

## BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

### OVERVIEW

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) integrates monitoring, evaluation, and learning (ME&L) into emergency response, early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience worldwide, including resilience food security activities (RFSAs), enabling staff to track program progress and results and enhance program effectiveness through the generation, capture, sharing, and application of evidence. ME&L activities facilitate the systematic collection and analysis of data and lessons learned to inform decisions on adaptations for improved program effectiveness and quality. Combined, ME&L improves planning, design, and resource-allocation decisions, building a body of knowledge and understanding that implementing actors share and apply across countries and sectors.

USAID/BHA ME&L  
Funding in FY 2023

**\$104,714,652**

## **Conducting Third-Party Monitoring in Complex Emergencies**

In complex emergency contexts—such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Yemen—limited access and security concerns often prevent USAID/BHA staff from conducting regular in-person site visits to monitor program performance and assess progress. To ensure continued visibility on program progress and effectiveness, USAID/BHA contracts independent third-party monitors (TPMs) with in-depth knowledge of local communities and security conditions to perform monitoring activities, including in-person site visits. TPMs combine quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to verify program implementation, outputs, and deliverables. Detailed reports from TPMs inform programmatic adjustments, strategic decision making, and future program design to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance. USAID/BHA staff review TPM methodology and tools and provide technical direction on sample size and site selection, including location selection, activity prioritization, sampling plans, and reporting schedules. USAID/BHA maintained TPM contracts in 19 countries in FY 2023. USAID/BHA also developed a TPM learning series to bring together implementing partner staff for six sessions on topics ranging from improving data quality and use to ensuring safe and accountable programming through TPM.

## **Investing in Innovation for Global Humanitarian Responses**

USAID/BHA investments in ME&L play a vital role in building the humanitarian community's capacity to generate evidence, including through piloting and strengthening rigorous, innovative, and context-specific approaches to address distinct ME&L challenges in humanitarian settings. In FY 2023, USAID/BHA supported eight research awards that contributed to global best practices for humanitarian ME&L.

In partnership with USAID/BHA, the University of Arizona is developing methods to measure indicators of the effectiveness and potential long-term impacts of humanitarian investments on local disaster risk reduction planning efforts. USAID/BHA nongovernmental organization (NGO) partner Mercy Corps is developing an open-source toolkit that outlines how to integrate Reduced Access Analytical Methods—including approaches such as conflict mapping, photo geolocation, rumor tracking, and satellite imagery analysis—into existing monitoring and evaluation systems so that humanitarian program teams make better, quicker program adaptations in contexts where humanitarian actors face reduced access and limited direct monitoring and oversight. USAID/BHA also funds UN World Food Program (WFP) to conduct impact evaluations in four focal research areas—forecast-based financing and climate adaptation, targeting, cash-based transfers, and peace and social cohesion—in addition to developing an open-source impact evaluation protocol and tool library and convening an impact evaluation methods community of practice.

## **Strengthening ME&L Capacity for USAID/BHA Staff and Partners**

During FY 2023, USAID/BHA conducted capacity-strengthening activities for internal staff and partners worldwide to bolster ME&L systems, improve data quality and analysis, and maximize evidence-based approaches to inform program development and adaptation.

Site visits are a critical and required component of performance management, providing USAID/BHA staff with impartial, primary data on its programming. USAID/BHA provides internal and external site visit protocols and guidance documents for staff and partners. Protocols encompass principles such as do no harm, informed consent, and sexual exploitation and abuse reporting. Guidance documents provide monitors with resources such as key informant selection, illustrative lines of inquiry, and data verification and triangulation.

Throughout FY 2023, USAID/BHA designed and implemented a variety of workshops and tools to strengthen USAID/BHA and implementing partner staff skills, including how to gather and document lessons learned, develop research and learning agendas, apply evidence and learning in program adaptations, scenario plan to anticipate future program needs effectively, and monitor sustainability plans. In addition, USAID/BHA finalized a qualitative toolkit, and shared best practices for community engagement. USAID/BHA also funds the Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC) to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of USAID/BHA-funded emergency food security activities through impact evaluations. HAEC is funding and facilitating six ongoing impact evaluations, including in Colombia, Honduras, and Guatemala, among others. In FY 2023, HAEC engaged USAID/BHA and implementing partner staff to build skills and familiarity with impact evaluation requirements, design, and methods. HAEC led two international workshops and shared tools to strengthen implementing partners capacity to coordinate and interpret rigorous impact evaluations.

### **Strengthening RFSAs Through ME&L Technical Support**

USAID/BHA provides technical support to improve the quality of USAID/BHA-funded RFSAs, including through 16 ongoing evaluations across nine countries. In FY 2023, during the first year of the RFSAs in Mozambique, USAID/BHA held a workshop to help the partner improve its theory of change, develop a shared understanding of evidence gaps, and identify priority research questions. USAID/BHA also organized workshops in Haiti and Ethiopia to support RFSAs at the end of their first year of operations, during which partners presented the results of initial research, revised theories of change, updated implementation plans, and improved working relationships for future collaboration. During the fiscal year, USAID/BHA also convened workshops for implementing partners in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Zimbabwe to review planning for sustaining program impacts after the end of the award, identifying aspects of the intervention to phase out or eliminate, and agreeing on critical next steps for the remaining implementation years.

### **Strengthening Cross-Organizational Collaboration to Improve Programming**

USAID/BHA supports collaboration between donors, implementing partners, and local government representatives to collectively plan for and respond to crises, plan activities, set coordinated goals, and share knowledge on emerging evidence and best practices. This coordination helps reduce information siloing and duplication across sectors and assistance types and ensures complementarity of programs. In FY 2023, USAID/BHA funded national and regional learning platforms for Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan to facilitate joint action planning, consolidate research and learning agendas, strengthen partner adaptive management practices, and identify the most promising interventions to scale up.

Globally, USAID/BHA strengthened partner capacities to design and implement programs through a humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding lens. In FY 2023, USAID/BHA's Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning mechanism produced learning briefs and other documentation detailing promising humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approaches by USAID/BHA partners. The mechanism also helped convene 200 participants in Naivasha, Kenya, for a four-days of peer-to-peer discussion on HDP coherence in food crisis contexts across the Greater Horn of Africa Region, identifying promising practices for joint planning, and shared needs analyses, research, and learning.

More information on USAID/BHA sectors can be found at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors)