

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 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.

Third-Party Monitoring to Address Access Constraints

In countries experiencing complex emergencies, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Mali, limited access and security concerns often prevent USAID/BHA staff from conducting regular site visits to monitor program performance and assess progress. Similarly, in countries where USAID/BHA is responding to natural disasters and other types of emergencies, areas can become hard-to-reach and nonpermissive due to a variety of constraints. To address access impediments, USAID/BHA contracts independent third-party monitors with in-depth knowledge of local communities and security conditions. Third-party monitors combine quantitative and qualitative methods—including direct observation, document reviews, focus group discussions, individual interviews, and surveys—for data collection at program sites. Detailed reports from third-party monitors assist

USAID/BHA and partners in making programmatic adjustments to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and inform future program design and strategic decision making.

Investment 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, pilot, test, develop, and strengthen rigorous and context-specific ME&L approaches and develop innovative solutions to address the distinct challenges related to ME&L in humanitarian settings. ME&L research awards broaden the global evidence base for ME&L in humanitarian assistance. In FY 2022, USAID/BHA supported seven research awards that contributed to global best practices for ME&L in humanitarian contexts.

As part of one ongoing USAID/BHA research award, nongovernmental organization partner Alight continued to develop its Kuja Kuja platform, a tailored, real-time feedback system for humanitarian actors to better monitor beneficiary satisfaction and improve accountability to Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia during FY 2022. Alight-Kuja Kuja also expanded their operations to West Bank and Gaza during FY 2022. Additionally, in partnership with USAID/BHA, the University of Arizona is developing indicators and methods to measure the effectiveness of humanitarian investments on local disaster risk reduction planning efforts, diversified livelihood strategies, and early warning systems that reduce disaster risk and enable households and communities to adapt and become more resilient to climate change.

USAID/BHA has contracted CARE and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to evaluate the effectiveness of mobile herd enclosures in soil fertility management and crop productivity in Zimbabwe. This research supports two of USAID/BHA's RFSAs, which are designed to improve food and nutrition security in Zimbabwe. RFSAs are multi-year, multi-sector activities located in countries identified as priority under the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy.

CARE and ICRISAT's research evaluates mobile herd enclosures as an alternative to conventional methods of fertilizing crops using cattle manure from stationary herd enclosures. The research finds significantly higher levels of plant height and greenness for maize and sorghum crops fertilized using mobile herd enclosures compared with manure from stationary enclosures. Additionally, the research indicates that mobile herd enclosures could improve soil fertility by reducing the use of chemical fertilizers. ME&L activities like CARE and ICRISAT's research generate evidence and best practices that can be used to improve food security among vulnerable populations.

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

During FY 2022, USAID/BHA conducted capacity-strengthening activities for partners worldwide to bolster ME&L systems, improve data quality and analysis, and maximize evidence-based approaches to inform program development and adaptation. Throughout the year, USAID/BHA designed and implemented a variety of training workshops and tools to help USAID/BHA and implementing partner staff strengthen skills in foundational learning practices, including facilitating knowledge sharing in virtual and in-person environments; conducting after-action learning; introducing adaptive management; developing learning agendas through guidance and templates; and engaging in scenario planning to anticipate future program needs effectively. USAID/BHA further strengthened implementing partners' ME&L capacity through workshops on monitoring sustainability plans, finalizing a qualitative toolkit, and imparting best practices for effective community engagement.

ME&L Technical Assistance Strengthens RFSAs

USAID/BHA provides technical support to improve the quality of USAID/BHA-funded RFSAs, including through 16 ongoing evaluations across nine countries with RFSAs. In FY 2022, USAID/BHA also convened a series of workshops for organizations in Ethiopia and Haiti in their first year of implementing two new RFSAs to improve their theories of change, develop a shared understanding of evidence gaps, identify priority research questions, conduct gender analysis, and enhance plans for community engagement, including how activities would highlight local voices, needs, and opportunities. USAID/BHA also supported workshops in Mali and Zimbabwe to support RFSAs at the end of their first year of operations in FY 2022, during which partners presented the results of initial research, revised theories of change, and updated implementation plans.

Cross-Organizational Collaboration for Improved Programming

USAID/BHA supports country-focused collaboration efforts to bring donors, implementing partners, and local government representatives together to collectively 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 that funded programs work in a complementary manner. For example, in FY 2022 USAID/BHA helped design and fund the Ethiopia Resilience Learning Activity, a national learning platform which convenes organizations 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 supported its partners' capacity to design and implement programs through a humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding lens. USAID/BHA's Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning mechanism staged a series of global virtual knowledge sharing events that gathered nearly 600 unique participants across 14 live events from June to September 2022. The peer-to-peer series convened practitioners with the aim of creating a shared understanding of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding programming, exploring current practices and enabling factors in different contexts, and providing partners with a forum to discuss common issues across contexts.

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)