



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA

FY 2022-2026

NOVEMBER 2022

PHOTO: Binauna Village, Nepal, USAID  
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# MODIFICATION LOG

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March 2022

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2. Revisions to Annex B, largely focused on Question 7 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

The *Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018* (Evidence Act) requires each Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act agency to develop a learning agenda that covers a four-year period aligned with that agency’s strategic plan and addresses a set of agency-wide priority learning questions. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Agency Learning Agenda comprises a series of products and processes designed to engage key stakeholders in the generation, synthesis, sharing, and use of evidence to inform decision-making. USAID’s Agency Learning Agenda is a critical tool supporting implementation of the Agency’s policy priorities, which are aligned with the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). By prioritizing key questions, the learning agenda channels attention and investment toward critical evidence gaps that would limit the ability of the Agency to achieve its policy objectives. It connects Agency learning networks and amplifies evidence from Missions and Bureaus to maximize cross-agency awareness and learning and improve Agency effectiveness.

The Agency developed USAID’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Agency Learning Agenda alongside the 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan to reflect emerging USAID policy priorities. The development process, which began in January 2021, engaged key internal and external stakeholders to identify critical learning needs for emerging Agency priorities and define a small, prioritized set of Agency-wide learning questions. USAID has also assessed the implementation of previous learning agendas to identify good practices and continuously improve the Agency Learning Agenda processes, as well as build on existing learning networks and evidence.

# II. EMERGING AGENCY PRIORITIES

USAID’s Agency Learning Agenda is an important tool to transparently communicate how the Agency will build and use evidence to inform decision-making as the Agency operationalizes its policy priorities. The [National Security Strategy](#), published in October 2022, outlines how the United States will advance vital interests and pursue a free, open, prosperous and secure world. The Department of State and USAID FY 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan aligns with the NSS and includes goals and strategic objectives for furthering Administration priorities (see [Annex A](#) for a full listing of JSP goals and strategic objectives):

- Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans’ security and well-being.
- Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.
- Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions.
- Goal V:** Serve U.S. citizens around the world and facilitate secure international travel.

Simultaneously, USAID has identified Agency policy priorities that align with one or more of the JSP goals:

- 1. COVID-19 and future pandemic threats** (JSP Goal I, II)
- 2. Climate Change** (JSP Goals I, II, III)
- 3. Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding** (JSP Goals I, III)
- 4. Democracy, Anti-Corruption, and Human Rights** (JSP Goal II, III)
- 5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** (JSP Goals I, II, III, IV)
- 6. Localization** (JSP Goals I, II, III, IV)

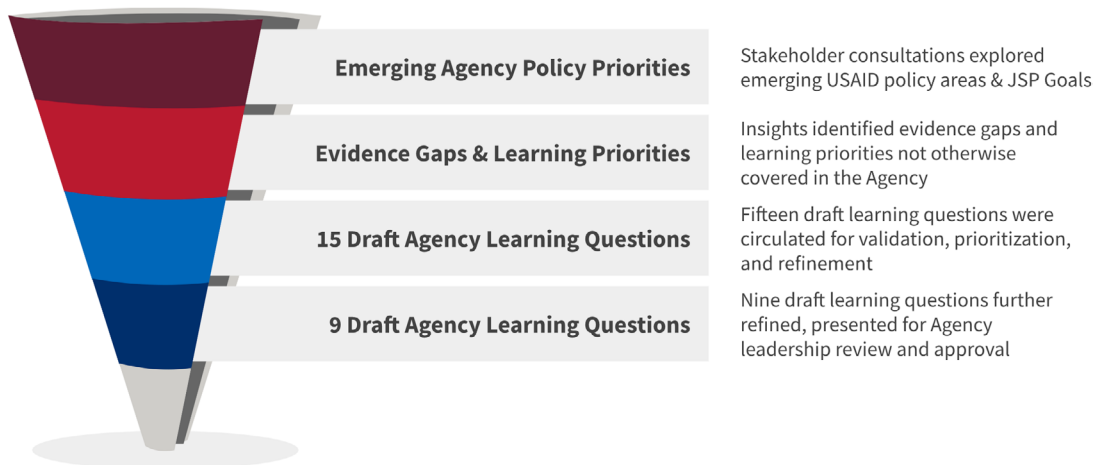
The Agency and interagency are developing whole-of-government strategies to address many of these challenges and the USAID Policy Framework further defines the Agency’s programmatic and operational response.

## III. CONSULTING STAKEHOLDERS TO DEFINE NEW LEARNING QUESTIONS

### QUESTION IDENTIFICATION, VALIDATION, REFINEMENT

As a learning best practice, and in fulfillment of the requirements of the Evidence Act and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance, USAID actively engaged key stakeholders to define new learning questions related to the Agency’s emerging priorities. Through a series of more than 20 consultative sessions and subsequent question validation discussions held from May through August 2021, internal stakeholders provided input on learning priorities and critical evidence needs representing views from across the sectors and geographies in which USAID works. Additional consultations with external stakeholders captured a range of perspectives, including those of the interagency, other donors, congressional staff, higher education institutions, researchers, international development-focused think tanks, and nongovernmental organizations.

### Agency Learning Question Identification Process



## FY 2022-2026 AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA QUESTIONS

USAID has identified a final list of nine priority Agency Learning Agenda questions.

### 2022-2026 USAID AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA QUESTIONS

1. How can USAID better **streamline systems, processes and resources** to meet **long-term needs** identified by Missions, while enabling the flexibility to respond quickly to unexpected shifts in context?
2. How can USAID strengthen household, community, and country **resilience** to **climate, conflict, economic, and health** shocks, such as COVID-19 and other global pandemic threats?
3. How can USAID best engage global actors, partner countries, and local leaders to mitigate the **climate crisis** and support equitable adaptation to its impacts?
4. How can USAID work with host countries, interagency colleagues, and other development actors to address **systemic corruption** through multisectoral approaches?
5. How can USAID advance an affirmative, sustainable development approach to mitigate **authoritarian or malign influences and actions**?
6. How can USAID better address drivers of **migration and forced displacement** through evidence-informed decision-making?
7. How can USAID programs and operations **mitigate harm** to underrepresented and marginalized populations, while promoting **equity and inclusion**?
8. How can USAID more equitably engage **local knowledge, assets, and practices** and align programming with local priorities and metrics for success?
9. How can USAID's **partnerships** with the private sector; local, faith, and nontraditional partners; and other donors contribute to **sustainable development objectives**?

Each question connects to multiple JSP strategic objectives and all of USAID's emerging policy priorities to facilitate collaborative learning across Agency sectors and geographies. Questions provide high-level direction to guide the development of more specific or context-relevant evidence-building questions for Agency evaluation or research efforts. See [Annex B](#) for more details on each question, including context, connections to strategy, intended use, illustrative learning activities, and existing learning and evidence.

## IV. OPERATIONALIZING THE 2022-2026 AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA

USAID's decentralized organizational structure extends far beyond its Washington Bureaus to programs and staff in more than 100 countries around the world. Development programming takes place across many technical areas, including agriculture; economic growth; environment; education; democracy, human rights, and governance; women's empowerment; water and sanitation; and global health. Additionally, USAID leads the U.S. Government's humanitarian response to disasters and crises overseas. Agency investments in evidence and learning are made across USAID geographies and sectors through many activities, including sectoral and topical learning agendas, evaluations, research studies, assessments, and monitoring efforts. USAID uses the Agency Learning Agenda to

create and strengthen a centralized architecture for Agency-wide learning, engaging key stakeholders to build, share, and use evidence and knowledge across these decentralized USAID structures and systems.

To do so, USAID is intentionally identifying which existing Agency learning networks, evidence, and foundational learning topics will contribute to the 2022-2026 learning agenda. USAID will build on the success of a Mission Advisory Group for the Agency Learning Agenda to encourage field Mission staff to share learning and ask questions about Agency priority topics as well as learn about tools and resources that connect their country-focused learning priorities, findings, and resources to the rest of the Agency. All Agency learning products completed to date will remain hosted as an Agency-wide Evidence and Resource Collection on ProgramNet, the Agency’s internal knowledge-sharing platform. Public learning products will remain archived on the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#), the Agency’s online resource for USAID-funded technical and project materials, and [USAID Learning Lab](#), a public platform for collaborating, learning, and adapting. Foundational learning topics (areas previously explored in Agency learning efforts, for which critical evidence gaps remain) include operational effectiveness; the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; strengthening locally-led development and integrating local voices and priorities into USAID’s work; and approaches to partnering and engagement. The table outlines connections between foundational learning topics and the 2022-2026 learning questions.

| FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING TOPIC                     | RELATED FY 2022-2026 LEARNING QUESTIONS  |
|---|--|
| <b>Operational Learning</b>                     | Q1 operational effectiveness<br>Q7 diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility   |
| <b>Humanitarian - Development - Peace Nexus</b> | Q1 operational effectiveness<br>Q2 resilience to shocks<br>Q3 responding to climate change<br>Q6 migration and forced displacement |
| <b>Strengthening Locally-led Development</b>    | Q3 responding to climate change<br>Q8 locally-led development  |
| <b>Partnering and Engagement Approaches</b>     | Q4 anti-corruption<br>Q5 affirmative development<br>Q9 partnering for sustainability   |

The Agency Learning Agenda is not only a series of products or outputs, it is also a behavior change process intended to strengthen the use of evidence to improve the Agency’s effectiveness. USAID commissioned a rapid stocktaking exercise in June 2021 to examine: 1) how learning agenda activities contributed to the generation and use of evidence, and 2) whether Agency learning processes and networks influenced staff attitudes and behaviors around learning. Key findings show that newsletters, Agency Notices, and learning events have been valuable in raising awareness and sharing evidence resulting from learning activities. However, reported use of learning agenda evidence in decision-making was limited. Staff requested more user-friendly knowledge products that are shorter in length and use plain language and also sought direct assistance in applying evidence in their work. Staff cited the 2020 Agency-wide Learning Week, peer-to-peer assistance, and cross-Mission sharing sessions as helpful models.

Initial Agency Learning Agenda networks, including cross-Agency volunteer Question Teams and the Mission Advisory Group, were found to help members advocate for and share their work beyond their Bureaus or Missions. Participation in these networks increased staff awareness of available Agency learning resources, including evidence syntheses, fact sheets, toolkits, and how-to notes; however, these effects often did not translate beyond those more immediately involved to the broader Agency workforce. The voluntary nature of Question Team and

Mission Advisory Group membership was cited as a constraint to active and long-term participation in Agency-wide learning networks and evidence-building activities, and participants believe that this negatively affected the quality and timeliness of evidence dissemination. Areas identified for future improvement include: 1) clearer coordination among Agency learning efforts, 2) more systematic dissemination of knowledge products, 3) greater financial and human resources available for Agency Learning Agenda efforts, and 4) more engagement in learning by Agency leadership and between USAID Missions and Washington Operating Units (OUs).

USAID is using these findings, as well as inputs from the *USAID Capacity Assessment*, to inform the implementation of the Agency Learning Agenda. The rapid stocktaking process has also established a foundation for future analyses of learning agenda progress and outcomes, contributing to the Agency's evidence base on [learning agenda design and implementation](#).

## STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

Based on the stocktaking and given limited resources for Agency Learning Agenda evidence-building activities, USAID will focus available resources on: 1) synthesizing and packaging available evidence for use; 2) convening internal and external stakeholders working on similar evidence-building activities; 3) building awareness and improving dissemination of available evidence; and 4) supporting the use of evidence in strategic, operational, and programmatic decision-making. For example:

- Synthesizing findings and recommendations from existing research and evaluation reports connected to Agency priorities, like the [Human and Institutional Capacity Development \(HICD\) Desk Review](#) that generated 1,017 page views across USAID's external sites. The Agency Learning Agenda will support the synthesis and packaging of evidence for stakeholders to access and apply available evidence more easily.
- Strengthening field learning networks, Mission participation in Agency learning, and collaboration between Washington OUs and Missions through structures like the Mission Advisory Group. The Agency Learning Agenda will expand field engagement so that Missions not only are the producers and users of evidence, but also determine where and how the Agency Learning Agenda focuses its efforts to best meet Mission learning needs.
- Using the *USAID/Washington Learning Agenda Snapshot*—an internal catalog maintained in collaboration between the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning and points-of-contact for topical, sectoral, and geographic learning agendas managed by Washington-based USAID OUs—to focus learning resources strategically. Developed in response to staff requests for centralized documentation of learning agendas, the *Snapshot* includes a spreadsheet containing a brief description, status, points-of-contact, learning questions, and key outputs for each learning effort.
- Leveraging virtual platforms to convene global audiences around Agency learning, building on the success and lessons learned from the 2020 Agency-wide Learning Week, which hosted nearly 500 participants across 16 learning sessions, including staff from 65 Missions. The Agency Learning Agenda will expand opportunities for Agency stakeholders to participate in evidence exchange with external stakeholders and thought leaders, including, for example, roundtable discussions on specific Agency Learning Agenda questions.

## USAID OPERATING UNIT CONTRIBUTIONS TO AGENCY-WIDE LEARNING

Internally, the USAID workforce remains the Agency's most critical asset in evidence generation and use. Missions and Washington OUs support the Agency Learning Agenda by:

- Incorporating context- and/or sector-specific evidence-building questions that align with and contribute to the Agency Learning Agenda into relevant documents, such as strategies; performance management and monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans; and technical or sectoral Mission or Bureau learning agendas.
- Referencing the Agency Learning Agenda questions in solicitations and other procurement documents.
- Incorporating appropriate evidence-building opportunities (monitoring, evaluation, research, learning) that respond to these questions into program design and implementation.
- Generating and capturing experiential knowledge related to Agency Learning Agenda questions at critical milestones in strategy or program design and implementation; for example, as part of Before- and After-Action Reviews, mid-course stocktaking, or pause-and-reflect exercises.
- Sharing Agency Learning Agenda evidence in reports and public communications and using Agency Learning Agenda communications channels and platforms to share evidence with broad Agency and external audiences.
- Participating in Agency-wide learning events and peer-to-peer networks hosted by the Agency Learning Agenda to share knowledge and evidence.
- Reviewing and using Agency Learning Agenda evidence as part of decision-making related to Agency strategies, operations, and programming.
- Directing funding or other support to the Agency Learning Agenda to invest in Agency-wide evidence-building activities that address critical evidence gaps.

Agency leadership has an essential role to play in supporting staff in learning efforts and using evidence to inform their strategic investments and programmatic and operational decision-making. Leadership forums, such as the Management Operations Council, Mission Directors calls, and the Program Officers Conference, present key opportunities for leaders to engage with and act on Agency Learning Agenda evidence.

## EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO USAID LEARNING

Just as USAID relies on collaboration with external partners to implement our programs, USAID must also collaborate to sufficiently resource the generation, synthesis, translation, dissemination, and uptake of evidence needed to address Agency Learning Agenda questions. USAID pursues and invites collaboration from external partners on all Agency Learning Agenda questions, including contributions from the Department of State and other interagency partners, implementing partners, local actors, researchers and higher education institutions, think tanks, and other donors. USAID leadership, including the Agency Evaluation Officer and Agency Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning Officer, will continue to advise on the Agency Learning Agenda's focus and methods, help link its activities and evidence to other Agency learning efforts, and connect it to learning across the international community through participation on external platforms, such as the Multi-Donor Learning Partnership for Development Impact and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Evaluation Network. *More information on how external actors might engage with the Agency Learning Agenda can be found in [Annex C](#).*



## ILLUSTRATIVE 2022-2026 AGENCY-WIDE EVIDENCE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The nine Agency Learning Agenda questions are intentionally broad to capture and synthesize Agency evidence from technical and sectoral learning and research agendas, evaluations, research, and experiential learning opportunities. All questions are long-term in nature (2022-2026), and a mix of near- and longer-term activities will contribute toward addressing each question. The timeline for activities will be determined in line with key milestones identified by intended users, against which related evidence can be applied in decision-making. An initial set of Agency evidence-building activities linked to each of the learning questions is outlined in the table below. Further details for each learning activity, including timeline and methods, can be found in [Annex B](#).

The FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan includes details on additional planned significant evaluations not listed below. USAID has defined significant evaluations as those that generate evidence toward Agency Learning Agenda questions and are either a performance evaluation of a USAID activity with a budget of \$40 million or more; or an ex-post evaluation; or an impact evaluation (for definitions of ex-post and impact evaluation at USAID, see Automated Directives System 201).

| FY 2022-2026 LEARNING QUESTION                            | ILLUSTRATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES*   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Operational Effectiveness</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Plan and Report (PPR) COVID-19 key issue analysis in USAID annual reporting process (Performance Plan and Report, PPR)</li> <li>• COVID-19 Strategy and Operations Task Force (CTF) Hotwash</li> <li>• Mission Management Assessment policy update and pilot</li> <li>• Customer Service Framework development to enhance a culture of internal service</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Resilience to Shocks</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Evaluation: Institutional Resilience and COVID-19</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3. Responding to Climate Change</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from implementation of the USAID Climate Readiness Plan, including the forthcoming 2022 - 2030 USAID Climate Strategy</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4. Anti-Corruption</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Evaluation: Anti-Corruption and COVID-19</li> <li>• Analysis and Research on Social Norms and Behavioral Approaches to Combating Corruption</li> </ul>   |
| <b>5. Affirmative Development</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countering People's Republic of China Influence Fund Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning</li> </ul>   |
| <b>6. Migration and Forced Displacement</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency Root Causes Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan and Semi-Annual Root Causes Strategy Results Reports</li> <li>• Vanderbilt University's AmericasBarometer the and Latin American Public Opinion Project</li> <li>• Analysis of Migration data from Customs and Border Protection</li> </ul>  |
| <b>7. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency internal equity assessment phased learning data collection support</li> <li>• Gender-Based Violence Portfolio Performance Evaluation</li> </ul>   |

| FY 2022-2026 LEARNING QUESTION   | ILLUSTRATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES*   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 8. Locally-led Development       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stopping as Success +</li> <li>• Local Works</li> <li>• Local Knowledge Best Practices in External Organizations</li> </ul>  |
| 9. Partnering for Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Testing Local Knowledge Tools</li> <li>• Enduring Results 4.0</li> <li>• Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Evidence Gap Map Phase II</li> <li>• USAID Partnering Process Analysis</li> </ul> |

\* Additional details on each of these activities is provided in [Annex B](#).

## V. CLOSING

Built on a foundation of stakeholder consultation and evidence from the implementation of other learning agendas to date, the 2022-2026 USAID Agency Learning Agenda serves as an evidence-building roadmap as the Agency tackles the most pressing policy issues of our time. The Agency Learning Agenda ensures that the Joint Strategic Plan and USAID policy objectives will be informed by evidence-based decisions. It is a critical tool to advance the Agency’s policy priorities and ensure that data and evidence inform USAID’s work. The learning agenda aims to bring together Agency staff and external partners under a unified vision and effort to build and use evidence to support an effective U.S. Government response to critical international development and humanitarian needs.

# ANNEX A: 2022-2026 DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND USAID JOINT

## JSP GOALS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Goal I: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.**

**1.1:** Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.

**1.2:** Secure ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes, including supporting effective Paris Agreement implementation.

**1.3:** Reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership and provide lifesaving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas.

**1.4:** Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

**1.5:** Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

**Goal II: Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.**

**2.1:** Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans.

**2.2:** Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities across the globe.

**2.3:** Support U.S. technological leadership, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance and protect the U.S. innovation base while leveraging technology to improve lives around the world.

**2.4:** Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks.

**Goal III: Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.**

**3.1:** Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens.

**3.2:** Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.

**3.3:** Prevent, expose, and reduce corruption.

**3.4:** Promote a safe, humane, and orderly immigration and asylum system, address the root causes of irregular migration collaboratively with our partners, and enhance protections for refugees and displaced persons.

**3.5:** Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

\* JSP Goals and Strategic Objectives continued from previous page.

**Goal IV: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions.**

**4.1:** Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

**4.2:** Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

**4.3:** Protect our personnel, information, and physical infrastructure from 21st century threats.

**Goal V: Serve U.S. citizens around the world and facilitate secure international travel.**

**5.1:** Support and serve American citizens traveling or residing abroad.

**5.2:** Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

**FY 2022-2026 AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA QUESTION PRIMARY CONNECTIONS TO JSP**

|  | 2022 - 2026 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objectives |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
|--|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
|  | 1.1   | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 |  |
| Q1 Ops Effectiveness                               |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q2 Resilience to Shocks                            |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q3 Responding to Climate Change                    |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q4 Anti-Corruption                                 |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q5 Affirmative Development                         |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q6 Migration & Forced Displacement                 |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q7 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q8 Locally-led Development                         |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |
| Q9 Partnering for Sustainability                   |   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |

*FY 2022-2026 Agency Learning Agenda Questions align with all JSP strategic objectives to which USAID contributes (JSP Goal V and related Strategic Objectives are managed exclusively by the Department of State).*

# ANNEX B: FY 2022-2026 USAID AGENCY LEARNING AGENDA QUESTION DETAILS

The Agency Learning Agenda questions represent a mix of operational and strategic Agency-wide learning opportunities. Operational questions consider how USAID does its work and focus on human and financial resources, partnering and procurement processes, systems and technology, training and staff capacity, and other similar areas. Strategic questions consider the what of the Agency's technical work, building connections across sectors and geographies.

There are two notable challenges in developing evidence to support policymaking across the USAID policy priority areas that are covered by the nine cross-cutting questions. The first challenge relates to restrictions on the initial funding that the Agency received; namely, limitations on how early supplemental COVID-19 response and recovery funds could be used for monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities. To overcome this challenge, USAID requested, and recently received, program funds to support evidence generation, synthesis, and peer-to-peer learning events that can facilitate the use of evidence in Agency decision-making in the face of COVID-19. The second challenge relates to issues in data quality for particular policy priorities such as migration and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. To overcome data gaps and restrictions, USAID is working closely with interagency partners to ensure that Agency policymaking is informed by comprehensive and up-to-date evidence and data.

The following tables provide details on each learning question; including context, connections to strategy, intended use, illustrative learning activities, and existing learning and evidence.

## I. OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

How can USAID better **streamline systems, processes and resources** to meet **long-term needs** identified by Missions, while enabling the flexibility to **respond quickly to unexpected shifts in context**?

Question I focuses on aspects of USAID's operational effectiveness; particularly ways in which the Agency can better align budget, policy, programming, staff, and systems - and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, or 'sludge' - to achieve its mission. The question considers operational factors that affect how well long-term development and humanitarian needs identified by Missions are addressed in strategies and programming, given resource limitations, mandates, directives, or other barriers or tradeoffs. It also creates space for investigating how Agency systems and processes enable flexible and timely response to game-changing shifts in operating context, including crises such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, while balancing long-term development and humanitarian needs.

### *Connections to Strategy*

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

## Illustrative Learning Activities

### **Performance Plan and Report (PPR) COVID-19 Key Issue Analysis in USAID Annual Reporting Process** MARCH 2022

As part of their PPR, USAID Missions have been asked to submit an open narrative regarding the portfolio adaptations they have made or plan to make in the near future in response to the pandemic. Each narrative consists of an open narrative with a 10,000 character limit. USAID will analyze the narrative submissions to determine common themes, areas requiring support from USAID/Washington, examples of effective adaptation for sharing within the Agency or other areas that support learning priorities in USAID's COVID-19 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan.

*Qualitative analysis of USAID Mission submissions of the COVID-19 key issue narrative in the annual PPR. Specific themes of interest are portfolio adaptations in response to the pandemic and the policies, processes, and structures that enabled or hindered those adaptations.*

### **COVID-19 Strategy and Operations Task Force (CTF) Hotwash** NEXT REPORT: FY 2022 Q2

USAID is conducting ongoing hotwashes for the COVID-19 Strategy and Operations Task Force (CTF) to reflect on the CTF's operations over the course of the previous months and to gather lessons learned to improve the continued performance of the CTF.

*Qualitative analysis of data collected through facilitated focus group discussions with individuals including both those who serve on and those who collaborate with the CTF.*

### **Mission Management Assessment Policy Update and Pilot** SUMMER 2022

USAID uses a business review process called Mission Management Assessments (MMAs) to help Mission, Operating Unit (OU), and Regional Bureau senior managers identify what is working and can be emulated elsewhere; major, often immediate, management issues; and propose practical and feasible steps to address gaps or weaknesses. USAID conducted a policy effectiveness review of the [ADS guidance](#) on MMAs in 2021 with the goal of shifting the focus of MMAs to organizational learning. USAID updated the draft guidance based on the recommendations from the review and is piloting the updated draft guidance this fall and winter with volunteer Missions in the Africa and Asia Bureaus before finalizing the ADS guidance in 2022.

*Qualitative data analysis to inform the initial policy updates; and qualitative and quantitative data analysis to validate final policy changes.*

### **Customer Service Framework Development to Enhance a Culture of Internal Service** FEBRUARY 2022

The Framework is a follow-up to the Customer Service Culture Assessment USAID conducted in 2021. Respondents from the assessment noted varied interpretations and understandings of the Agency's approach to customer service. USAID will develop the Customer Service Framework by bringing together customer service champions to outline the Agency's customer service definition, vision, and staff responsibilities and competencies.

*Qualitative analysis of input provided by customer service champions.*

## Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- Fighting Ebola with Information: Learning from the Use Data, Information, and Digital Technologies in the West Africa Ebola Outbreak Response
- [Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education White Paper](#)
- [Evidence Base of Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting: Adaptive Management](#)
- Bureau for Management Operational Excellence Agenda (Internal)
- COVID-19 Response and Recovery MEL Plan (Internal)

## 2. RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS

How can USAID strengthen household, community, and country **resilience to climate, conflict, economic, and health shocks**, such as COVID-19 and other global pandemic threats?

Question 2 focuses on USAID programming seeking to strengthen resilience, defined as the ability of individuals, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from acute and recurrent shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Building resilience requires strengthening the capacities that help individuals and systems to:

- absorb shocks by minimizing exposure to them and changing behavior to deal with the impact;
- adapt measures that identify and manage risks over the longer term; and
- transform as the underlying conditions are changed.

By leveraging evidence on the effectiveness of interventions and which factors enable adaptation to adversity, USAID is driving evidence-based investments that enable better management and adaptation to shocks. Question 2 creates opportunities to better connect, synthesize, and disseminate the resilience evidence-base being built across the Agency, so that USAID can holistically strengthen resilience to a range of complex and competing shocks and stressors, including climate, conflict, economic, and health shocks. Learning from the implementation of USAID's Resilience Policy, currently undergoing revision, will be key to addressing this question.

### **Connections to Strategy**

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

### **Illustrative Learning Activities**

#### **Performance Evaluation: Institutional Resilience and COVID-19** FY 2023 Q2

The United States COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Plan outlines the U.S. government's commitment to building resilience and bolstering political, economic, and social systems that have been affected by COVID-19. The purpose of this evaluation is three-fold. Results will inform:

1. Ongoing decisions about how USAID can strengthen systems resilience through adaptations to existing programs and the development of new programs.
2. USAID's strategies for building community and systems-level resilience capacities, so that public and private systems are stronger in the face of future pandemics.
3. USAID's operational and programmatic approaches to systems strengthening and capacity building more broadly, ensuring that these efforts support, rather than undermine, local efforts.

*A mixed-method approach that triangulates across quantitative and qualitative data sources. Global assessment, with case studies in specific countries identified through initial data collection.*

## Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- [ResilienceLinks: assessments, case studies, discussion papers, reports](#)
- [Transforming Systems in Times of Adversity: Education and Resilience White Paper Research Agenda for Land and Resource Governance](#)

### 3. RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

How can USAID best engage global actors, partner countries, and local leaders to mitigate the **climate crisis** and support equitable adaptation to its impacts?

Climate change is a planetary crisis that is leaving no corner of the world untouched. Failure to aggressively address this crisis will have dire consequences for us all. Conversely, responding to the climate crisis helps avoid these dangerous consequences and incentivizes economic, technological, ecological, and sociopolitical innovations in the very systems it threatens. Climate change affects the frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme weather events, alters precipitation patterns, disrupts ecological systems, and causes temperatures and sea levels to rise. These changes in turn exacerbate economic, sociocultural, and ecological inequities and contribute to hunger, poverty, malnutrition, displacement, fragility, and increased mortality.

Climate change impacts go beyond just the environmental sector to affect human health, nutrition and food security, ecosystems and biodiversity, peace and stability, and access to essential services, such as health care; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and education. Climate change threatens to drive increases in maternal and child malnutrition, is an increasing threat to national security, and contributes to migration, displacement and increased pressure on scarce government resources. Climate change also exacerbates inequalities, increasing the vulnerability of marginalized and underrepresented populations to gender-based violence, dispossession, and disempowerment. Addressing climate change is a top priority for USAID as part of the U.S. government's renewed and strengthened commitments to building climate resilience and helping limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius as called for under the Paris Agreement. Within the larger U.S. government effort, USAID plays a leading international role by working on the ground with partner governments and local actors to strengthen mitigation and adaptation.

Question 3 focuses on USAID programming and operations seeking to mitigate climate change and address its impacts—across all sectors—by partnering with global actors, partner countries, and local actors to reduce emissions, protect critical ecosystems, transition to renewable energy, build resilience and support equitable adaptation against the impacts of climate change, and promote the flow of capital toward climate-positive investments.

#### Connections to Strategy

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.



## Illustrative Learning Activities

### Learning from implementation of the USAID Climate Readiness Plan, including the USAID Climate Strategy ONGOING, 2022-2030

The 2021 *Climate Readiness Plan* outlines actions USAID will implement across the Agency's operations management functions and programs to adapt to the effects of changing climate. USAID developed its Climate Readiness Plan in response to Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. The Plan supports and aligns with USAID's forthcoming 2022-2030 Climate Strategy and demonstrates USAID's whole-of-Agency approach to combating the climate crisis.

Through the Climate Readiness Plan, USAID will implement priority climate adaptation and risk-mitigation actions across its program processes and management functions to increase the resilience of the Agency's core mission to known climate threats and vulnerabilities. Learning from implementation will inform Agency operations and programming, including mainstreaming climate across USAID's work, improving climate risk management and supply-chain resilience, building a climate-ready workforce, and using data to ensure climate-ready facilities and services.

*Determination of methods forthcoming, as part of Climate Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan.*

### Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- [USAID ClimateLinks](#)
- [Evaluation of Climate Risk Management at USAID \(2020\)](#)
- [The heat never bothered me anyway: Gender-specific response of agricultural labor to climatic shocks in Tanzania](#)

## 4. ANTI-CORRUPTION

How can USAID work with host countries, interagency colleagues, and other development actors to address **systemic corruption** through multisectoral approaches?

The fight against corruption is a key U.S. domestic and foreign policy priority and a [core national security interest](#). Corruption fundamentally undermines development progress across all sectors—whether health, education, economic growth, or building resilience to climate change. Corruption robs developing countries of an estimated \$1.26 trillion annually, while destabilizing democratic societies, undermining the rule of law, and diminishing the integrity of democratic institutions. Authoritarian regimes have weaponized corruption to consolidate their rule and undermine confidence in democratic processes and norms. In many USAID partner countries, corruption fuels violence, funds transnational criminal and terrorist enterprises, and perpetuates the trafficking of drugs, arms, and people. In the context of COVID-19, corruption impedes the integrity of emergency responses and humanitarian efforts to deliver lifesaving resources to affected and vulnerable communities.

USAID targets systemic corruption by aiming to build systemic accountability across the public-private landscape, including by expanding and accelerating efforts to build local capacity to prevent, detect, mitigate, and sanction corruption; strengthening oversight, accountability, and justice sector institutions; supporting open government and transparency norms; and empowering civil-society and media reformers to uncover corruption and hold governments to account. Question 4 focuses on how USAID can best partner with others on multisectoral anti-corruption interventions that promote good governance, government transparency, and accountability to support development objectives across all sectors.

## Connections to Strategy

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

## Illustrative Learning Activities

### **Performance Evaluation: Anti-Corruption and COVID-19** FY 2023 Q2

The purpose of this evaluation is to further our understanding of USAID anti-corruption programming in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. This study will assess how the Agency's new and existing anti-corruption initiatives have been able to respond to and address pandemic-enabled corruption. In addition, the evaluation will identify successful approaches and examine the coordination of COVID-19-sensitive anti-corruption programming both internally and with USAID's external partners. This performance evaluation aims to inform both future and ongoing programming to diminish the harmful effects of COVID-19-enabled corruption.

*A mixed-methods evaluation that collects and analyzes both quantitative survey data and data derived from qualitative interviews with various stakeholders involved in different stages of USAID'S COVID-19 response.*

### **Analysis and Research on Social Norms and Behavioral Approaches to Combating Corruption** FY 2023 Q2

This research project will use a case study approach to gather data, complemented by reference to existing literature, to consider the fundamental questions of how and when social and behavioral approaches should be used to counter corruption in diverse contexts across USAID partner countries. This analysis will include fragile and post-conflict countries, casting light on any adaptations to such contexts and whether any approaches are generalizable. The research will also consider whether there are early indicators of corruption-related social norms. The primary anticipated outcome of this project is an analytic report to inform the Anti-Corruption Task Force's work in updating USAID's anti-corruption policy, strategy, and technical practice.

*This project will use a case study methodology. It will include research of at least five (preferably eight to ten) cases. The cases must be regionally diverse and can be at the local, regional, or country level. The project will also include initial analysis of how this evidence can be applied to (1) USAID's assessments of corruption; and (2) USAID approaches to supporting reformers and building systemic accountability.*

## Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- Analysis of USAID Anticorruption Programming Worldwide (2007-2013)
- [Combating Corruption Among Civil Servants: Interdisciplinary Perspective on What Works](#)
- [Aiding or Abetting? Cross-national Effects of Foreign Aid on Corruption Combating Conservation Crime Learning Agenda](#)

## 5. AFFIRMATIVE DEVELOPMENT

How can USAID advance an affirmative, sustainable development approach to mitigate **authoritarian or malign influences and actions**?

Amid the 16-year democratic decline globally documented by Freedom House, nine more countries slipped into a state of autocracy in the last 5 years alone, affecting civil liberties of more than 300 million people. Authoritarians are using the COVID-19 pandemic as a further excuse to curb individual freedoms and tighten their grip on power. The pandemic has also tested the ability of fragile democracies that are trying to respond and maintain public confidence in their institutions. The People's Republic of China (PRC) increasingly supplies technological surveillance tools to other nations and uses its financial leverage to sway their actions. When countries turn to the governments of the PRC, Iran, Russia, and North Korea for investments and support, outcomes are detrimental to U.S. interests and overall progress toward reaching development goals.

In response, USAID works to:

- bolster democracy throughout the world when there is a political opening or an attempt to roll back democratic progress;
- help countries fight misinformation and disinformation, increasingly used by malign actors to stoke public anger against democratically elected officials and civil society;
- support activists and citizens subjected to digital repression by regimes that are becoming increasingly sophisticated at surveilling and censoring their populations;
- continue to provide support for governments to align regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies with democratic values;
- work to support independent and public interest media, helping journalists and whistleblowers withstand government repression, legal harassment, disinformation, and attacks on media outlets' financial viability; and
- build the resilience of democratic institutions by supporting the separation of powers, including independent judiciaries and electoral institutions, and stronger legislatures.

Question 5 focuses on building evidence and data to support Missions in knowing when and how to compete, counter, and engage with adversaries and competitors working in the same countries as USAID.

### *Connections to Strategy*

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.
- **JSP Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

## Illustrative Learning Activities

### Countering People's Republic of China (PRC) Influence Fund (CPIF) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning VARIES PER CPIF ACTIVITY

In FY 2020, USAID and the Department of State solicited and reviewed 167 proposals totaling \$1.5 billion and selected 84 innovative proposals from field Missions and Washington Bureaus to operationalize the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF; officially renamed the Countering PRC Influence Fund for FY 2022).

USAID is working with the Department of State to determine monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities for the suite of CCIF-funded proposals.

### Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- V-Dem Democracy Report 2021 - Autocratization Turns Viral
- [Theories of Democratic Change Phase II: Paths Away from Authoritarianism](#)
- Countering Malign Kremlin Influence Development Framework - Implementation Report
- Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Learning Agenda (Internal)

## 6. MIGRATION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

How can USAID better address drivers of **migration and forced displacement** through evidence-informed decision-making?

USAID programs related to migration and forced displacement span all regions in which the Agency works and often implicate both humanitarian and development assistance resources, tools, and approaches. For example, in Central America's Northern Triangle region, USAID plays an integral role in the implementation of the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government approach to ensure orderly, safe, and humane migration, including the [Root Causes Strategy](#) and the [Collaborative Migration Management Strategy](#).

Question 6 focuses on the Agency's use of data and evidence in its work to address drivers of migration and forced displacement. Drivers (root causes, determinants) are the intersecting factors that, together, compel the movement of individuals, families, or population groups. USAID works with civil society, U.S. and local private-sector partners, faith-based groups, and partner-government officials to understand and address the interrelated economic, governance, and security conditions that contribute to migration and forced displacement. In doing so, the Agency seeks to leverage rigorous analysis of data, lessons learned from past programming, and local and worldwide expertise to bring together the latest evidence around drivers of migration and innovative approaches to address root causes of migration.

### Connections to Strategy

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.
- **JSP Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

## Illustrative Learning Activities

### Interagency Root Causes Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan and Semi-Annual Root Causes Strategy Results Reports

DECEMBER 2021; SEMI-ANNUAL AND ANNUAL REPORTING

USAID and the Department of State, with input from other departments/agencies, are developing an interagency Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan for the U.S. Strategy to Address the Root Causes of Irregular Migration from Central America (Root Causes Strategy).

Per guidance from the National Security Council (NSC), USAID and the Department of State, in collaboration with other departments/agencies, produce semi-annual results reports. USAID and State submitted the first of these reports to the NSC and Office of the Vice President in November 2021. An early version of the draft Root Causes Strategy MEL Plan informed the structure and analysis of the November 2021 report, which highlighted preliminary results and context data organized by the five Root Causes Strategy pillars. Six U.S. agencies provided performance indicator data from more than 120 unique activities in Central America for the report. The context and performance metric data will be useful as benchmarks for comparing and analyzing future commitment and results data. Future semi-annual results reports will provide updated FY 2021 results data and incorporate new programs and data as Root Causes Strategy implementation matures. Starting in 2022, versions of the annual results reports prepared in the spring also will be submitted to Congress and published online, in line with legislative mandates.

#### RCS results reports and reports to Congress

*Context indicators: Sourced to independent third-parties and national governments, context indicator values for specific countries are compared to regional and other benchmarks, as appropriate, and over time.*

*Performance indicators: The November 2021 results report presented preliminary results data reported to U.S. agencies by implementing partners. These data primarily serve as a benchmark for analyzing future results data. They also provide an initial snapshot of short-term results that are expected to lead to longer-term outcomes. Future results reports will include data (results and targets) on these performance indicators, as well as additional indicators for recently launched and future programs.*

### Vanderbilt University's AmericasBarometer and Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)

BIENNIAL

Vanderbilt University developed the AmericasBarometer—which USAID has partially funded since 2004—to monitor and analyze issues related to democratic governance, citizen security, migration intentions, and related issues in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. This survey has been a vital resource in designing, focusing, and evaluating USAID programs in Central America to better address the root causes of migration. Vanderbilt carried out the 2021 surveys in 22 countries with more than 64,000 interviews. The team provides focused analysis of migration-related issues in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and has provided country-specific and region-wide briefings to LAC Missions, the LAC Bureau, and interagency partners.

*Vanderbilt University, the AmericasBarometer, and the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) are widely recognized as the gold standard for methodological rigor. A detailed description of Vanderbilt's survey and sampling methods, as well as results of the surveys, is available [here](#).*

### Analysis of Migration data from Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

ONGOING

To fill data gaps on the number and demographic makeup (e.g., sub-national origins, age, sex) of individuals emigrating from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras USAID began receiving and analyzing select origin data provided by CBP. Data were used to underpin a [USAID-commissioned study](#) on the statistical links between violence, development, and waves of Central American migrants to the United States. USAID expanded data sharing through a [memorandum of understanding \(MOU\) signed by USAID and CBP in March 2020](#) that provides USAID regular access to data—including de-identified data on migrants' city and country of permanent residence—collected from Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran migrants encountered by CBP officials at the U.S.-Mexico border.

*Quantitative analysis of data from CPB.*

## Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- [USAID/Honduras Reducing Homicide and Migrations Rates through CLA](#)
- [Documenting Learning and Decisions in a Refugee Context in Uganda](#)
- [Foundational Skills Development Learning Agenda](#)

## 7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

How can USAID programs and operations **mitigate harm** to underrepresented and marginalized populations, while promoting **equity and inclusion**?

USAID recognizes that historical marginalization, geographical isolation, cultural prejudice, gender discrimination, racism, and other complex systemic challenges affected by power, privilege, opportunity, and access to resources have led to inequities and exclusion. Development efforts designed without consideration of, and participation by, underrepresented and marginalized populations can result, at best, in exclusion of these groups from equal access to benefits of development investments, and at worst, in harm. To ensure that U.S. foreign assistance investments reduce (rather than reinforce) structural disparities, USAID seeks to advance equity and inclusion proactively and support the underserved.

USAID achieves this, in part, through approaches to gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusive development, which are supported through a variety of guidance and policy documents including: the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act, USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, ADS 205 guidance, the US Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, policies on Youth in Development, Indigenous Peoples, Disability Inclusion, and LGBTQI+ inclusion. An Additional Help to ADS 201 document provides guidance on integrating inclusive development considerations across the Program Cycle.

USAID is also committed to a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace where everyone has an opportunity to thrive. The Agency's [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Strategy](#) commits USAID to improving diversity and promoting equity and inclusion in the workplace, and strengthening accountability for sustaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive Agency culture.

USAID is strengthening operational efforts that mitigate potential risks and promote equity and inclusion, particularly for those who are marginalized, underrepresented, or in vulnerable situations. Among USAID's current approaches include advancing best practices with regard to safeguarding (including child protection and preventing sexual misconduct), ensuring adherence to nondiscrimination for beneficiaries of USAID grants and contracts, elevating the importance of environmental and social risk management, abiding by the counter-trafficking in persons code of conduct, and training staff and implementing partners. Per the [Equity Action Plan](#), USAID is developing an independent accountability mechanism to provide stakeholders with a simple means to communicate real or perceived economic, environmental, or social harm; and drafting a 'Bill of Rights' to communicate the rights of, and protections for, those engaged through USAID's efforts.

Question 7 considers how USAID can utilize evidence to further promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in programs and operations; reduce disparities due to gender, racial and ethnic identity and other drivers of vulnerability; and ensure we do no harm to underrepresented and marginalized populations. New evidence will also inform how USAID can safeguard against or address any negative consequences to underrepresented or marginalized populations associated with Agency operational and programmatic policies and practices.

### **Connections to Strategy**

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.

- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.
- **JSP Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

### **Illustrative Learning Activities**

#### **Agency Internal Equity Assessment Phased Learning Data Collection Support** SPRING 2022

USAID, in compliance with Executive Order 13985, conducted equity assessments on barriers to entry for potential partners and the different elements of the Civil Service employment life cycle. USAID will conduct additional equity assessments on the different elements of the Foreign Service employment life cycle and the different elements of the employment life cycle for non-direct-hire hiring mechanisms.

*A mixed-methods approach that utilizes both qualitative data collection and quantitative data analysis. USAID identified barriers to entry for potential USAID partners and analyzed promising employment practices at the Agency. USAID will engage in baseline metric data collection around its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion monitoring and learning plan and will conduct an After-Action Review on the Foreign Service promotion process and an assessment of barriers to equity in the non-direct-hire hiring mechanisms.*

#### **Gender-Based Violence Portfolio Performance Evaluation** FY 2022

The purpose of this study is to conduct a portfolio performance evaluation (PPE) to understand what is working, challenges faced, knowledge gaps, as well as what can be improved. The GBV portfolio comprises four activity clusters:

- a. The women's economic empowerment (WEE) activities directly funded by GenDev integrating GBV prevention and response activities;
- b. Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV);
- c. The Resilient, Inclusive & Sustainable Environments (RISE): A Challenge to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Environment; and
- d. The activities funded by USAID's Better Together Challenge with GBV prevention and response interventions.

*The PPE is structured to initially include a period of co-creation with USAID and its partners in developing the evaluation scope of work. This will be followed by evaluation design, data collection and analysis, presentations and reports that summarize key findings, gaps and recommendations to inform future research and programming.*

### **Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence**

- [USAID Equity Action Plan](#)
- [Education in Crisis and Conflict Learning Agenda](#)
- USAID Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion MEL Plan (Internal)
- [Global Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Analysis](#)
- [Positive Youth Development Learning Agenda theme #4: Vulnerable or marginalized populations](#)
- [Evaluation: LGBTI Global Development Partnership](#)
- [Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education](#)
- [Landscape Analysis: How are USAID Operating Units including Indigenous Peoples into development activities?](#)
- [Gender Gaps in Agricultural Growth and Development](#)
- [Menstrual Hygiene in the Workplace: Learning Brief](#)

## 8. LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT

How can USAID more equitably engage **local knowledge, assets, and practices** and align programming with local priorities and metrics for success?

Locally-led development is the process in which local actors—individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments—set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring the capacity, leadership, and resources to make those solutions a reality. USAID recognizes that local leadership and ownership are essential for fostering sustainable results across our development and humanitarian assistance work. Locally-led development is not a single approach, but a range of ways that USAID, its partners, and communities can work together to shift agenda-setting and decision-making power into the hands of local actors.

To inform these shifts, Question 8 focuses on how USAID can more equitably engage the knowledge, assets, and practices of local actors. This means investigating and documenting promising local practices that can be amplified through our work, the ways that USAID currently interacts with local actors and knowledge systems, the power dynamics inherent to these engagements, and opportunities for local actors to lead technical direction and agenda setting. This question also aims to explore how USAID might better share data and evidence with local actors to support their initiatives and programs.

USAID can catalyze and facilitate local leadership of development and humanitarian assistance in a variety of ways throughout the design, procurement, management, and measurement of assistance. Question 7 additionally aims to explore how local priorities and metrics for success are and can be incorporated across the program cycle.

### Connections to Strategy

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
- **JSP Goal II:** Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.
- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.
- **JSP Goal IV:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

### Illustrative Learning Activities

#### Stopping as Success + (SAS+)

FY 2025 Q3

Stopping as Success: Locally Led Transitions in Development (SAS+) builds on learning outcomes over the past three years from the consortium's existing evidence base about "what works" in responsible transitions. USAID-funded SAS+ will enable development partnerships to be more locally led, transitions to be more effective and sustainable for the local actors involved, and systems of development actors (local organizations, international partners, and USAID) to be more responsive to the communities in which they work by applying, refining, and disseminating findings and tools from the first round of research (SAS, 2017-2020) through an accompaniment approach with existing development partnerships.

*Prime consortium partner CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) will leverage collaborative and participatory research methodologies to learn with local and international partners, communities, and organizations to create actionable evidence for more effective and accountable development efforts.*



### Local Works

FUNDING THROUGH AT LEAST FY 2025

The congressionally-directed Local Works program advances locally led development around the world, while also enhancing USAID's ability to support local actors. With 5-year discretionary funds, Local Works provides Missions more time and greater freedom to pursue locally led programming and innovative ways of working with resources, tools, and opportunities to try new development approaches that are more flexible, locally responsive, and locally sustainable.

*Local Works collaborates with Missions, their local partners, and research partners to generate learning through the Local Works Community of Practice, partner-driven MEL and reporting, case studies, research & development activities (see SAS+, above), and evaluations.*

### Local Knowledge Leading Practices in External Organizations

JUNE 2022

Through the support of Virtual Student Federal Service Interns, USAID is investigating how development organizations outside USAID approach local knowledge definitions; how and when local knowledge is used; what best practices exist; what other organizations' experiences have been; and where there is or is not consensus within the greater development sector on these topics.

*Literature review and interviews with a variety of development organizations (Public International Organizations, bilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations, activist groups, etc.).*

### Pilot Testing Local Knowledge Tools

DECEMBER 2022

USAID selected five tools, some internal and other external, that Missions can use to increase use of local knowledge in their programming. Draft summary sheets describing each tool were produced, and an exploration of how to pilot test and eventually scale up the use of these tools is ongoing.

*Iterative field testing followed by qualitative data collection from test users to improve the five tools.*

### Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- [Local Works Stories from the Field](#)
- Locally-Led Development Research 2017-2020
- Recommendations for Improving Capacity Strengthening Approaches
- [Developing Locally-Relevant Measure of Commitment Higher Education Learning Agenda](#)

## 9. PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

How can **USAID's partnerships** with the private sector; local, faith, and nontraditional partners; and other donors contribute to sustainable development objectives?

Today, private sources represent more than 90 percent of financial flows into emerging markets. Inclusive growth can only be achieved when USAID works with the private sector—as a driver of capital markets—to spur greater development impact. Our approach to global development is enterprise-driven. The Agency is undergoing an intentional shift toward pursuing market-based approaches and investment as a more sustainable way to empower people and communities worldwide.

Simultaneously, the Agency's New Partnerships Initiative helps USAID partner with new, nontraditional, and local actors to advance their development goals—while elevating the quality of our partnerships through strengthened accountability, capacity, and local leadership. USAID supports partnerships that promote local leadership; seeks innovative approaches to strengthening the capacity, performance, and accountability

structures of our partner ecosystem; and identifies new and nontraditional sources of funding to sustain partnerships and scale impact. USAID also works with bilateral donor organizations like the United Kingdom, Japan, and Sweden; multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank Group, other Regional Development Banks and the various United Nations agencies; and country partners who may still receive assistance, such as India, South Africa, and Indonesia. By coordinating and working closely with other donors, USAID improves the delivery, impact, and sustainability of development assistance, thereby maximizing development results.

Question 9 will look across a range of USAID approaches to partnering, to better understand how partnerships with specific actors contribute toward sustained development results.

### **Connections to Strategy**

- **JSP Goal I:** Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.
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- **JSP Goal III:** Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

### **Illustrative Learning Activities**

#### **Enduring Results 4.0**

FY 2023 Q1

The Enduring Results 4.0 Study will examine the drivers of sustainability and scale in USAID's partnerships with the private sector. The study will identify factors that have contributed to the continuity of activities and outcomes and the role that partners play in enabling enduring results. The study will build on the work done in the third iteration of the Enduring Results series.

*The study will utilize data from multiple sources, including the Agency's public-private partnership database and interviews with USAID staff, implementing partner staff, and private-sector partners. The findings from these interviews will be examined through a framework designed for the Enduring Results series.*

#### **Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Evidence Gap Map Phase II**

FY 2023 Q1

The [Private-Sector Engagement \(PSE\) Evidence Gap Map \(EGM\)](#) facilitates the use of evidence in PSE approaches and helps to identify knowledge gaps. The tool consolidates the breadth of PSE research and evidence available both internal and external to USAID. In phase II of the EGM, additional evidence will be added to the repository and evidence synthesis reports will be created for priority topics.

*New evidence will be identified through a targeted search strategy that includes key terms related to private-sector engagement in development. More information on the methodology can be found [here](#).*

#### **USAID Partnering Process Analysis**

FY 2022 Q2

Using systems engineering and multi-stakeholder perspective approaches to examine the end-to-end private-sector engagement process employed by USAID from problem definition, partner selection, engagement negotiation, implementation, and closeout to: 1) map out the engagement processes; 2) identify bottlenecks and root causes that affect PSE formation, operations, relationships, and health using a systems approach; and 3) identify leading practices to address these challenges.

*Qualitative research methods including process mapping techniques, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, in-depth multiple cases study analysis, and narrative analyses were used.*

### Examples of Existing Learning and Evidence

- [Private-Sector Engagement Evidence Gap Map](#)
- Enduring Results Study 3.0
- [PIVOT-SRLA Learning Review](#)
- Stories from the New Partnerships Initiative
- [Multi-Donor Learning Partnership for Development Impact](#)
- Private Sector Engagement Evidence and Learning Strategy
- [PIVOT: Practical, Innovative, On-the-Job Training Cohort Program](#)

## ANNEX C: FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTERNAL COLLABORATION ON AGENCY LEARNING

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Department of State and Interagency</b> | The Evaluation Officers Council and other interagency meetings provide opportunities for evidence exchange around shared learning priorities.   |
| <b>Implementing and Local Partners</b>     | <p>Implementing and local partners play an essential role in advancing USAID’s learning and can contribute to the learning agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitting concept notes, applications, and proposals that incorporate learning questions, objectives, and best practices in data collection, reporting, and evaluation in support of the Agency Learning Agenda</li> <li>• Working with USAID to co-design research aligned to the learning agenda.</li> <li>• Informing USAID of new findings related to learning agenda themes.</li> <li>• Disseminating findings from the learning agenda within their organizations and across relevant networks.</li> <li>• Applying findings from the learning agenda to the implementation of USAID activities</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Researchers and HEIs</b>                | <p>Individual researchers, research institutions, and Higher Education Institutions play a unique role in advancing USAID’s learning by generating knowledge through basic and applied research, supporting its application, and developing solutions that contribute to development and innovation. Researchers can contribute to the Agency Learning Agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning research interests of faculty and students with the questions and themes to co-design and complete research projects of mutual interest and benefit.</li> <li>• Informing USAID of knowledge and research related to learning agenda themes.</li> <li>• Responding to anticipated requests and calls for information and research on specific topics.</li> <li>• Joining new and existing networks and communities of practices to foster additional interest and collaborations.</li> <li>• Using findings from the Agency Learning Agenda to inform research and networks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Think Tanks</b>                         | Think Tanks play a fundamental role in disseminating evidence to drive policymaking.  |
| <b>Other Donors</b>                        | USAID’s participation in the Multi-donor Learning Partnership and other donor coalitions fosters collaboration in evidence synthesis and identification of evidence gaps.   |