2024-26 DRG Learning Agenda

A dynamic collection of research questions that serve to guide the DRG Center's and USAID Missions' analytical efforts related to DRG

The 2024-26 DRG Learning Agenda priorities and questions were informed by extensive stakeholder consultation and analysis. The priorities 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 programs.

Since 2016, the USAID DRG Learning Agenda has been an evolving set of questions in priority development areas for which the DRG Bureau has organized and disseminated existing data, generated new evidence, and produced conclusions and recommendations. The Bureau continues to focus on generating evidence as well as summarizing the ever expanding tehcnical evidence base.

The DRG Bureau has generated evidence over the past almost decade years by gathering information from academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of DRG program assumptions and theories of change. The DRG Bureau shares this evidence through the DRG Annual Learning Forum and the DRGLinks website platform.

Past Insights

Information Integrity: Debunking and inoculation are the most effective information integrity interventions. Media literacy interventions in the Global South are more effective for those with higher education and digital literacy. Emotional appeals and social norms can boost their impact. Intensive training isn't always necessary. Institutional interventions have potential but lack evidence.

Democratic backsliding: There are 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.

Human Rights Awareness Campaigns: Targeted framing and media diversity are key to successful awareness campaigns, but can also cause unintended consequences

PITA in Development: Integration of Participation, Inclusion, Transparency and Accountability (PITA) focused interventions can enhance citizen engagement and service outcomes, but participation alone may not guarantee quality.

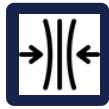## For more info

drglinks.org

idea.usaid.gov/drg

Current Learning Priorities and Questions

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 impact the knowledge acquisition, skill development, and self-reported preparedness of potential DRG recipients, considering factors such as prior experience, learning styles, and access to technology?

Democratic Resilience

What activities across development sectors work to contribute to democratic resilience?

- How do activities across non-DRG development sectors positively or negatively influence democratic outcomes, 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 processes and institutions? How can this be identified, mitigated and addressed through our programming?

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?
- How have past USAID interventions addressed democratic openings in various countries, and what lessons can be learned from these experiences?

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?
- 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?