and USAID at the outset of the period of performance. This will include an impact evaluation planning workshop. An impact evaluation will likely have several implications for the Offeror's proposed approach.

Selection of municipalities: USAID assumes that eligible municipalities will be randomized into treatment municipalities that will receive the interventions and control municipalities that will not during the period of the evaluation. The Offeror should define municipal eligibility criteria for the intervention, in consultation with USAID and the evaluator, and assemble a database of municipalities with data on selected eligibility criteria. At least 100 municipalities should be identified as eligible for treatment and the tested intervention should occur in an expected 50 randomly-selected municipalities during the evaluation period. The evaluation period might run for the remainder of the intervention or for a set period (e.g., Years Two and Three). If the latter occurs, municipalities identified as control could receive interventions in subsequent years. In addition, the Offeror is not restricted from operating in more than the pre-pilot and 50 treatment locations.

Adaptation and implementation fidelity: The formal impact evaluation is expected to occur in Year Two of the intervention, once the Offeror has had an opportunity to learn from initial implementation in pre-pilot municipalities that are not part of the control or treatment for the evaluation period. It is expected that by Year Two, the implementer will maintain implementation fidelity throughout treatment municipalities for the duration of the impact evaluation, monitor implementation fidelity, and share data with the evaluation team. Implementation fidelity indicators should be developed in cooperation with the evaluation team.

Programmatic focus: The impact evaluation may test the effectiveness of the entire activity or a part of the activity to be determined as part of the evaluation design process. The Offeror is encouraged to propose areas of focus where the learning from an impact evaluation could be most beneficial. Activities to be tested should have an adequately robust theory of change and reasonable expectation based on the available evidence to achieve their intended outcomes.

Coordination and flexibility: The Offeror tor will be expected to cooperate and coordinate closely with the third-party evaluator. To ensure effective coordination and communication, a point of contact should be identified from among Offeror in-country staff with adequate technical skills in impact evaluation to serve as a member of and point of contact for the evaluation team, including participating in design, monitoring, and evaluation activities. Coordination is also expected to entail regular meetings, regular sharing of draft and final programmatic documents, and sharing of monitoring and cost data for the activities being evaluated. Some elements of the Offeror's proposed or desired approach may need to be adjusted to allow for a meaningful evaluation.

Costs: While the costs of the third-party evaluator will be borne by USAID via the evaluation partner, the Offeror should recognize that impact evaluations incur additional costs for implementers in coordinating with the evaluator, dedicating staff time to the evaluation, obtaining data on and selecting eligible municipalities, operating in randomly-selected municipalities, and collecting robust monitoring and implementation fidelity data, among other activities.

Evaluation use: The Offeror is expected to develop and implement a plan for how it will use data generated by the evaluation, including baseline data, monitoring data, and the final evaluation findings.

IE FRED Call for Expression of Interest

BLUF: The DRG Bureau's Evidence and Learning (E&L) Team is pleased to announce our annual call for Mission expressions of interest for co-funding and technical support of rigorous DRG evaluations, an initiative affectionately called FRED. Missions who are interested in conducting rigorous evaluations of planned or upcoming DRG activities are invited to express interest by April 4, 2024.

The challenge: The vast majority of USAID evaluations are one-time performance evaluations, which are valuable but have their limitations. More rigorous evaluations are less common largely because of (1) the higher cost and (2) capacity constraints in overseeing and carrying out such work. As such, the DRG Bureau aims to encourage more rigorous evaluation through co-funding, technical support by E&L staff, and the involvement of top academics and evaluators available through the DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) mechanisms.

What do we mean by "rigorous evaluation"? For the purposes of this call, we consider a rigorous evaluation to be either (1) an impact evaluation or (2) a Rigorous Outcome Performance Evaluation (ROPE) that includes measurements of outcomes over time and a thoughtful examination of potential contribution. An impact evaluation requires a control group that can reasonably serve as an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of the intervention. (More on impact evaluations here.) While USAID has a preference for impact evaluations when it wants to know if an activity is achieving its intended outcomes (ADS 201.3.1.2.A), it is not always feasible to conduct an impact evaluation. In such cases, we can still design and implement a ROPE by measuring changes in outcomes over time, exploring the influence of the intervention on those changes, and considering alternative explanations for change. (More on rigorous performance evaluations here).

What is the process if I want to do a rigorous evaluation?

- **March/April 2024**: Missions and OUs are asked to fill out this short expression of interest by Wednesday, April 3. Interested Missions are also invited to participate in a webinar discussing this call, the process, examples of rigorous evaluations, and any questions you may have. We will offer two sessions:
    - Monday, March 18, 9am-10am Eastern Time (Google Meeting link here)
    - Wednesday, March 20, 9pm -10pm Eastern Time (Google Meeting link here) (Thursday AM for Asia Missions)[TIME CHANGED FROM ORIGINAL ANNOUNCEMENT]

  To register for one of the events or to receive a recording of the event, please enter your email here.

- **April/May 2024**: The E&L Team will review applications and conduct follow-up discussions with short-listed Missions.

- **May/June 2024:** Announcement of selected Missions.

- **July 2024**: Depending on the response and timeline of Missions, the E&L Team may host a virtual Rigorous Evaluation Clinic with selected Missions designed to build capacity in evaluation methodologies, explore the pitfalls and keys to success in commissioning a rigorous evaluation, engage with leading academics and potential principal investigators to arrive at rough evaluation designs, and set a Mission-specific timeline for next steps. Alternatively, the E&L Team will work with Missions one-on-one to rough out an approach.

- **Post-July**: For evaluations that move forward, there are different options available. The full process entails an evaluability assessment of the DRG activity to be evaluated, and a tasking to one of the E&L Team's LER III learning partners (Cloudburst or Social Impact) to conduct a review of the research evidence (example here) to ensure the approach to be tested benefits from the best available evidence. The learning partner will then host an evaluation design workshop with USAID, principal investigators, implementing partners, and host country and other relevant stakeholders to co-design the evaluation, conduct a scoping trip to gather additional information, and produce an evaluation design document.

Who will carry out the evaluation? To receive co-funding, the evaluation work will be done via the DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) III mechanism held by Cloudburst and Social Impact. In most cases, evaluations will be led by principal investigators (PIs) from academia that bring expertise both on relevant research evidence and on evaluation methodologies. Past PIs have come from Stanford, Harvard, Duke, UCLA, Yale, New York University, and several universities in the Global South, just to name a few. Evaluation experts on the Evidence and Learning Team will provide technical support and oversight throughout the process. (The E&L Team is also available to provide technical consultations for rigorous DRG evaluations done through other mechanisms.)

Tell me more about this co-funding: Rigorous evaluations typically cost between $600,000-$1.2 million. For selected evaluations, the DRG Center will co-fund up to $250,000, starting with the costs of design. Missions will be responsible for the remaining costs, but depending on the timeframe for the evaluation these costs can usually be incrementally funded over more than one fiscal year.

What criteria are used in selection?

- **Timing**: Under this approach, it is essential to have a large amount of lead time to design an evaluation, and baseline data would probably not be collected until 2025. In addition, particularly in the case of impact evaluations, it is very important to have language in procurement documents alerting potential implementers to the evaluation and its implications at the proposal stage. As such, except in the case of ex-post evaluations (focused on sustainability outcomes after programmatic close out), we have a strong preference for activities that are still in the design phase. In some cases, it may be possible to conduct rigorous evaluations of existing contracts/agreements for existing activities or activities being scaled up.

- **Feasibility**: The proposed activities should lend themselves to a rigorous evaluation. For selected Missions, this will be the focus of the evaluability assessment.
- **Rigor**: Proposed evaluations must meet the definition used here of a rigorous evaluation: an impact evaluation or an outcome-focused performance evaluation with at least baseline and endline outcome data collection. Rigor will also be maintained in data collection and the analysis of that data.
- **Use**: There should be a clear articulation of how the evaluation data and findings will be used, and agreement/contract flexibility to allow for use.
- **Prioritization**: Evaluations that contribute to the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal and the forthcoming DRG Policy (currently being cleared), including evaluating new and emerging DRG programming, evaluating the DRG impacts of integrated programming, or filling critical gaps in knowledge including gaps in DRG Evidence Maps (scroll down to "Access to Maps") are particularly desirable.

AUDRA Dissemination and utilization checklist

Item	Resp.	Status	Comments/Notes
Conduct utilization briefing with the commissioning OU and emphasize D&U best practices (Utilization briefing slides) before submitting tasking request to the learning partner	E&L		
Review with commissioning OU the tasking template and SOW language related to D&U. Create tasking specific checklist to aid in management.	E&L		
Work with commissioning OU to identify stakeholders for future dissemination and engagement (Stakeholder engagement planning. See low and high LOE options)	E&L/OU		
Include D&U heading in concept note. (This should be a more robust section if there is no workplan.)	LP		
Ask about use goals in kick-off meeting	LP		
Include a D&U plan in workplan (if applicable). (The level of effort of the plan should be tailored to the tasking. Consider audience based strategy, two-pagers, translations, presentations, etc…)	LP		
During data collection, develop a list of evaluation participants and stakeholders for future dissemination	LP		
Discuss recommendations and utilization in any outbrief and remind about the action plan (in-country, if possible)	LP		
Develop useful/actionable recommendations in draft report	LP		
Share draft report with stakeholders based on D&U plan. Encourage discussion around the recommendations. (Consider recs workshop or discussion of recs during presentations.)	LP		
Emphasize use thinking in draft review, share review template, notes from the utilization briefing, and remind about the action plan (DRG deliverable review for learning and utilization template)	E&L		
Send draft version of action plan along with revised report (Action plan template)	LP		

Emphasize use thinking in revised version review, share review template, and remind about action plan	E&L		
Implement remaining dissemination aspects of D&U plan (e.g., distribution, two-pager, presentations)	LP		
Utilization workshop and plan for follow-up	LP		
Finalize action plan	OU		
Obtain final version of action plan	LP/E&L		
E&L engagement to ensure/promote OU D&U actions	E&L		
Close out actions and updates to D&U Database, D&U Calendar, DRGLinks, and Learning Harvest	LP		
Implementation of action plan	OU		
Follow-up 1 (Utilization tasking)	LP		
Follow-up 2 (Utilization tasking)	LP		
Total		**0**	

AUDRA - Action Plan Template

PURPOSE

The goal of this action plan is to help you and your team decide together how you will utilize findings from the XXX Evaluation. This may include implementing recommendations suggested by the team, but can also include other actions your team or the Mission will take as a result of the findings. This tool can also be used to share findings and next steps with an external audience to raise awareness and elevate the learning and approach. We recommend that your team re-visit this action plan regularly and update and adapt it according to your needs. You are also encouraged to adjust the content of the action plan to maximize its utility for your specific goals. Please note that post-evaluation action plans are a required part of the evaluation process (ADS 201.3.6.10).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

Recommendation 2:

Recommendation 3:

Recommendation 4:

Recommendation 5:

ACTION PLAN

Based on this research, **what** will you do? **Who** will do it? By **when**?

Complete the table below. You may wish to link the action item to a specific recommendation, or to prioritize the action items - but neither is essential. Some other points you may wish to consider include budget allocation, or current status.

Action Step	Rec. #	Priority	Person Responsible	Timeline or deadline

Stakeholders for Dissemination

Who do you want in the room? Who is based placed to share the learning? (The Mission? E&L team? Evaluation team?)

DISCUSSION NOTES

AUDRA - LER III Utilization outreach protocol

Overview

This document details the steps in the utilization outreach both under an original tasking and under tasking SI314/CB053 and provides more detailed information to support the overall Utilization Promotion Guidance. The level of detail is not intended to constrain learning partners (LPs) but rather aid in automating the utilization follow-up process and ensuring consistency between LPs and between taskings. Warranted deviations from these scripts are Utilization Promotion Guidance_V6welcome when required. This protocol covers the following steps:

Planning of utilization workshop (original tasking)

Overview: While some thoughts and guidance are provided below on the utilization workshop, the structure and content of these are expected to vary based on the audience and the study itself. As such, the guiding principle for teams should be: What will work best to ensure that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are translated into concrete actions.

Planning: It is recommended that a meeting is held with the study's USAID activity managers (commissioning operating unit, DRG/E&L, and other DRG Center, as relevant) three weeks prior to the workshop to set expectations, ensure engagement, and discuss the points below.

Time: The utilization workshop should be 1.5 hours, but longer would be preferred if the commissioning OU is willing.

Attendees: Core stakeholders/decision-makers referenced in the recommendations should be encouraged to attend. Often this will just be USAID stakeholders, but in the case of a midline evaluation where many recommendations are targeted at the implementer, then IP staff should be in attendance. Budget and time permitting it might be desirable to conduct one session with implementers and one with USAID stakeholders. Where decision-making authority is outside of the core team (e.g., the activity COR) then suggest leadership attendance.

Preparatory work: At a minimum, the study team should send the action plan template with short summaries of the recommendations. Given insufficient time to discuss all recommendations, it is also recommended to prioritize ahead of time with the study activity managers. For example, prioritization might be based on the most important recommendations, recognizing some need to build stakeholder buy-in, or prioritization might focus on recommendations on which there is general consensus and then the conversation can focus on specific actions. To aid in this process, it is recommended to return to the original use objectives defined and discussed in the SOW, utilization briefing, and kick-off conversations.

Jamboard or Google doc: Consider using a Jamboard or Google doc to obtain participant input. This can be used to (1) prioritize recommendations if not done ahead of time, (2) vote on acceptance of a recommendation if consensus isn't clear, and/or (3) brainstorm actions.

Communication: The text below focuses on utilization as some discussions around dissemination should have already occurred by this point (e.g., revisiting the dissemination plan, planning two-pagers, planning events). The language below can either be used as talking points for a meeting or as part of an email to kickstart utilization planning.

Dear USAID/XXX colleagues,

As the tasking deliverables are wrapping up we wanted to keep the conversation going on utilizing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to inform your decision making.

Action plan: The ADS requires post-evaluation action plans for evaluations and it is good practice for other learning products. As such, the DRG Center strongly encourages all Missions to dedicate time as a team to filling out an action plan and adhering to it. We are attaching a template for this plan with some content already filled in to get you started.

[If applicable] **Utilization workshop:** To aid in filling out the action plan, we would like to schedule a 90-minute utilization workshop with core users of the evaluation. This will likely include those on this email chain, but it also might make sense to include leadership and/or implementing partners. There are different approaches to this workshop and we are open to your thoughts on what would be most useful. For example, (1) we can facilitate a conversation about prioritizing recommendations, explore if there is agreement with the recommendations, discuss potential amendments, and then discuss potential actions, or (2) if there is general agreement with the recommendations and priorities, then we can jump to concrete actions to be taken.

It would be good to set up a planning meeting for this session where we can discuss the goals, format, and attendees. Please also let us know potential dates that would work for the workshop in the coming weeks.

Utilization follow-up: As discussed earlier, we will conduct two rounds of follow-up on the action plan implementation. Each round consists of an approximately 30-minute meeting where we ask about the status of the action plan and examples of utilization, among other questions.

The first follow-up should be at a point during action plan implementation, and the second should be once many of the actions should have already been undertaken. The default for these follow-ups are three and six months after developing the action plan, but we can adjust these times to what makes the most sense given your expected timeline. Even though these meetings are far out, we like to put a date on the calendar and send an invitation to avoid a lengthy back and forth later on (but of course these dates can change if more pressing issues come up).

We like to conduct the interview with at least two people from the technical office although others in the core stakeholder group including from the program office are welcome to join. As there is at times expected turnover of staff, we would like to identify these individuals now.

We look forward to talking through these issues with you.

Best,
XXXX

Utilization workshop if applicable (original tasking)

Taskings with recommendations should have a utilization workshop but this will be discussed at the tasking development stage and noted on the tasking request.

The goal of the workshop is to begin to fill out the action plan. While it is likely necessary to discuss the recommendations, it is essential to steer the conversation into specific actions that could/should be taken. It is unlikely that there will be time to identify persons responsible or timelines but ideally this would also be discussed. Recognizing the limits of the workshop, it will be essential to preserve at least ten minutes to discuss next steps. This should include:

1. Clarification that the study team will send notes/output from the workshop.
2. Identification of a commissioning OU POC (likely the study POC) to coordinate action plan development/refinement and to return it to the study team (or to the E&L Team if it contains procurement sensitive information).
3. Next steps to finalize the action plan. This would likely entail the POC using the study team's draft action plan and workshop notes to develop a final version (and managing

commissioning OU clearance if required), subsequent meetings to discuss other recommendations, identification of individuals to draft actions in response to recommendations not discussed, or a combination of these.

4. Clarification of the follow-up process, identification of the POC for follow-up, determination of when follow-up should occur. The default is three and six months after the workshop; however, this could be longer or shorter based on the nature of the actions to be taken. See sampling protocol for more details. Dates should be set with the POC by the end of the workshop.

Lead to coordinate finalization and implementation of the action plan: [commissioning OU POC's name]	Timeline for each step (cumulative time)
Date for final draft of the action plan to be shared among commissioning stakeholders	2 weeks (2)
Date for comments to be due	2 weeks (4)
Date for revisions	2 weeks (6)
Date to finalize and for any needed clearances and share with LP and DRG Center	2 weeks (8)
POCs for follow-up: [at least two names of technical officers plus any others]	
Date and time of first follow-up	13 weeks (21) Day/Month/Year: Time
Date and time of second follow-up	13 weeks (34) Day/Month/Year: Time

Post-utilization workshop (original tasking)

Within one week of the utilization workshop the LP will start a new email thread for follow-up and use this same email thread for all future communication:

Dear USAID/XXX colleagues,

Many thanks for the fruitful discussion the other day. We very much appreciate you devoting the time for this important conversation. We are sending along XXX output from the workshop. In addition we discussed the following next steps:

(Paste in table from above)

Please feel free to reach out to us and our DRG Center colleagues with any questions or concerns that you have. We look forward to hearing how things develop.

Best,
XXXX

1ST FOLLOW-UP PLANNING (SI3-14/CB053 TASKING)

The LP will send an email to the entire commissioning stakeholder group four weeks prior to the agreed to date. It is important to reach out early to give them time to update the action plan with actions taken to date, and/or to take actions if no/limited progress has been made at the time of outreach. Please cc the SI314/CB053 activity manager, original tasking activity manager(s), and COR. Email language can be adapted but should contain the following content.

Dear USAID/XXX colleagues,

I'm writing to you from CB/SI to follow up on the XXXX tasking. As discussed, we are carrying out follow-up at two points in time following the conclusion of the evaluation/assessment/study.

Confirmation: The first follow-up is scheduled for [XXX date] from [XXX time] to [XXX time] with [technical POC1] and [technical POC2]. I wanted to confirm that this time will still work. If not, please suggest a few windows as alternatives.

Action plan update: We ask that you please review the action plan (link here), check in with your colleagues, and update the status of any action items between now and the meeting. We would also be grateful if you could share the updated version with us a few business days in advance of the meeting.

Content of the interview: Among other questions, in the interview we will be asking follow-up questions on the status of the action plan and asking if there are any concrete examples of how the evaluation/assessment/study has been used. It's important to mention that while we are asking about action plan progress and examples of utilization, this is not a "gotcha" exercise and so above all we value your frank and honest assessment. The overall purpose of these follow-up interviews is to assist stakeholders and decision-makers to make fruitful use of the valuable research you have devoted time, energy, and funding to commission.

Many thanks and we look forward to speaking with you!

Best,
XXXX

1ST FOLLOW-UP SESSION

Follow-up instrument (here)

POST 1ST FOLLOW-UP

Within one week of the interview, the LP should enter data from the interview into the utilization tracker and generate a report using the report template. To share that report, the LP should send a follow-up email to the full commissioning stakeholder group, plus the original tasking activity manager(s), plus the COR.

Dear USAID/XXX colleagues,

Many thanks for taking the time to speak with us the other day about the action plan and utilization efforts. We very much appreciate it. We are sending along a brief report that summarizes key points and provides a point of comparison against other evaluation and research taskings.

We will reach out again around [XXX date] in advance of the second follow-up interview, currently scheduled for [XXX date and time].

We look forward to speaking to you then. In the meantime, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Best,
XXXX

2ND FOLLOW-UP PLANNING

This repeats the 1st follow-up. The LP will send an email to the entire commissioning stakeholder group four weeks prior to the agreed-to date. It is important to reach out early to give them time to update the action plan with actions taken to date and/or to take actions if no/limited progress has been made at the time of outreach. Please cc the SI314/CB053 activity manager, original tasking activity manager(s), and COR. Email language can be adapted but should contain the following content.

> Dear USAID/XXX colleagues,
>
> I'm writing to you from CB/SI to follow up again on the XXXX tasking. As discussed, we are carrying out follow-up at two points in time following the conclusion of the evaluation/assessment/study.
>
> **Confirmation**: The second follow-up is scheduled for [XXX date] from [XXX time] to [XXX time] with [technical POC1] and [technical POC2]. I wanted to confirm that this time will still work. If not, please suggest a few windows as alternatives.
>
> **Action plan update**: As with the first follow-up, we ask that you please review the action plan (link here), check in with your colleagues, and update the status of any action items between now and the meeting. We would also be grateful if you could share the updated version with us a few business days in advance of the meeting.
>
> **Content of the interview**: As before, among other questions in the interview we will be asking follow-up questions on the status of the action plan and asking if there are any concrete examples of how the evaluation/assessment/study has been used. It's important to mention that while we are asking about action plan progress and examples of utilization, this is not a "gotcha" exercise and so above all we value your frank and honest assessment. The overall purpose of these follow-up interviews is to assist stakeholders and decision-makers to make fruitful use of the valuable research you have devoted time, energy, and funding to commission.
>
> Many thanks and we look forward to speaking with you!
>
> Best,
> XXXX

2ND FOLLOW-UP SESSION

Follow-up instrument (here)

POST 2ND FOLLOW-UP

Within one week of the interview, the LP should enter data from the interview into the utilization tracker and generate a report using the report template. To share that report, the LP should send a follow-up email to the full commissioning stakeholder group, plus the original tasking activity manager(s), plus the COR.

Dear USAID/XXX colleagues, Many thanks for taking the time to speak with us the other day about the action plan and utilization efforts. We are grateful for your time. We are sending along a brief report that summarizes key points and provides a point of comparison against other evaluation and research taskings. At this time no further follow-up is planned; however, we hope that the learning from the evaluation/tasking continues to bear fruit. We've enjoyed working with you over this time and look forward to future evaluations. In the meantime, please feel free to follow up with our DRG Center colleagues about any questions or concerns you might have, or to commission more research. Best, XXXX

AUDRA: USAID Evaluation and Learning Products Utilization – Interview Guide

Intro and Consent Statement: Thank you for your participation in this interview about the use and dissemination of [the evaluation/learning product]. The goal for today's interview is to obtain your views on how useful this [evaluation/report] has been and to document the ways in which it was (or was not) used after it was completed. This interview will take approximately thirty minutes.

Module A: Tasking Details (to be filled in prior to the interview at the conclusion of the base tasking)

Question	***Response***
A1 Tasking no.	
A2 Doc #	
A3 Technical Area 1	
A4 Technical Area 2	
A5 Methods (Renamed to Type)	
A6 Region	
A7 Countries	
A8 Title	
A9 Publication year	
A10 Research questions	
A11 Findings	
A12 DEC link	

Module B: Dissemination Details (to be filled out prior to the interview as part of the base tasking by LP. If USAID is conducting the interview skip B3-B5. Interview questions start at B7d. Note: Ask Mission for any missing items or clarifications)

Question	*Response/Entry*	*Indicator*
B0 Was a utilization briefing conducted early in the evaluation/study process	Yes No	Percent yes
B1 Was there a two-pager or other infographic created? [link]		
B2 Were there any other learning products created? [link]		
B2a [If not recorded by team and needs to be asked in an interview then ask this question and skip B3-5] Let's talk about dissemination presentations. What if any presentations of the findings were done? This might include an outbrief, a presentation at the draft stage, a presentation or multiple presentations of the final report.		
B3 Was there an **outbrief presentation** ? (This is a presentation after most or all data was collected but prior to analysis and writing. Core evaluation stakeholders typically include USAID and program implementing partners.)		
B4 Was there a dissemination/briefing event of the **draft evaluation** report? (Core evaluation stakeholders typically include USAID and program implementing partners.)		
B5 Was there a dissemination/briefing event of the **final evaluation** report? (Core evaluation stakeholders typically include USAID and program implementing partners.)		
B6 Either as part of the above or in a separate event, was there a dissemination presentation to share the findings from this study with a larger group of stakeholders than core OU and IP		

stakeholders? These may include government, civil society, academic institutions, private sector, or other stakeholders not affiliated with USAID. This might be a new event or any of the previous events. [link]		
B6a Approximately how many people attended the largest presentation?		
B7 Which of the following types of people attended any of these presentations: [select all] 1. Prime IP staff 2. IP subcontractors/sub-grantees 3. USAID staff from the Mission / OU 4. USAID staff from other Missions /OUs (this requires more than a small number of DRG Bureau staff) 5. Host country government partners 6. Study participants 7. The broader IP community 8. Other (e.g., academics, media, general public) [Answer options = yes/no for all items]		B7a. Percent with at least core presentation (not NA or 1,2,or 3 selected) B7b. Percent to larger USAID community (option 4 selected) B7c. Percent beyond core stakeholders (options 5,6,7,or 8 selected),
B7d. [To ask in the interview] Were there any additional efforts to disseminate the findings? (e.g., one-on-one briefings, targeted email outreach, raised findings in meetings, included in newsletters). To whom?		
B7e. Was the report or a summary shared with study participants?		Percent
B8 Was there a workshop or meeting held after the study was completed with core project stakeholders to discuss recommendations, which recommendations to accept, amend, and reject or to develop an action plan?		Percent

B9 Was a post-evaluation/learning action plan (PEAP/PLAP) finalized (and cleared, if necessary)? [link]		Percent
B10 Considering the percent of recommendations responded to, the level of detail in the action plan, the assignment of responsibility, and identification of timelines would you say that overall the PEAP/PLAP is (a) very poor, (b) poor, (c) fair, (d) good, or (e) very good?		

Module C: Interview Details (to be filled out prior to the interview)

Question	*Response*
C1 Interviewer 1	
C2 Interviewer 2	
C3 Interviewee 1	
C4 Interviewee 2	
C5 Interviewee 3	
C6 Date	
C7 1st or 2nd follow-up	

Module D: Utilization

Question	*Answer options*	*Indicator*

D0a. [If a PEAP/PLAP was created:] Has the post-evaluation action plan (PEAP) been updated? [Only ask if this has not been addressed over email. Ideally, the POC would have provided an updated plan prior to the interview.]	1=Yes 2=No 97=Do not know/do not recall 99=Not applicable	
D0b. [If yes and not provided by email:] Could you provide us with an electronic copy of the updated PEAP? [If procurement sensitivities, this could be sent to the DRG Bureau directly.]	1=Yes 2=No 97=Do not know/do not recall 99=Not applicable	
D1. Can you provide any specific examples of how the [evaluation/study] influenced USAID operations, including strategy, activity design, or activity implementation? In other words, what action have you or others taken in response to the evaluation/study? [Probe based on recommendations or actions in the action plan]	Open-ended	
D1a. Can you tell me about any additional actions that are planned or in progress and likely to be completed in the future?		
D2. In your view and thinking about your responses above, how much influence did the study have on your USAID team's operations, including strategy, activity design, and activity implementation? Negligible, minor, moderate, or major? [If the response does not correspond with previous statements (e.g., no concrete examples above but moderate influence), then clarify with respondent.][If there are multiple respondents with different views then provide an average of the respondents]	1=Negligible or no influence 2=Minor influence 3=Moderate influence 4=Major influence 97=Don't know	Average score

D3. [If negligible or minor:] Why do you think the [evaluation/study] did not have more influence on USAID's operations? Probes: Were there aspects of USAID that either favored or disfavored utilization (e.g., leadership interest, culture of learning in the Mission, learning champions)? Were there aspects of the [evaluation/study] that either favored or disfavored utilization (e.g., length, timeliness, clarity of presentation, quality of recommendations, dissemination efforts, utilization efforts)?	Open-ended	
D4. [If moderate or major:] What do you think were the key reasons that this study was able to influence USAID's activity design and implementation? See probes above		
D5. We've been talking about how the [evaluation/study] influenced USAID operations. However, regardless of whether or not a study impacts operations, evaluations/studies can also influence or fail to influence our general learning and how we think about a DRG problem or potential solutions. Is there any general learning that you would say came out of this [evaluation/study]? Examples of general learning may include operational or methodological knowledge on how to conduct a [type of product produced] or broader technical knowledge about [sector of tasking]		
D6. Overall, how much did the study contribute to general learning within your USAID team? Negligible, minor, moderate, or major? [If there are multiple respondents with different views then provide an average of the respondents]	1=Negligible or no contribution 2=Minor contribution 3=Moderate contribution 4=Major contribution 97=Don't know	Average score

D7-D8. In hindsight is there anything that USAID or the [evaluation/study] team should have done differently to increase [evaluation/study] use? Let's start with USAID (D7) and then I'll ask about the [evaluation/study] team (D8). Probes D7: Asked for dissemination efforts, conducted socialization with stakeholders, utilization efforts (e.g., action planning and follow through), getting the SOW right, including the questions asked. Probes D8: Methods and research conducted, quality and clarity of the report, communication of key findings, communication and coordination throughout.		

Module E: Wrap-Up

Question	*Answer options*	*Indicator*
E0. Is there any further dissemination that you would like to see? For example, Have there been any changes or developments since the original research that may have introduced new or additional audiences who could benefit from the findings? Were any stakeholders missed in the initial tasking dissemination events?		
E1. Do you have any other comments on utilization and implementation that you want to share with us?	Open-ended	
E2. Interviewer notes/concerns with the interview		
E3. [If a second interview is planned] As you might remember we like to check in at two points in time. Given that some of what we talked about is still in progress is there a good point in the coming months where you would expect to have made further progress?		

LER III Performance Evaluation Scope of Work
Activity Name

Date

Summary

Activity Name	
USAID Operating Unit	
Implementer(s)	
Cooperative Agreement / Contract#	
Total Estimated Ceiling of the Evaluated Activity	
Life of the Activity	
Active Geographic Regions	
Required evaluation? (See ADS 201.3.6.5, page 104)	*[Yes/No]*
External or internal evaluation	
Evaluation type (See ADS 201.3.6.4, page 102)	*[Developmental, formative, process/implementation, outcome]* *[Baseline, midline/mid-term, endline/final, longitudinal]*

Purpose and intended use: *[Define why you are conducting the evaluation and how you plan to use it. Specifically, what decisions will this evaluation help inform? Common categories include improving an existing intervention, strengthening sustainability, and informing a follow-on, but the more specific the better. For example, are there any specific concerns that are prompting the evaluation (e.g., implementation challenges, contextual changes)? The clearer the purpose, the* *more likely the evaluation will produce useful findings and conclusions. Use this session to also clarify the primary and secondary audiences.*

Background *[Add background information on the activity being evaluated. This is typically one page in length. Content may entail a description of the DRG problem and context followed by a description of the intervention, including the target population, the theory of change, workstreams, outputs, outcomes, and a summary of any substantive modification in the implementation plan/approach. You can also include links, references, or add documents as an annex to give the evaluation team more context. This might include maps with geographic areas of operation, activity logic model, implementation work plan, activity MEL plan, previous evaluations.]*

Evaluation questions *[Your questions should help you achieve the evaluation purpose and evaluation use laid out above. There should be no more than five questions. If the PE asks whether an intervention achieved a particular outcome/result/objective, the likely methodology must be able to answer that question. See the Evaluation Question Development Workbook (forthcoming) for support in developing questions. The ultimate questions should be:*

- *Limited in scope: It is often not desirable to ask broad questions about the entire activity. Rather the questions should focus on areas where we need to learn to inform decision-making.*
- *Clear: Vague terms (e.g., sustainability, effectiveness) should be defined and clarified. It is often desirable to include a short paragraph after the question to clarify terms, lay out potential lines of inquiry, and identify hypotheses to be explored.*
- *Feasible: Questions should be answerable with the available research methods. For example, you should avoid questions about outcomes if there are not existing measures of outcomes and if the team will not be able to accurately measure outcomes with the methods available to them.]*

Evaluation design and methodology *[The evaluation team will be expected to propose a methodology, but if there are certain expectations or evaluation options that have been assumed to formulate budget expectations, these should be noted here.]* The evaluation team should propose a methodology to answer the evaluation questions. Below are some illustrative methodological options.

[If document review: Provide any details on the documentation that will be provided to be analyzed and if there is an expectation that the evaluation team conducts additional review of any secondary literature or literature/evidence from other countries or other USAID projects.

Program and related documentation should be made available to the evaluation team at the time of commissioning the evaluation.]

[If there is existing data: Provide information on any useful existing data expected to be used in the evaluation, including baseline data, MEL data, and secondary sources of data. Note any concerns with data quality or data limitations. Discuss with implementing partners how relevant raw monitoring data can be shared.]

[If survey data collection. If a survey is to be conducted, commissioners should work with implementing partners (IPs) to develop the sampling frame (e.g., list of civil society organizations, list of project participants) with contact information.] It is expected that the evaluation team will conduct a survey. The evaluation methodology should make clear how a sampling frame will be developed, sampling will occur, key outcomes will be measured, and steps to mitigate sampling or measurement bias. Final reporting should note any potential sources of measurement or sampling error, sample size, weighting, margins of error, and response, cooperation, and contact rates. Particular attention should be paid to avoiding or mitigating social desirability bias. Survey analysis should entail comparisons, including with a comparison group, between programmatic approaches, and between subgroups, including gender. Any comparisons included in the report should distinguish between observed and statistically significant differences.

[If qualitative data collection: If it is expected that the evaluation team will select units or geographical sites, then a database of such units/sites with basic information about them should be developed to aid in unit/site selection. Similarly, IPs should be asked to gather data on program participants to aid in interview selection.] It is expected that the evaluation team will select some units or geographical sites for deeper study including interviews and/or focus or group discussions. Proposed evaluation approaches should be clear about the population of units/sites, the selection criteria, and the units/sites selected. Similarly, the proposed evaluation approach should identify targeted populations of potential study participants, selection/sampling criteria, the targeted number of study participants, and how study participants will be recruited. The evaluation team should also be clear about how qualitative data will be captured and how human subjects will be protected. Furthermore, the team should detail how data will be compiled and analyzed to arrive at findings and conclusions. It is expected that teams will produce detailed soft-copy notes or transcripts as raw data and that these data will be systematically analyzed.

Deliverables *[Below is standard deliverable language. There are some choices that OUs will need to make in the text below. Please note that our standard template includes robust* *dissemination and steps towards utilization, including an ADS required post-evaluation action plan to be completed by the commissioning OU and followed-up on by the learning partner.]*

The learning partner is expected to submit the following deliverables. All deliverables should be consistent with at least ALEC minimum guidance [link to guidance document]:

- **Concept Note and Budget:** The Concept Note (CN) should include proposed evaluation team members, justification for selected team members, any issues for discussion with USAID in developing a detailed work plan, a timeline, and a budget narrative. The learning partner is welcome to propose deviations from this SOW, but any meaningful deviations or omissions should be clearly highlighted and discussed. Otherwise, it will be assumed that all SOW elements will be met. A preliminary call to address any concerns or questions should be held prior to CN and Budget submission.
- **Kickoff meeting and regular check-ins**: An in-brief will be held with the evaluation team and the USAID stakeholders. This will be an opportunity for the evaluation team to raise clarifying questions prior to the start of the work. Regular check-ins should be established either on a biweekly or monthly basis depending on the stage of the research to report on status, learning to date, and ensure effective communication and coordination.
- **Evaluation Design and Work Plan:** The Evaluation Design and Work Plan should include an explanation of the evaluation design, methodology, and data sources. In explaining the evaluation approach, the learning partner should include the following:

    Site and respondent selection approach: Provide detailed information about how both (a) sites/units have been selected and (b) how respondents will be selected, including information about how the sites/units and respondents relate to the larger population of implementation sites/units and program stakeholders.

    Data capture and study participant protections: Describe how evaluation teams will capture a close to verbatim record of each qualitative event, either as a primary data capture strategy (if transcription is not possible) or a backup strategy (if recording and transcribing). It should also detail security protocols to protect study participants, including efforts to limit the collection of and access to personally identifiable information.

    Data analysis: Describe a documentable and systematic approach for arriving at findings from all data sources (e.g., desk review, interviews, focus groups, surveys, secondary data) and documenting that process. For analysis of qualitative data, at minimum this should include structured thematic or content analysis.

Design matrix: Provide a table linking evaluation questions to (1) data sources, (2) data collection methods, and (3) data analysis methods.

Limitations and mitigation measures: Identify any expected limitations or risks to the evaluation design and mitigation measures planned. Mitigation measures need not eliminate the limitation or risk.

Training and quality assurance: Describe any processes to train evaluation team members and data collectors and to ensure quality control throughout (e.g., in developing the evaluation approach and instruments, during data collection, during data analysis, and in the report writing).

Dissemination and utilization planning: Describe how deliverables will be shared with stakeholders, including the draft report, what presentations will be offered and what stakeholders will be invited. Drafting this section will require coordination with USAID.

Timeline: Provide a timeline or Gantt chart. Any subsequent revisions to this timeline should be agreed to and the timeline updated.

Draft instruments: Annexes should include draft instruments. Instruments should aim to minimize any potential social desirability bias.

- **Outbrief: Preliminary findings presentation**: [Recommended when field work is being conducted] At the conclusion of field work, the evaluation team should provide an outbrief to key evaluation stakeholders with preliminary findings or emerging themes summarized in a PowerPoint or similar file. The outbrief should be used as an opportunity to get USAID input on remaining gaps, to validate any preliminary findings, and to get input on potential recommendations. Teams should discuss next steps with stakeholders, including any pending data collection and how data will be analyzed and how evidence will be presented in the report.

- **Draft report:** The draft and final report should be consistent with USAID evaluation report requirements (See Mandatory Reference) and ALEC minimum guidance [link to report].

  The main body of the report should contain a brief methods section with more detailed methodological information provided in an annex. The report should provide detailed information about how both (a) sites/units and (b) respondents were selected, including information about how the sites/units and respondents relate to the larger population of implementation sites/units and program stakeholders. The report should note any nonresponse challenges and explain any deviations from original respondent selection in response to logistical or security considerations, as well as the implications of these deviations on findings. The methods sections should also detail how data was captured and how it was analyzed to arrive at findings and conclusions. The design matrix should be updated and included in the annex.

Among other requirements, any methodological limitations should be clearly noted, findings and conclusions should be well supported, and recommendations should be derived from the findings and conclusions. While the evaluation team has full discretion over the recommendations, it is desirable that they are developed with USAID input to maximize relevance, feasibility, and use.

There should be a summary of the question response below each evaluation question. Each finding should appear as a bolded topic sentence followed by relevant supporting evidence. The report should favor brevity; key points should be well highlighted; and content should be easy to understand.

Annexes may be used for detailed, technical, or less essential content. The annex should also contain the SOW and any potential conflicts of interest declarations. The executive summary should be translated into XXX. A list of individuals to receive and review the draft should be developed with USAID ahead of submission and shared directly.

- **Presentation of findings, discussion, and recommendations workshop:** To aid in obtaining feedback, foster learning and utilization at the draft stage, and to develop or refine recommendations, the learning partners should present findings from the draft report to evaluation stakeholders and discuss recommendations. This might entail sharing a three column table with (1) summary of findings, (2) implications for decision-making, (3) draft or preliminary recommendations.
- **Utilization workshop and draft post-evaluation action plan**: [Please note the strong focus on utilization of evaluation findings. All commissioning OUs should participate in a utilization briefing at the SOW development stage.]The learning partner should facilitate a discussion with the stakeholder group on utilization of the findings and develop a post-evaluation action plan template to aid in planning (see also ADS 201.3.6.10.a). (It is the responsibility of the commissioning operating unit (OU) to develop, finalize, and implement this plan.) The learning partner should follow-up with OUs to obtain the final post-evaluation action plan. If this action plan contains sensitive but unclassified (SBU) information (such as procurement sensitive information), the DRG Bureau will obtain a

copy of the final post-evaluation action plan. The utilization workshop should occur after the draft report comments are provided so that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are fresh in users' minds. If substantial revisions are required, this workshop and the action planning may be postponed until after the next revision.

- **Final report:** A final report should address reviewers comments and include both a clean copy and track changes copy with response to comments. Alternatively, a comment matrix may be submitted. One / two round(s) of revisions is (are) envisioned [select one or two rounds based on the complexity of the tasking] but an additional submission may be required if there are major concerns with the initial draft or to accommodate small edits. The final report should include an abstract. Once approved, a 508 compliant report will be posted to the DEC.

- **Draft and Final Evaluation brief:** The evaluation team should produce a brief targeted towards a specific audience selected in consultation with USAID. The brief should not repeat the executive summary of the report but should provide actionable information to a specific audience. This should also be translated into XXXX. Once approved, a 508 compliant brief will be posted to the DEC.

- **Data submitted to the DDL:** *[If a survey has been conducted using a large sample size representative of a larger population, then include this section on data submission to the DDL. Small-n or non-representative surveys and qualitative data are not typically submitted to the DDL; however, if the evaluation is expected to entail highly structured qualitative interviews of a sample that is intended to be representative of a larger population, then data anonymization and DDL submission may be warranted. Consent language used at the time of data collection will need to note if data is to be anonymized and made publically available. Please note that non-anonymized quantitative or qualitative data should not be shared with USAID, IPs or the public, as it puts study participants at risk and undermines confidentiality.]* Survey data should be anonymized and posted to the DDL.

- **Dissemination event:** At least one dissemination event is envisioned with a larger USAID and non-USAID audience. The audience and format for this event will be developed as part of the Evaluation Design and Workplan dissemination plan and updated as needed.

- **Utilization follow-up:** Three months and six months from the finalization of the plan, the learning partner or the DRG Bureau will follow-up to track progress in action plan implementation. (Follow-up work will be billed under a separate tasking.)

Deliverables timetable [Please review the timetable to ensure that evaluation evidence will be available in time for important decision making].

Item	Time (cumulative weeks)
Concept note, budget, and teaming	3 weeks (3)
USAID review and approval	2 weeks (5)
Kickoff call	1 week (6)
Evaluation work plan	4 weeks (10)
USAID review and approval	2 weeks (12)
Planning	5 weeks (17)
Data collection and outbrief	3 weeks (20)
Draft report	5 weeks (25)
USAID draft report review and presentation of findings to stakeholders	2 weeks (27)
Utilization workshop, draft action plan, and Final report	2 weeks (29)
Brief submission	2 weeks (31)
Brief review	1 week (32)
Brief finalization and Dissemination event	2 weeks (34)
Final action plan submitted by the operating unit	2 weeks (36)

Evaluation team

[What are the characteristics of the team you would want to see answering the question. Do you want comparative subject matter expertise, local context expertise, specific evaluation methodology expertise? Teams are often two internationals with two nationals but this varies based on the evaluation.] The evaluation team is expected to include a team leader and [list other positions as needed but it is not necessary to specify specific positions] and collectively they should have demonstrated expertise in the following areas:

- Experience leading and conducting evaluations of DRG development aid programming
- Sectoral expertise on [insert topical focus]
- Extensive local knowledge on [sectoral focus] in [country]

- Expertise in qualitative methods, qualitative data collection, and qualitative data analysis
- Expertise in survey methods, survey question design, survey implementation, and survey data analysis [if a survey is included].
- Strong English writing skills and demonstrated evidence of strong past written products by the expected lead author.
- An ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively and respectfully with USAID, implementing partners, and evaluation participants

Given the importance of local knowledge, local team members should form at least half of the evaluation team and where possible a majority or the entire evaluation team.

Annexes

[Include any relevant documents and links here. We typically establish a shared google drive where files are shared. While not all information needs to be made available at the tasking stage, it will need to be completed by the time the concept note and budget are approved.This should include: program descriptions, factsheets, websites, quarterly and annual reports, annual work plans, the MEL plan, MEL data, data quality assessments, past evaluation or learning products, site information to aid in any site selection, and program participant information to aid in respondent selection]

Additional resources: How to Note: Evaluation Statement of Work (2022) and a Template (2022)

TASKING MANAGEMENT - EVIDENCE REVIEW TEMPLATE

Evidence Review Scope of Work Template and Example
Topic Name

Date

Note: This SOW template uses an example from USAID Liberia. Any text specific to the example appears in italics. [Additional guidance information appears in brackets].

Summary
Conduct a short evidence review on the effectiveness of classroom-based civic education for USAID/Liberia.

USAID Operating Unit	*USAID/Liberia*
Problem statement	*Low levels of civic engagement and increasing non-democratic attitudes.*
Outcomes of interest	● *Civic knowledge: Understanding of course material* ● *Civic skills: Includes technical skills (how to read a ballot, organizing civic action) but also critical thinking and communication skills.* ● *Civic attitudes: Tolerance of opposing viewpoints, trust in institutions, sense of efficacy, sense of national identity, belief in the rights of minority groups* ● *Civic behavior: Voting, signing a petition, contacting representatives, volunteering in the community.*
Programmatic approach(es)	*Classroom-based civic education*
Variants on on the programmatic approach(es) considered	● *In-class, lecture based: Traditional classroom education* ● *Participatory learning in and out of class: Role-playing, mock trials, student poll workers* ● *Service learning: Research and take action on civic issue, volunteering, student government*

Purpose and intended use
This evidence review aims to inform activity design [Consider procurement sensitivities. The learning partner can be asked to sign an NDA).

Evidence review questions
The evidence review should answer the following questions:

[If a program approach has not yet been selected and you want to know the best approach to achieve a specific outcomes, then the review should ask: "What works, what doesn't work, for whom, and under what conditions in achieving X outcome?"]

[If a specific programmatic approach has been selected or is being considered you may want to ask: "What are the impacts of X approach on outcomes A, B, and C? Is there variation in effectiveness by group, country context, or other intervening factors?"]

Approach

The evidence review should communicate information in an easy to understand and actionable format but without ignoring important nuances or key intervening variables. It is expected that the evidence review will draw on experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational research and include both published and grey literature. While the evidence review can draw from experiences globally, there should be a particular focus on the applicability of the evidence to the *Liberian context. This should include drawing on evidence from other low-income and conflicted affected counties.*

The Evidence Review document should stand as a formal deliverable that will be made publicly available on the DEC. Nonetheless, it is equally as important to ensure a meaningful dialogue between decision-makers and the reviewers to foster a deeper understanding of the evidence.

Deliverables

The learning partner is expected to submit the following deliverables:

- **CV of reviewer and budget:** It is not necessary to submit a Concept Note, although the learning partner should note any concerns with the tasking. The learning partner should submit the CV of the reviewer with a justification for why s/he is a good fit for the tasking.
- **Kickoff meeting**: A kick-off meeting will allow the reviewer and the evidence review users to meet and provide an opportunity for the reviewer to raise clarifying questions prior to the start of the work.
- **Draft evidence review:** The draft evidence review should follow the Evidence Review Template, Outline, and Guidance document. This includes: ensuring that key findings or conclusions from the evidence stand out, communicating confidence in the conclusion visually and through the narrative, providing hyperlinks to sources, offering specific, actionable recommendations based on the evidence, and including an annotated bibliography of around five recommended readings. The report should favor brevity, be written to a practitioner audience, and the body should not exceed six pages. Visualizations are encouraged. Annexes may be used for detailed,

technical, or less essential content. A list of individuals to receive and review the draft should be developed with USAID ahead of submission and shared directly.

- **Presentation of the evidence and discussion:** The learning partner should organize a 60-90 minute event to include a very brief presentation of the evidence review findings with the bulk of the time reserved for discussion. USAID participants should attend having read the review and prepared to ask questions to better understand the evidence. While the evidence review is a written deliverable, it is equally if not more important to ensure a meaningful dialogue between decision-makers and the reviewer.
- **Final evidence review:** A final evidence review should address reviewers comments and include both a clean copy and track changes copy with response to comments. Alternatively, a comment matrix may be submitted. Only one round of revisions is envisioned but a third submission may be required if there are major concerns with the initial draft or to accommodate small edits. Once approved, a 508 compliant report should be posted to the DEC.
- **[Optional] Dissemination event:** [If the review is of interest to a broader audience a dissemination event might be included. This can be recorded and included in the procurement package to encourage evidence-based proposals] The final review will be disseminated to a larger USAID and non-USAID audience.
- **Utilization follow-up:** Four months from the completion of the evidence review, the learning partner will briefly follow-up with the users to discuss how the review was or was not used.

Deliverables timetable [Please review the timetable to ensure that evaluation evidence will be available in time for important decision making]

Item	Time (cumulative weeks)
CV and budget	2 weeks (2)
USAID review and approval	1 weeks (3)
Kickoff call	1 week (4)
Draft evidence review	3 weeks (7)
USAID review and presentation and discussion	2 weeks (9)
Final evidence review	1 weeks (10)
Posted to the DEC and [Optional] Dissemination event	2 weeks (12)
Follow-up	24 weeks (36)

Reviewer

The reviewer should bring pre-existing expertise on the topic and already have familiarity with the evidence. Doctoral students, post-docs, and assistant professors should be considered. [If applicable] The reviewer and learning partner staff will be asked to submit a nondisclosure agreement.

DRG Deliverable Review for Learning and Use

Tasking deliverable:
Date:
Reviewer:

1. Key Findings

Think of these as items that you want to remember six months from now. We recommend cutting and pasting in key points, key quotes, and key figures (using the snipping tool).

2. What actions we should take based on this deliverable

This is the most important reflection that we want to be doing based on the deliverable.

3. Big picture concerns with the report that need to be addressed to finalize

We often have a large number of comments that go back to our learning partners. This section is a chance to step back and really highlight the main concerns that need to be addressed. Rather than just react to what is in the deliverable, you might also think about what might be missing.

Evidence and Learning Event Registry (Incomplete)

Talk name	Speaker(s)	Affiliation	Talk type	Audience	Year	Month	Recorded	PPT link	Document link	Summary
Learning from Poland's Redemocratization	Maria Skora, Jakub Jaraczewski	Democracy Reporting	Tuesday Group		2024	12	No			Our speakers will discuss the efforts being undertaken to re-democratize Poland after an 8-year period of weakening. How can a government de-politicize institutions and re-establish rule of law compliant bodies - and do so using a process that itself complies with rule of law? What challenges is the current pro-democracy government facing and what strategies are they using? Speakers will also address how eight years has exacted wear and tear on the societal fabric and how this might be repaired.
Youth Political Engagement	Horacio Larreguy	ITAM	E&L Talk Series		2024	12	Yes - missing			presentation and discussion about youth political engagement with Horacio Larreguy, Professor of Professor of Economics and Political Science at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) in Mexico City.
To Improve Evaluation Questions, Ask the Right Questions	Andrew Green, Aleta Starosta	Cloudburst	E&L team event (other)		2024	12	Yes - missing			The webinar explores three components of a successful evaluation question - feasibility, scope, and clarity - and offers examples, sample language, and processes for deriving an appropriate set of evaluation questions. The presentation concludes with guidance for study commissioners to be followed by a discussion.
Judicial Backsliding	Lydia Tiede	University of Houston	E&L Talk Series		2024	11	Yes			The presentation explores recent research about why and how elected leaders seek to undermine courts. The presentation will define judicial backsliding and present empirical findings concerning its determinants as well as examples of this phenomenon. The presentation will also present preliminary findings concerning how courts may rebound after they have been attacked.
Supporting Innovation, Localization, Research and Learning in the Information Integrity and Resilience Space: A New	Susan Abbot, Bea Reaud	USAID	Tuesday Group		2024	11	No			Present findings from a recent report that USAID's Office of Global Trends and Technology did in partnership with USAID's New Partnerships Initiative Hub. The Global Review and Directory (SBU - internal USAID only) maps disinformation and information integrity and resilience (IIR) initiatives in the regions where USAID operates.

Global Directory to Support Healthy Information Ecosystems										
USAID's Investments in Cities 2014-2024: Findings from the Making Cities Work Program Review	Kate Marple-Cantrell, Moira O'Neill Hutson	Cloudburst, University of Virginia	GOV team event		2024	10	Yes			The goal of the Investing in Cities Literature and Program Review is to 1) aggregate together what USAID has learned across the 18 Making Cities Work (MCW) task orders and 2) complement the USAID-specific learning with broader learning from academic research about urban governance.
Tuesday Group - Inside the Political Mind	Greg Power	Global Partners Governance	Tuesday Group		2024	10	Yes			Why have efforts to strengthen the quality of governance in some of the world's most troubled states so often failed? Greg Powers tells us that it is because they almost always ignore the human side of politics. Drawing on the experience of working with hundreds of politicians in more than sixty countries, Greg explores how social norms, public expectations and the personal interests of MPs themselves shape the path of political development. Ultimately, political institutions only get stronger when politicians want to make them stronger. But in many places, there are few incentives for politicians to strengthen them, because that's not how you get elected. Instead, politicians tend to spend most of their time going around the system, rather than through it. As a result, weak states tend to stay weak. This is the conundrum that sits at the heart of Greg Power's book, Inside the Political Mind, and in this event talks about how we might address that challenge, the tensions that every aid agency has to manage, and why driving in a different country provides a useful analogy for understanding how politics really works.
Webinar: Avoiding pitfalls in USAID performance evaluations	Luis Camacho, Kate Marple-Cantrell, Daniel Sabet	Social Impact, Cloudburst, USAID	E&L team event (other)		2024	9	Yes			USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) recently commissioned a study to develop guidance on addressing seven common challenges and pain points in qualitative evaluation work, including: 1) case and site selection for small-n studies; 2) selection of respondents; 3) social desirability bias; 4) qualitative data capture; 5) qualitative data analysis; 6) evidentiary support for statements; and 7) clarity of findings to facilitate use.The webinar explores each challenge

										and offers minimum standards and good practices. The presentation concludes with guidance for study commissioners to be followed by a discussion.
Money, Power, and Manipulation: The Nexus of Transnational Corruption and Political Finance in Elections	Richard Nash	IFES	Tuesday Group		2024	9	No			Richard Nash of IFES will explore the links between transnational corruption and political finance, focusing on how illicit finance shapes electoral outcomes and political dynamics. It will also examine how corrupt practices fuel political attacks on opponents, create uneven playing fields, and undermine democratic integrity in electoral processes across borders.
Addressing Challenges in Financing Critical Subnational Infrastructure	Eugenie Birch	University of Pennsylvania	E&L Talk Series		2024	9	Yes			In this talk, Eugenie L. Birch provides an overview of subnational finance, the role of international organizations including the multilateral development banks and bilateral aid agencies in supporting investments, and review current suggestions for improving policy and programs in this area.
Do People Do What They Say They Will Do? Comparing Survey and Experiential Measures of Anti-Corruption Voting	Jake Bowers, Matthew Winters	University of Illinois	E&L Talk Series		2024	6	Yes			Survey questionnaires are a common way of collecting data for use in project evaluations. We use them to understand people's behavior, from how they might vote to how they would respond to corruption. However, do people's responses to survey questions reflect their actual behavior? With reference to scholarship on how people react to political information, Jake and Matthew compare the results of survey experiments and field experiments involving the dissemination of information about political corruption. In doing so, they show that people's stated reactions in a survey context do not always correspond to their actual behaviors in real-life situations, and raise some concerns about how best to develop an evidence base in domains that rely heavily on survey research.
Building Better Government Programs with Evidence-Based Research	Brigitte Seim, Jake Bowers	Office of Evaluation Services, University of North Carolina, University of Illinois	L COP		2024	6	Yes			Since its launch in 2015, OES has collaborated with dozens of agencies across the government, completing over 100 program evaluations. This session will delve into their research process showcasing how it has demonstrably improved federal programs.

Advancing women's political empowerment: lessons learned and ways forward	Saskia Brechenmacher	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	6	Yes			Women's political empowerment has become a critical foreign policy and assistance objective. Every year, donor governments and multilateral organizations spend millions on aid programs that train women to run for office, support women legislators, and bolster women's political networks. What ideas about gender, power, and political change guide these aid programs? How successful have they been at driving global change at a time of democratic erosion and antifeminist backlash? How can policymakers, practitioners, and advocates improve their work going forward? Saskia Brechenmacher, fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, will share key findings from her new book (with Katherine Mann): Aiding Empowerment: Democracy Promotion and Gender Equality in Politics, which critically examines international assistance for women's political empowerment across Kenya, Myanmar, Morocco, and Nepal and traces the new and recurring challenges facing the field.
Cracking the Code: Social Norms and the Anti-Corruption Puzzle	Various	Various	L COP		2024	5	Yes			Join the DRG Learning and SBC CoPs host RTI International, in partnership with Besa Global, to uncover the role of social norms in driving or hindering anti-corruption effort in two studies: USAID's SIBOL project in the Philippines and a government anti-corruption entity in Africa
Attitudes towards same-sex relationships in Africa 2014 -2023: any notable shifts or just more of the same?	Boniface Dulani		E&L Talk Series		2024	5	No			Dr. Boniface will present his research that draws from Afrobarometer data to track changes in attitudes towards homosexuality in Africa over the period 2014-2023. His research highlights countries that have recorded notable attitudinal changes over this time period and provides some preliminary explanations for those changes. In particular, his research assesses if legalization of homosexuality results in shifts in public attitudes towards same-sex relationships or if public opinion contributes to legislative changes in selected African countries.
Insights from the 2023 WJP Rule of Law Index: Turning People-Centered Rule of Law Data into Action	Elizabeth Andersen	World Justice Project	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	4	Yes			Join us for this month's Tuesday Group! Elizabeth (Betsy) Anderson will present on the 2023 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index. The Index found the rule of law declining in 59% of the countries measured. This was the 6th year in a row in which WJP found a majority of countries with declining rule of law--what WJP has characterized as a global rule of law recession. In Betsy's presentation, she will share with us details of these findings and the people-centered data collection methodologies that lie behind them. Notwithstanding the negative global rule of law trends, WJP finds some jurisdictions making

										steady progress. Betsy will also highlight some of these bright spots and share how WJP is seeing its data drive this positive change. The presentation promises insights for USAID's implementation of its new Rule of Law Policy and the data-driven, evidence-based, and people-centered approach it promotes.
Debt transparency and oversight as a global democratic norm	Kristen Sample, Corina Rebegea	NDI	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	3	Yes			In this Tuesday Group, Kristen Sample and Corina Rebegea from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) will share programming approaches aimed at enhancing borrower and lender accountability
Movements	Beyerle		E&L Talk Series		2024	4				
2023 WJP Rule of Law Index	Elizabeth Anderson	WJP	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	4	Yes			Elizabeth (Betsy) Anderson will present on the 2023 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index. The Index found the rule of law declining in 59% of the countries measured. This was the 6th year in a row in which WJP found a majority of countries with declining rule of law--what WJP has characterized as a global rule of law recession. In Betsy's presentation, she will share with us details of these findings and the people-centered data collection methodologies that lie behind them. Notwithstanding the negative global rule of law trends, WJP finds some jurisdictions making steady progress. Betsy will also highlight some of these bright spots and share how WJP is seeing its data drive this positive change. The presentation promises insights for USAID's implementation of its new Rule of Law Policy and the data-driven, evidence-based, and people-centered approach it promotes.
Debt transparency and oversight as a global democratic norm	Kristen Sample and Corina Rebegea	National Democratic Institute	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	3	Yes			Kristen Sample and Corina Rebegea from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) will share programming approaches aimed at enhancing borrower and lender accountability through:(1) Civil society monitoring and advocacy, (2) Parliamentary policy making and oversight, (3) Specialized research, monitoring and advocacy focused on women and marginalized communities, (4) Open Government solutions, (5) International advocacy/dialogues aimed at establishing debt transparency as a global democratic norm.
V-Dem	Staffan Lindberg		E&L Talk Series		2024	3				

Annual Learning Forum	Various	Various	Annual Learning Forum		2024	2	Yes			A list of all sessions and resources can be found here.
Global Virtual Help Desk for Activists Under Threat	Nathan Freitas, Lobsang Gyatso Sither	Guardian Project, Tibet Action Institution	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	2	No			The Guardian Project and Tibet Action Institute have worked together for over 15 years, focusing on how best to utilize technology to benefit non-violent activists, journalists, and human rights defenders around the world. Ensuring these groups have access to the latest digital security training, tools, and support on how to use them, has been a key focus of their collaboration. Beyond an intense focus on providing more opportunities for in-person training and community building, there was a strong realization that a need existed for better online tools to provide ongoing user support and safe ways to connect to learn more when people were apart. This has resulted in a now successfully proven model of the Secure Help Desk, which is comprised of the LINK ticketing service, and the CONVENE chat service, all built on free and open-source software. Link+Convene allows for people to ask for help through multiple channels and receive that support in a safe, reliable manner without compromising security and privacy. Learn how GP and TAI will together bring their experience and solutions to bear on the Powered by the People community.
Why Demography Matters for DRG	Loretta Bass	USAID	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2024	2	Yes			This talk by Loretta Bass will highlight findings from social and political demographic research that may inform the work of the Demography, Human Rights, and Governance Bureau. Using what is known about the demographic transition, and the interrelated changes in mortality, population growth, fertility, migration, and the population age structure, this talk will discuss trends related to democratization, human rights, and governance from a demographer's lens.
CVE	Ghayda Hasan	University of	E&L Talk Series		2024	1	Yes			
Information integrity	Natalia Bueno	University of	E&L Talk Series		2023	12	Yes			
What's Working and Why: A Stocktaking of USAID Information	Beatrice Reaud and Susan Abbott	USAID	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	11	No			Beatrice Reaud and Susan Abbott of the DRG Bureau's Global Trends and Technology Team will share findings and insights from case studies profiled in a recent in-depth Program Review of information integrity and resilience (IIR) activities carried out by NORC at the University of Chicago. The Program Review draws on information from 23 USAID-funded projects implemented in 22

Integrity And Resilience Activities										countries in all regions where USAID works, including three regional and global projects.
How (Not) to Engage with Authoritarian States	Nic Cheeseman	University of Birmingham	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre, External partners list	2023	10	Yes	Yes	ODA Report; How to engage report	Drawing on a recent OECD report, Professor Cheeseman noted that official development assistance to authoritarian states increased during the 2010s while it decreased to democratic states, begging the question if donor assistance is "doing harm" in undermining democracy. Given increasing autocratization and an inadequate response from pro-democracy states, Chesseman then presented findings from a recent report that outlined six pitfalls in how donors engage with authoritarian states and offered several recommendations. These included calculating and offsetting the cost of everyday engagement with authoritarian states and anticipating authoritarian efforts to circumvent democratic demands.
Increasing civil society oversight to tackle organized crime and corruption influence in elections: Lessons from Paraguay	Xavier Lezcano	Semillas para la Democracia	Tuesday Group	Internal:DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	10	No			Xavier Lezcano from Semillas para la Democracia (Seeds for Democracy) will present on civil society efforts to oversee political finance and reduce the influence of organized crime and corruption in elections in Paraguay. Semillas para la Democracia is a paraguayan non-governmental organization founded in 2006 that promotes the quality of democracy through increasing citizen participation, social equity and responsive governance. Xavier Lezcano is Semillas' Director of Strategic Alliances. He is a Social Psychologist, with a Bachelor in CSOs Direction (from UNSAM Argentina) and a Specialist in Latin American Studies (UFJF Brazil)
	Ofusu		E&L Talk Series		2023	9	Yes			
Briefing on the 2023 Democracy Perception Index: How People Perceive Democracy	Olaf Böhnke	The Alliance of Democracies Foundation	Tuesday Group	Internal: DRG, Sector Council,	2023	9	Yes		Report	Olaf Böhnke presented on research conducted by the Alliance of Democracies Foundation and Latana to understand how people around the world perceive the state of democracy in their country today and the major challenges that lie ahead. His presentation covered findings related to the importance of democracy, threats to democracy, global challenges that impact democracy, and geopolitics.

Unbundling Corruption to Understand It's Harms	Yuen Yuen Ang	Johns Hopkins University	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre, External partners list	2023	8	Yes		Blog	Professor Ang's research shows how different types of corruption harm countries in different ways. Her research unbundles corruption into four distinct types: grand theft, petty theft, speed money, and access money. Petty theft and grand theft directly and unambiguously hurt the economy by draining public and private wealth while delivering no benefits. Speed money relieves a headache but doesn't improve one's strength. Access money spurs growth but comes with serious side effects. Unbundling and decolonizing the measurement of corruption is necessary for reflecting upon and revitalizing democracies globally.
Political Will and Anti-Corruption	Eddy Malesky	Duke University	E&L team event (other)	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre, Study participants	2023	8	Yes		Report, Two-pager	A common refrain is that efforts to combat corruption are frustrated by a lack of political will among government officials. In this talk, colleagues from the Duke Center for International Development presented research findings in response to the DRG Center's Learning Agenda question, "How should USAID foster anti-corruption in contexts where "political will" is weak?" The research explores the serious limitations of political will as a concept and breaks it down into five more specific logics. The authors argue for a sectoral approach focused on sectoral level policy outcomes with anti-corruption as a means to achieve policy outcomes rather than an end in and of itself. They identify four promising approaches to adopt in challenging context and explore these approaches in four case studies in Vietnam, Mozambique, Peru, and Ukraine. Please join the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Bureau and the Anti-Corruption Task Force for this dissemination event.
Transnational corruption, strategic corruption, and kleptocracy in Sub-Saharan Africa	Tom Shipley, Vaclav Prusa, Julie Younes	Social Impact	E&L team event (other)	DRG Center, ACTF, study participants	2023	8	No		Yes	Researchers from Social Impact presented the results of a study on transnational corruption, strategic corruption, and kleptocracy (TASCK) in sub-Saharan African. Commissioned by the Africa Bureau the research aimed to answer the question: How, if at all, should USAID adapt, expand, and/or enhance its programming in sub-Saharan Africa to address TASCK? The research, which included case studies on elections and natural resources in Nigeria and Madagascar identified several potential points of entry.
Exploring the Role and Performance of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Five	Anja Osei	Freie Universität Berlin	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre,	2023	7	Yes			Anja walked us through her data from a survey of MPs in Botswana, Benin, Gabon, Cameroon, and Uganda. Among many interesting findings, her data clearly showed a wide gap between the expectations among constituents looking for concrete goods and services and the actual legislative authorities of MPs. The research highlights that reform-oriented policies need to take into

African Countries				External partners list						account how MPs perceive their roles and the constraints they face.
Linking Legislature-Supreme Audit Institution for government accountability	Harriet Busingye Muwanga Camilla Fredriksen Lina Panteleeva	USAID/Uganda; USAID/Georgia; INTOSAI Development Initiative	GOV team event	Internal: DRG, EGSC, PFM/PA listserv	2023	7	Yes			Legislatures and SAIs have critical roles in holding the government accountable over its use of public resources. Democratic legislatures and parliaments approve and scrutinize the use of government budgets, referred to as the “power of the purse.” Most legislators, however, do not have the expertise or staff to conduct rigorous fiscal oversight and rely on the professional standards and objective advice of SAIs. Furthemore, the link between legislatures and SAIs is often under-utilized, and communication regarding the meaning of audit reports can be poor. Despite these challenges, some SAIs are finding ways to work more effectively with counterparts in parliaments, thus reinforcing an important means for fiscal accountability. This webinar shared experiences from USAID/Georgia, USAID/Uganda and INTOSAI's International Development Initiative.
What is the Evidence on Government Responsiveness in Developing Countries?	Guy Grossman and Tara Slough	University of Pennsylvania; New York University	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre, External partners list	2023	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Guy Grossman from the University of Pennsylvania and Tara Slough from New York University walked us through a recently published review study which explores the evidence on interactions between pairings of three key actors --politicians, bureaucrats and citizens. While many programs target one pairing, for example, citizen oversight of bureaucracy, to increase responsiveness, it is likely that we need to be thinking about all three of these pairings: citizens to politicians, politicians to bureaucrats, and citizens to bureaucrats.
Online Gendered Disinformation: The Trojan Horse that Threatens Democracy	Lucina di Meco, Kristina Wilfore	She Persisted	Tuesday Group	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Gender Champions	2023	6	Yes			On June 13, She Persisted co-founders Lucina Di Meco and Kristina Wilfore presented key findings from a five-year study investigating patterns, impacts, and modus operandi of gendered disinformation campaigns against women in politics at Tuesday Group hosted by the Gender Working Group. Caroline Hubbard (E&L) introduced the talk and Meral Karan (DRI) gave opening remarks before turning it over to Lucina and Kristina. The presentation featured new evidence from Brazil, Hungary, India, Italy, and Tunisia, which is part of their #MonetizingMisogyny research series that highlights the intentional use of gendered disinformation to weaken democratic stability. The case studies illustrate how gendered disinformation has been used by political movements, and at times the government itself, to undermine women's political participation and to weaken democratic

										institutions and human rights. The research also looks at the responsibilities and responses that both state actors and digital platforms have taken - or most often, failed to take - to address this issue and suggests solutions focused on legislative frameworks, corporate accountability, and solution-oriented research and programs.
USAID Response to COVID-19 Enabled Corruption	Rick Gold; Tiernan Mennen, Ben Morse	Social Impact	E&L team event (other)	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre, past corruption event attendees	2023	5	No	Yes	Report, 2-pager	Social Impact presented findings from a recently completed Performance Evaluation of USAID's Response to COVID-19 Enabled Corruption. The study explores the degree to which USAID-funded programs adapted to corruption risks that emerged during the pandemic and the effectiveness of theseadaptations in achieving their objectives. Among other sources of data, the study includes a survey of 81 Mission-based activity managers responsible for overseeing anti-corruption related programming and five Mission case studies in Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Indonesia, Malawi, and Nepal.
Human Rights Documentation: How and When to Use Human Rights Documentation in Development Work	Jesse Roberts, Jacqueline Geis	Videre	Tuesday Group	DRG Center, ACTF, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	5	No	No	No	Documenting human rights violations is a crucial step towards achieving justice and accountability for victims of human rights violations. This talk by Videre, a leading human rights documentation organization, explored the different purposes and approaches to documenting human rights violations, highlighting examples from Videre's work. This included documenting human rights abuses against the Rohingya in Myanmar and by the police in Kenya.
Building Fiscal Capacity in the D.R. Congo: Insights on political participation, role of local leaders, and optimal tax rates	Jonathan Weigel	UC Berkeley	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, DRG Sector Council, DRG Cadre, External Partners' List	2023	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Professor Weigel first showed that a door to door property taxation campaign increased property tax compliance and political participation, potentially starting a virtuous feedback cycle wherein citizens hold the government accountable for providing services. He then showed that tax collection by local elites (chiefs) increased tax compliance more than tax collection by state agents because local elites used local information to efficiently target households with high payment propensities. Lastly, he showed that reducing tax rates by about one-third would maximize government revenue through increased tax compliance, but that tax enforcement capacity of the state can increase the tax rate that maximizes revenue substantially, so maximizing revenue requires considering tax enforcement and the tax rate.

Gender, Deliberation, and Natural Resource Governance: Experimental Evidence from Malawi	Amanda Clayton	Vanderbilt University	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, DRG Sector Council, DRG Cadre, External Partners' List	2023	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	The Evidence and Learning Talk Series (Chris Grady, Daniel Sabet) hosted Professor Amanda Clayton from Vanderbilt University for a talk about women's participation in decision-making affects climate governance. Professor Clayton examined climate-related deliberations about communally managed forests in rural Malawi. She ran a lab-in-the-field experiment that randomly varied the gender composition of six-member groups asked to deliberate and then vote on solutions to combat deforestation. She found that women become more influential as women make up a larger share of the group; as a result, the group is more likely to settle on policy outcomes preferred by women. But women's increased influence does not result from women speaking more frequently – women are not more likely to speak as the proportion of women in the group rises. Rather, as more women are present in the group, women's contributions are increasingly recognized by men. These findings suggest that including women in decision-making can shift deliberative processes and outcomes in support of historically marginalized resource users.
Keeping horses in front of (and hooked to) carts: Facts and puzzles in the dynamics of national development	Lant Pritchett	Diverse	Tuesday Group	DRG Center, DRG Sector Council, DRG Cadre, Anti-Corruption Task Force	2023	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	In his recent paper on "national development", Lant Pritchett argues that the current obsession with "what works" and which projects donors/philanthropists should do is mostly beside the point of achieving high levels of human wellbeing. He argues that "national development delivers" and high levels of national development are empirically necessary and empirically sufficient for high levels of human wellbeing. The paper finds that "higher order" wellbeing indicators (like "tolerance") are affected more by governance (state capacity and democracy). However, measures of "electoral democracy" do not contribute greatly to basic wellbeing indicators when compared to "state capability."
Evidence & Learning Talk Series: V-Dem Institute Democracy Annual Report 2023: Defiance in the Face of Autocratization	Staffan Lindberg and Evie Papada	V-Dem Institute	E&L Talk Series	DRG Center, DRG Sector Council, DRG Cadre, Anti-Corruption Task Force, External Partners' List	2023	3	Yes	Yes	Report	This talk provided the latest trends for democracy and autocracy in the world and across regions, based on the latest Democracy Report from the V-Dem Institute. Among other things, the speakers showed evidence that the wave of autocratization is accelerating, engulfing 43% of the world population; that the number of closed autocracies now surpasses that of liberal democracy for the first time since 1995; and that autocratization often continues after breakdowns, taking countries further into more harsh dictatorships. Rising polarization and disinformation, growing threats on freedom of expression, coupled with shifting global interdependencies on global trade and energy sources make for a worrying picture. At the same time, the talk showed that a record number of eight countries have reversed their

										downward trends over the past 20 years and that mobilization, popular protests, judicial autonomy, and critical elections are some of the elements uniting these cases of democracy "bouncing back."
DRG Evidence Maps: A Recipe for Success	Douglas Glandon, Jane Hammaker, Jesus Nunez, Therese Pearce Laanelae	3ie, International IDEA, USAID/Honduras	L COP	External	2023	3	Yes	Yes		Join USAID's DRG Evidence and Learning Team and 3IE for an interactive discussion on DRG Evidence Maps on March 16th at 9 AM EST! You will discover how evidence maps allow you to benefit from successful strategies and interventions based on the research that is available to you in just a few clicks. You will also hear from experienced users who will demonstrate how they use evidence maps in their work. Whether you've used evidence maps before or not, this webinar will give you useful insights and tips on how your work can benefit. Do not miss this opportunity to learn how evidence maps can be a recipe for success as you make crucial decisions.
DRG Learning CoP: Innovations in Evaluation: Lessons Using Participatory Video	Morganne King Wale and Lotte	WarChild Canada	L COP	External	2023	3	Yes	Yes	No	Join us as we learn and discuss a novel approach to evaluation used by War Child Canada: participatory video evaluation. We will hear how the approach was developed and used and lessons from how it has been employed. Background: Under a two year grant with DRL, WCC engaged with their participatory video methodology to expand, test and evaluate the method and produce methods notes on how to apply this method in DRG contexts. The PVE approach uses video as a data collection tool to engage beneficiaries in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of projects in their communities. This grant sought to expand and test the use of methods to open channels for beneficiaries to contribute their voice to the evaluation process. The method and its use was evaluated by an external evaluator and WCC produced methods notes to help disseminate learning about the method's applicability to other implementers in the DRG community. The use of the method was also evaluated, which we think is a particularly interesting component of this grant. WCC has also continued to apply the method in USAID projects and developed a how-to package based on separate funding and a separate implementation which was only in South Sudan and focused on food security and livelihoods applications of participatory video for monitoring purposes.

Pro-Democratic and Pro-Authoritarian Narratives	Haim Malka, Eric Fridenwald-Fishman	The Metropolitan Group	Tuesday Group	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, ACTF, Cadre	2023	3	Yes	No	No	The Metropolitan Group (MG) presented top level findings from a year-long research activity that mapped pro-authoritarian and pro-democratic narratives. MG's research highlights how pro-authoritarian narratives are adept at using simple, emotive language that aligns with people's closely held values, while pro-democracy narratives often use highly technical language that fails to resonate. The activity--building on Phase 1 research in five countries and a global narrative scan--is now in its second phase This phase seeks to understand the dominant narratives about democracy and authoritarianism, in order to develop, test, refine, and recommend a pro-democracy narrative that appeals to a wide range of stakeholders, and builds resiliency that can push back against dominant pro-authoritarian narratives that delegitimize democracy. At the core of the study is a social and behavior change (SBC) methodology that identifies narratives, the closely-held values that make narratives relevant and motivating, and the message framing that supports and advances narratives.
Freedom in the World Briefing		Freedom House	JSR team event	Internal: DRG, Regional Bureaus	2023	3	No			Briefing on 2023 Freedom in the Wold Findings
Unleashing the Potential of Public Audits	Claire Schouten; Krishna Sapkota	Interntional Budget Partnership; Freedom Forum (Nepal)	Tuesday Group	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, ACTF, Cadre	2023	2	Yes	No	No	The International Budget Partnership's (IBP) Audit Accountability Initiative was a multi-country project (May 2019-January 2022) that brought together SAIs and civil society organizations to enhance government responsiveness to previously ignored audit findings through more effective communication and strategic engagement on audit recommendations. In five target countries (Argentina, Ghana, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania), IBP worked to establish partnerships between the national SAI and domestic CSOs, document partners' approaches and impact, and connect with other actors at the country and international level to strengthen governments' response to audit findings that matter to people, including in key sectors such as health, education and water and sanitation.The speakers shared an overview of the project's key impacts and outcomes as well as lessons-learned for deepening locally-driven, inclusive and cross-sectoral strategies to combat corruption, strengthen democratic practices, and promote sustainable development.

Machine Learning for Peace: Forecasting Civic Shocks and Insights from New Research	Erik Wibbels; Jeremy Springman	DevLab@Penn	CSM team event	External: DRG Cadre, DRG Center, Sector Council, ACTF, Partners List	2023	2	Yes	No	Website	The Civic Space Early Warning System data dashboard is designed to provide policymakers and civil society with advanced warning of major changes in civic space across nearly 50 countries. CSEWS furthers MLP's mission of using recent advances in big data and machine learning to accelerate the provision of data and insights from researchers to decision makers working to protect democracy and civic space. In addition to serving as the informal launch of the CSEWS website, the presentation covered basics about the MLP project and discuss how these tools can be used to inform strategic planning and crisis response by USAID staff and their international and local partners.
Foreign Funding Flows and People's Perceptions of Donors, Domestic Governments, and Development Interventions	Matthew Winter	University of Illinois	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	2	Yes	No	No	The Evidence and Learning Talk Series (Chris Grady, Daniel Sabet) hosted Professor Matthew Winters from University of Illinois for a talk about the effects of foreign aid branding on citizens' perceptions of their own domestic government, of donors, and of development interventions (recording here). Professor Winters summarized research about foreign aid branding in Bangladesh and Uganda. He first showed that relatively few citizens are aware of donors' contributions to development projects, despite donor branding. He then showed that informing citizens that projects were funded by the donor slightly improves perceptions of the donor country and slightly increases confidence in local authorities – the presence of foreign aid signals domestic government competence. Informing citizens about donor funding for projects does not, however, change respondent's opinions on substantive foreign policy issues. This research suggests that information about foreign donors can change citizens' attitudes and perceptions, but that current mechanisms for information transmission might not be sufficient to do so.
Session 1: Making sense of Information Disorder	Jessica Gottlieb, Laura Paler, Rob Blair, Brendan Nyhan	University of Houston, American University, Brown University and Dartmouth College	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation are not new but have become more powerful with the advent of new technologies and online social media platforms that made rapid communications possible. The session will share the preliminary findings from the literature review on factors and dynamics foster -- and build resilience to -- the proliferation of disinformation, misinformation and/or malinformation.

Session 2: Willing the end of Corruption - What works in low political will environments?	Eddy Malesky, Maureen Moriarty-Lempke, Ahmad Qisa'i	Center for International Development at Duke University, USAID/Indonesia	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	The term "political will" is frequently used to explain the success or the failure of anti-corruption initiatives, but the term has become such a catch-all that it does not really help USAID better design and implement programming. This session will present preliminary findings from a literature review and original research exploring how to better think about political will and how USAID should foster anti-corruption reform in contexts where it is weak.
Session 3: What do we know about how to support democratic openings?	Rachel Beatty Riedl, Jennifer McCoy, Kenneth M. Roberts,	Cornell University and Georgia State University	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	As a third wave of autocratization has unfurled, key questions remain on how to forestall and reverse democratic backsliding. We will hear from researchers working on a literature review and original research focused on addressing the following learning question: What are the most effective interventions focused on public institutions to reverse democratic backsliding and/or support greater democratization?
Salon 1: Guide to Social and Behavioral Change: Theory and Practice	Levi Adelman, Laura Van Berkel, Kassidy Irvan	USAID and DI	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	In this salon session, we will discuss Social and Behavioral Change (SBC) and the importance of understanding the individual, socio-cultural, and institutional drivers of behavior. We will then explore how to use SBC to achieve DRG development goals.
Salon 2: Recent advances in non-experimental research	Chris Grady and Thokozile Chisala	USAID	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	We want to establish credible evidence for the effects of our programs without burdening implementation. In this session you will learn about non-experimental ways that missions can evaluate and learn from their programs.
Salon 3: Is Our Work Evidenced-Based? How to Better Use Research Evidence in Activity Design	Daniel Sabet and Liza Prendergast	USAID and DI	Annual Learning Forum	Public	2023	2	Yes	Yes	No	USAID DRG staff use research evidence far less than other forms of evidence. In this session, we'll discuss the benefits of research evidence and explore new resources and tools to better incorporate research evidence into your decision-making.

Salon 4: Duty of Care - Resilience in DRG Programs and the Implementing Partner Workplace	Ajit Joshi, Phea Sat, Paco Camacho, Ria Orca	USAID, Asia Foundation	Annual Learning Forum	Internal: DRG Cadre	2023	2	Yes	No	No	In this USG only session, we will hear about resilience and psychosocial interventions integrated in two human rights programs implemented in receding democracies in Asia: the Initiative for Advancing Community Transformation (I-ACT) that supports over a hundred civil society organizations in the Philippines in countering apathy towards drug war killings, and the Advancing Rights in Cambodia (ARC) that supports a coalition of 10 local human rights NGOs to empower Cambodian citizens to stand up and exercise their human rights and to defend the rights of Cambodians who are forcibly evicted or displaced from their land and who are affected by human trafficking. Both programs ensure psychological wellness of project staff and partners working in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The reflections from each country's case study will highlight the importance of trauma-informed, survivor-centric, intentional, intersectional approach to collaborating with DRG activists on the ground, our implementing partners and ensuring the resilience of our CORs, AORs, and activity managers in managing these programs.
Addressing Cyber Threats to Elections	Erica Shein, Michael Yard, Tarun Chaudhary (IFES)	IFES and DAI (Digital Frontiers)	DEPP team event	Internal: USG only	2023	2	N			During this virtual panel discussion, leading experts in the field – Erica Shein, Mike Yard and Dr. Tarun Chaudhary– will cover the basics of: (1) assessing electoral cybersecurity needs and threats in a country; and (2) developing electoral assistance programs to address those needs and threats. As part of the discussion, they'll summarize key take-aways from IFES' forthcoming Guide on Electoral Cybersecurity Program Development, which USAID is supporting under the DAI Digital Frontiers Project. This session is the final event in a three-part electoral cybersecurity webinar series. These webinars have accompanied a series of IFES' recent publications: Electoral Cybersecurity Primer; Understanding Electoral Cybersecurity: A Reference Document; Cybersecurity and Voter Registration; and Cybersecurity of Election Results Management (coming soon!), all of which USAID supported under the DAI Digital Frontiers Project.
Evidence & Learning Talk Series: Lessons for Donors from 'Sandwich Strategy'	Rachel Robinson and Jonathan Fox	American University	E&L Talk Series	External: DRG Center, DRG Sector Council, DRG	2023	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Jonathan Fox and Rachel Robinson from American University presented on a recent study that compares a set of 19 diverse reform initiatives that delivered tangible openings to enable collective action for socially excluded groups, what they term "sandwich strategies," with openings from above and pressure from below. Half of the cases led to at least incremental pro-reform shifts in the balance of power. The research provides

Reform				Cadre, Anti-Corruption Task Force, External Partners' List						a potential path for reform promotion and offers key lessons for USAID, including (1) preparing for backlash and reformist loss of power, (2) avoiding light touch interventions, and (3) investing in hybrid, state-society institutions with subnational foundations. (Recording here)
Developing Countries are Facing a Renewed Debt Crisis: Is USAID Prepared?	Rafael Romeu and Gabriel Lopetegui, introduction by Dean Karlan	DevTech	GOV team event	DRG, EGSC, PFM/PA community of practice, BS11	2023	1	Yes	Yes		Public debt issues are at the center of international policy discussions today, because of the increase in debt across countries after the Global Financial Crisis and during the COVID-19 crisis. Many countries face difficulties in servicing debt and are forced to make trade-offs between the public investments needed to fuel growth and meet development objectives, and the pressure they face to contain debt vulnerabilities. And it is not just the level of public debt that is attracting international attention. Its composition is also evolving, with commercial debt, particularly foreign currency bonds, outpacing other sources of financing for low- and middle-income countries. This makes debt management and restructuring more complex and undermines debt transparency.
Dollars and Dissent: Donor Support for Grassroots Organizing and Nonviolent Social Movements	Ben Naimark-Rowse	USAID	Tuesday Group	Internl: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	1	No	No	Yes	More people than ever before are using nonviolent collective action to secure rights, justice, and democracy around the world. Scholarship shows this strategy has been twice as effective as violent action at attaining these goals. Yet, from 2011 to 2019, public charities and private foundations gave only three percent of their total human rights funding to support nonviolent collective action. Ben Naimark-Rowse presented his recent report, Dollars and Dissent: Donor Support for Grassroots Organizing and Nonviolent Movements. Ben argued that donor support requres a "movement mindset," that foreign support is less important than domestic support, and that there is a need for donor coordination.
Misuse of Technology "Salon"	Data & Society + invited academics and CSOs	Data & Society		Internal: DRG, ITR, OTI (max 10 members)	2022	9 + 11	No, Chatham House Rules			Charley Johnson from Data & Society's Public Tech Leadership Collaborative has organized a multi-part salon series to support USAID to better understand potential avenues for the misuse of data and technology. USAID has been working with Charley to convene a group of academic and civil society experts to work with a small group of USAID colleagues interested in this issue set. Part 1 (9/22) established a fulsome understanding of the problem and included case study presentations from the PRC (a COVID tracking app) and India (Aadhaar, India's biometric ID); Part 2 (date TBC) will explore solutions using case studies from

										Advancing Digital Democracy pilots in USAID/Serbia and USAID/Zambia. A potential Part 3 is TBD.
The Role of Youth in Nonviolent Action Campaigns	Erica Chenoweth, Matthew Cebul, Neetha Tangirala	Harvard Kennedy School, USIP, USAID/DRG	E&L team event (other)	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre, youth listservs	2022	12	Yes	No	No	Young people are often found on the frontlines of nonviolent action campaigns, yet we know comparatively little about how youth participation affects social movement dynamics and outcomes, in either the short or long term. Are youth-based movements more creative and diverse? Are they more successful? And what about long term effects in the years after campaigns end? USIP and the Harvard Kennedy School, draw on a new cross-national dataset of youth participation in nonviolent campaigns and a series of survey experiments on youth framing. The evidence reveals promising associations between youth participation and nonviolent campaign success, but also cautions that youth participation does not necessarily make movements more popular or inclusive across societal divides.
The Role of Women in Nonviolent Action Campaigns	Erica Chenoweth, Matthew Cebul, Neetha Tangirala	Harvard Kennedy School, USIP, USAID/DRG	E&L team event (other)	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre, interagency gender stakeholders	2022	12	Yes	No	Yes	Women have played central roles in many of the world's most impressive nonviolent campaigns. Indeed, some have argued that women are especially effective nonviolent activists, as they are more committed to nonviolent discipline and more difficult to repress. USIP and the Harvard Kennedy School bring new empirical evidence to bear on women's unique role in nonviolent action, including survey experiments and cross-national data on women's frontline participation in nonviolent action campaigns. Among other findings, the evidence reveals that movements featuring women's participation are perceived by observers to be more likely to succeed and more deserving of popular support, and that women's participation is historically associated with nonviolent campaign success.
DRG Mission Use of Evidence (MUSE): Learning from	Daniel Sabet, Aleta Starosta, Robert Gerstein, Paula VanDyk	Cloudburst, USAID/DRG, USAID/South Africa	E&L team event (other)	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	12	Yes	Yes	Report and 2pager	E&L learning partners from Cloudburst Aleta Starosta and Robert Gerstein and Daniel Sabet (E&L) completed a study and held a dissemination event on evidence utilization and evaluation planning in USAID DRG program design." Paula Van Dyk (USAID/South Africa) provided comment. The study found that while DRG activity designs are informed by contextual and experiential evidence they are less likely to be informed by research evidence and rarely include significant evaluation planning. The presentation covered recommendations for activity designers (2-pager for activity designers here), including a recommendation to commission evidence reviews and require (where appropriate) research evidence in solicitations.

Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq	Salma Mousa	UCLA	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	12	Yes	Yes	No	The Evidence and Learning Talk Series (Chris Grady, Daniel Sabet) hosted Professor Salma Mousa from Yale University for a talk about social cohesion (recording and other materials available here). Professor Mousa first described the theory and evidence behind intergroup contact as a means to reduce outgroup prejudice and increase social cohesion. She then described her study testing the theory in post-ISIS Iraq with Christians and Muslims. Her intervention successfully changed attitudes and behaviors towards individual Christians/Muslims but did not generalize to the wider group. She concluded by theorizing about the conditions necessary for intergroup contact to create positive attitudes towards the group, rather than just individuals.
GOV - Open and inclusive eGOV systems	Arturo Rivera, Kristina Mänd.	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Open and Innovative Government Division, and the e-Governance Academy of Estonia	GOV team event	Internal: DRG, EGSC, PFM/PA listserv	2022	12	Yes	N/a	Recording	Join the Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) on Wednesday, December 14, from 9:00 A.M.- 10:00 A.M EDT for a discussion on e-Governance with Arturo Rivera, of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Open and Innovative Government Division, and the e-Governance Academy of Estonia's, Kristina Mänd. Governments are increasingly using data to design and deliver policies and services, improve their operations, and better understand and respond to evolving conditions in their countries. The power of government use of public sector data is magnified as once disparate data sets are integrated and, in some cases, combined with external data. While e-Governance systems have many benefits, especially where data governance arrangements are weak, they raise serious risks regarding privacy, the representativeness and trustworthiness of data sources, and data misuse (e.g. excluding or repressing marginalized groups). Moreover, for digital government to reach its full potential, individual users must trust in government systems and in government as a custodian of their data.
Delivering on Localization's Promise	Dan Honig	University College London	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	11	Yes	Yes		Drawing on his work about development effectiveness (including his 2018 book, Navigation by Judgment) Professor Honig argued that making localization more than cheap talk requires changing management practices, not just identities. He first described aid localization as benefiting the ethical and effectiveness goals of international development. He then laid out the trade-off between local knowledge and top-down control, concluding that the benefits of local knowledge are worth the lack of control. He

										concluded by illustrating how international development organizations can empower local actors and gain the benefits of local knowledge. New accountability frameworks are needed to realize the benefits of localization, which can and should benefit development effectiveness.
DRG L CoP: The Perils and Potentials of using Indices to Measure Complex DRG Outcomes..?	Ms. Lina Maria Jaramillo Rojas	Pact	L COP	External: DRG Cadre, IPs, USAID staff	2022	10	Yes	Yes		Over time, the complexity of what we wish to measure has increased as we have accomplished the quick wins and addressed the low hanging fruit. This is true especially in democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) evaluation, a sector that has struggled to measure and operationalize more and more complex concepts. Evaluators have risen to the challenge by using indices – weighted measures of multiple indicators – to represent a complex concept, and then using those indices to measure the concept and track intervention outcomes. Conectando Caminos por los Derechos (CCD), a USAID/Colombia-funded activity implemented by Pact as part of the HRSM consortium, has developed an index to measure the outcome of increased citizen security for Venezuelan migrants and Colombian host communities, which includes concepts of social cohesion and integration. The CCD MEL Manager will share how CCD conceptualized and operationalized the governance outcome in practical ways.
Demystifying Electoral Cybersecurity	Matt Baily, Tarun Chaudhary	IFES	Tuesday Group	Mostly internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	10	No	No	Election Cybersecurity Primer; Reference Document	The DEPP team hosted this month's expanded Tuesday Group, which entailed a presentation by IFES colleagues Matt Bailey and Tarun Chaudhary on Demystifying Electoral Cybersecurity. The speakers highlighted key take-aways from two new IFES publications (Electoral Cybersecurity Primer and Understanding Electoral Cybersecurity: A Reference Document) that USAID supported under the DAI Digital Frontiers Project.

New Insights on Autocratic Legacies in Africa	Mai Hassan	MIT	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	10	Yes	No		This month's DRG Evidence and Learning Talk Series, which featured Mai Hassan (MIT) presenting research on authoritarian legacies in Africa (Recording here). While much of Africa has left the age of autocracy behind, many countries in the region still display autocratic legacies. Dr. Hassan laid out how the political break was not as clean as we often assume and that political elites, bureaucratic leaders, political clientelism and even co-opted civil society organizations from authoritarian periods remain in place and prevent further democratic advances.
Resisting Backsliding: Opposition Strategies against the Erosion of Democracy	Laura Gamboa	University of Utah	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	In the past two decades, democratically elected executives across the world have used their popularity to push for legislation that, over time, destroys systems of checks and balances, hinders free and fair elections, and undermines political rights and civil liberties. Using and abusing institutions and institutional reform, some of them have transformed their countries' democracies into competitive authoritarian regimes. Others, however, have failed. What explains these different outcomes? This talk answers that question. Focusing on the cases of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Alvaro Uribe in Colombia, it shows that the strategies the opposition uses and the goals it uses them for are key to understanding why some executives successfully erode democracy and others do not. Highlighting the role of the opposition, this talk emphasizes the importance of agency for understanding democratic backsliding and shows that weak oppositions can defeat strong potential autocrats as well.
Use of data and evidence in beneficiary targeting?	Ben Morse and Elayne Stetcher	Social Impact and UCLA	L COP	External: DRG Cadre, IPs, USAID staff	2022	9	Yes	Yes		Ben Morse, Technical Director of Impact Evaluations at Social Impact, and Elayne Stetcher, Research Fellow at UCLA Preventing Violence Lab joined the DRG Learning Community of Practice on September 9 to share their expertise on evidence-informed decision making in intervention site selection. After sharing criteria to consider when selecting intervention sites, the presenters shared examples from a Mali reintegration program and a Caribbean-based violence prevention program along with evidence-focused tools and resources on site selection. Applications and implications for DRG programming were discussed by practitioners in small groups following the formal remarks (watch the recording).

DRG Youth WG - The Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education	Alex Sutherland	Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education	CSM team event	Internal: DRG, Youth Missions and Youth Corps	2022	9	No			DRG Youth WG meeting hosted the Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education. The Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education is an activist education organisation orientated towards supporting working class social justice movements, organisations and community groups with political education. The organization was established in 2016 in South Africa, to assist social justice movements and activists in challenging inequalities and supporting struggles for freedom and dignity. Their core constituents are activists from poor and working class struggles with a particular focus on youth and women. The organization's strategic vision for the next five years is to extend their work throughout Southern Africa.
Nonviolent Action Campaigns and Democratic Transitions	Jonathan Pinckney	USIP	E&L Talk Series	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2022	8	No	No	Yes	Pinckney presented the results of a comparative study of 72 political transitions between 1945 and 2019 to understand how nonviolent campaigns can produce a democratic outcome. The presentation highlighted the importance of working with “sustainable mobilization infrastructure” like labor unions, creating disincentives for political repression through diplomatic pressure, and training activists.
DRG Youth WG - Presentation from Zinc Network - Influencer Academies		Zinc Network	CSM team event	Internal: DRG, Youth Missions and Youth Corps	2022	8	No			DRG Youth Working Group hosted the Zinc Network for a presentation about their Influencer Academies. Zinc’s Influencer Academy provides young social media influencers with the tools and techniques they need to produce compelling content that is socially impactful, targeted to their audiences, and optimized based on performance.
DRG Youth WG - Youth Active Citizenship for Decent Jobs		The Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	CSM team event	Internal: DRG, Youth Missions and Youth Corps	2022	5	No			The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and three of their partners in Zimbabwe developed a Handbook that helps to integrate youth active citizenship strategies in employment interventions.Civic skills are essential for negotiating fair, safe and decent work and for influencing a conducive policy environment. The Handbook recognizes the need to engage the informal economy and be aware of the political economy of youth employment interventions.

DRG Youth WG - Presentation from Save the Children on Child Rights Governance			CSM team event	Internal: DRG, Youth Missions and Youth Corps	2022	4	No			CRG is one of Save the Children's global programs and aims to address the systemic, underlying and/or structural aspects that enable or hinder children's rights. They have long emphasized that a strong civil society where children (under 18 years old) and their communities hold states and the international community to account is crucial. Save the Children's CRG programs support children's civic awareness and participation in influencing governments to establish the policies and systems that make child rights a reality. Children's own ability, agency, and contributions are essential for making societal change and for practicing democratic values, leading to a lifetime of positive civic and political engagement. Save the Children works to advance CRG outcomes by monitoring and demanding child rights in coordination with child activists, advocating for good governance and public investment in services for children, leveraging child-centered social accountability, and facilitating child participation.
DRG Youth WG - Presentation from the Global Alliance for Youth Political Action		Global Alliance for Youth Political Action	CSM team event	Internal: DRG, Youth Missions and Youth Corps	2022	1	No			Global Alliance for Youth Political Action, a growing network of organizations throughout the world focused on increasing youth civic and political engagement. The Alliance currently comprises Accountability Lab, Community of Democracies, Democracy Moves, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, People Powered, and Restless Development. They recently released a report, "Walking the Walk", which uses survey-research and interview findings to push back against the false narratives of youth apathy and democratic disaffection.
DRG Conference							Yes	Yes	Website	Annual DRG Conference

Research on trends in democratic erosion and autocratization post-Covid	Brigitte Seim	CEPPS / D Arch	DEPP team event	Internal: DRG, Sector Council, Cadre	2023	8	No	PPT		The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening, generously supported by USAID under the Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) Leader with Associates Award, is pleased to invite Brigitte Seim from DEPP partner D-Arch to present the findings of two recent reports funded through the DEPP mechanism. The first report "Democratic Erosion and Authoritarian Consolidation" explores the ongoing trend of democratic erosion over the past decade with the aim of identifying its root causes. Through an extensive literature review, quantitative analysis of V-Dem and GEPT data, and the development of in-depth qualitative case studies, the report identifies six common factors – or "precursors" (Bairey et al., 2020) – associated with recent democratic erosion worldwide. The common factors include: 1) increasing information control; 2) rising populism; 3) expanding polarization, social cleavages, and its fallout; 4) soaring inequality; 5) corruption and its consequences; and 6) pandemic-related backsliding. The second report "Achieving DEPP's Program Objectives: A Review of Existing Indicators and Evidence" distills the current DEPP and third-party indicators for assessing progress towards the nine DEPP program objectives and assesses current evidence regarding how to achieve the objectives. The retrospective analysis draws upon six GEPT case studies, a broader review of academic literature and program reports from related non-GEPT interventions targeting similar objectives in democratic development, and a descriptive analysis of Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) and other cross-national datasets that provide indicators related to the DEPP objectives. The report finds that there is extensive variation in the state of the evidence, measurability, and achievability of each DEPP objective. It also unearths a set of common accelerating and inhibiting factors related to achieving DEPP objectives, some of which are affectable while others are systematic or relatively entrenched conditions of DEPP operating contexts.
Title TBD	TBD	Semillas para la Democracia	DEPP team event	Internal: DRG, Sector	2023	10	No			

				Council, Cadre						
Money, Power, and Manipulation: The Nexus of Transnational Corruption and Political Finance in Elections	Richard Nash	IFES	Tuesday Group	DRG Bureau and Sector Council	2024	9	No	To come		This presentation will explore the links between transnational corruption and political finance, focusing on how illicit finance shapes electoral outcomes and political dynamics. It will also examine how corrupt practices fuel political attacks on opponents, create uneven playing fields, and undermine democratic integrity in electoral processes across borders.
USAID Conference on Legislative Strengthening	Multiple	Multiple	GOV team event	Practitioners and Researchers	2024	12	Virtual portions			The Legislative Strengthening Conference will explore methods to reinvigorate development approaches to legislative strengthening. Stakeholders will expound on emerging lessons to promote a greater understanding of appropriate and effective strategies for transparent, accountable, and inclusive democratic governance in the legislative space.