

Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Sector Update

OCTOBER 2015

SECTOR OVERVIEW

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) integrates monitoring, evaluation, and learning (ME&L) activities into emergency response and disaster risk reduction programs to improve the quality of programming, enhance accountability, and ensure that USAID/OFDA-supported assistance is appropriate and effective. A critical component of program management, ME&L helps USAID/OFDA and its partners understand the progress and results of humanitarian responses so that future programs can better save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impacts of humanitarian emergencies. In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$5.3 million for third party monitoring programs and continued to support the development and implementation of impact evaluations and a guide for evaluating humanitarian programs. USAID/OFDA's ME&L support complements and builds upon the efforts of the partners implementing USAID/OFDA-funded humanitarian programs.

SUPPORTING THIRD PARTY MONITORING IN DIFFICULT-TO-ACCESS AREAS

In countries experiencing complex emergencies, security concerns can prevent USAID/OFDA and expatriate partner staff from conducting regular site visits to monitor the progress of programs. In such cases, contracting a third party to conduct quantitative and qualitative output monitoring and activity verification is highly relevant and useful. Third party monitoring allows USAID/OFDA to access independent data on the progress of programs, allowing USAID/OFDA and its partners to make real-time adjustments to improve the quality of assistance in complex emergencies. Third party monitoring programs can also inform USAID/OFDA strategic decisions regarding future program design. USAID/OFDA supported third party monitoring programs in four countries in FY 2015.

ADVANCING THE QUALITY OF IMPACT EVALUATIONS

Donor organizations and individuals contribute billions of dollars annually toward providing humanitarian assistance. Performance evaluations play a key role in helping donors and humanitarian agencies understand the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coverage, and sustainability of the programs they support. However, only impact evaluations can identify the relationship between humanitarian programs and the results on the ground and help answer critical questions, such as whether humanitarian assistance reached the right people; if aid was sufficient and delivered at the right time; and, most importantly, whether the support made a difference and, if so what, at what cost?

Through a partnership with the UK Department for International Development (DFID), USAID/OFDA continued to support the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3iE) in FY 2015 to explore and advance impact evaluations—assessments that measure the change in an outcome attributable to a defined intervention—applied in humanitarian contexts to improve evidence-based decision making by the humanitarian community. During FY 2015, 3iE continued to develop two USAID/OFDA-funded systematic reviews, including the identification of implementing partners. 3iE selected Tufts University to conduct a review focused on the effectiveness of short-term hygiene interventions, such as hand hygiene, water treatment, and waste disposal. A second partner—not yet publicly announced—was selected to conduct a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of distributing relief commodities following a natural disaster. 3iE expects partners to complete the systematic reviews in FY 2016.

ALNAP EVALUATING HUMANITARIAN ACTION GUIDE

During FY 2015, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) advanced the development of the inaugural Guide on Evaluating Humanitarian Action (EHA Guide). As an active supporter of ALNAP, USAID/OFDA contributed to development of the EHA Guide in FY 2015 through direct participation in a EHA Guide validation workshop in Berlin in March. The workshop primarily aimed to address questions and concerns hampering the revision and finalization of the guide. ALNAP expects to complete and disseminate the guide in FY 2016. The pilot version can be viewed on ALNAP's website at <http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/evaluation/eha>.

USAID/OFDA CONTACT

Caroline Andresen, *Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator*, candresen@usaid.gov