

MICROLINKS

VALUE CHAINS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IN HAITI

Q&A AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

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PRESENTERS

Ken Smarzik, RTI International

MODERATOR

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Audience Member:	Thank you for a very perspicacious process of implementation. The thing that
	occurred to me, and I'm sure they're an answer, is, you indicated that one of the
	major problems in the textile field was the lack of certain construction products, that
	is these factory shells. Had you considered trying to use some of the resources to
	develop factory shells, to develop an industry that builds them?

Ken Smarzik: Yeah, we did. It's an industry to itself. A lot of the work is done by foreign firms. They come in and do it a lot faster than the Haitian firms. But because of the volumes of money we're talking about here, it's a \$33 million project, one building is 3 million dollars. So, the question is, how do you really stimulate ... what can you do ... some of these private industrial parks are building 5 billion ... 5 buildings, so they've got 5 to 20 million dollars of investment. So how do you ... they don't need much push. They need the land. They need the space to be able to put these buildings up. And they actually got it. What we could have done, or what an idea was, to find some sort of financing mechanism. The industry actually lobbied and found out ... found it on its own, and that was the central bank reduced reserve requirements on loans in gourdes, to people building factory shells, and fixed the interest rate from between 5 to 8 percent over a period of 15 years, I think. And Robin, correct me on the details of stuff like that. But that ... basically, that has opened the floodgates now to releasing private capital to build those shells, which then we can help with the training. And so we find sort of an adaptive place to intervene.

Moderator: And now we'll take a couple of questions from our webinar audience. There were a lot of questions towards the end of the presentation about how do you do flexible monitoring and evaluation while still having consistent data over time. Are there any particular tools that the project is using, for example, digital data collection or qualitative methods? And so how do you do it in practice, this flexible monitoring and evaluation?

Ken Smarzik: No, to be honest, we're working through it. We haven't ... number one is finding a set of indicators that's reasonable, or that's applicable. And not spending too much time measuring indicators that are not really that meaningful. In terms of ... So number one is, I think, is finding the appropriate indicators that's sort of tracking

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what we're doing. And that means releasing, letting go of what we thought the indicators should be. Or ... and I think there's attention here ... what has gone into the mission planning in terms of what this project would contribute to their indicators? Secondly is, one thing that we do do is we up targets and lower targets. So, as we started working, for an instance, we didn't realize we would be touching that many micro enterprises. And that's an F level indicator for the mission. It's important. And, for instance, in Caribbean harvest, 150 of their farmers, fishing farmers, are micro enterprises. And ... But when we looked at the activity, we only looked at Caribbean harvest. We didn't think about the micro enterprises. So, we were able to actually ... we had a low target on micro enterprises. We actually upped the target. And we keep upping that target on an annual basis to show the mission that we can actually ... because of some of the activities that we selected, we can actually end up with greater number of micro enterprises than they originally thought. So giving us some flexibility in terms of setting targets is one way. That's about it for now, though. The rest is sort of a work in progress.

Audience Member: Hi, Ken. Great presentation. You guys are doing a fantastic job in a real crazy environment. I'm Bob Rabatsky. I'm working with Fintrac on a program called Feed the Future, Partnering for Innovation. And I wanted to get back to the contracts versus cooperative agreement, and how these things are structured. And I hear you. We experience this all the time. The design of these programs and the RFPs as they come out in a contract are very, very prescriptive. We've all read these 20 page RFPs that get down way into the weeds about what AID wants to see in very granularly versus designing an RFP that has higher-level indicators as what they want. Jobs created. Investment made. Businesses started up. And allowing the respondent to really write to those higher level outcomes. And wouldn't that give you the flexibility then, to structure your implementation and have that a little bit more reactively planned? And then, on the contract mechanisms, have you guys looked at ... or what are your thoughts, in general, about design and perform? So that used to be an approach that AID used, I guess, a couple decades ago. They tried it out. I thought ... I was involved in one of them, and I thought it worked really well. Again, very high level objectives. And then you go in and design with USAID and then implement.

> A second one is milestone-based contracting. In other words, if you hit this milestone you're gonna get payment. This goes to your point about burn rate, starting low, and ending high. You get paid for what you produce. So that's another

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idea. And then, finally, third question on your sub-agreements, your investment fund. Could you talk a little bit about how that's structured? Are those fixed-price grant agreements, grants under contract? And how do you work with the limitations on that, money-wise, and all the other regulations that go along with that?

Ken Smarzik: Okay. On gonna start off with the bottom first, 'cause I think the other topic areas, maybe Issac can pipe in. Sub-agreements are, we picked the number of \$250,000 out of the air and said, "Okay. This is gonna be the maximum grant we're gonna make. We're not gonna ... and we're gonna try and match that one-to-one. We're well above that in terms of overall matching. We maybe match a little bit less on the smaller ones, but a lot more on the bigger ones. And they are all types of grants. They're grants under contract, but they're all types. And again, we basically look at ... we spend a lot of time looking at the type of activity and are there things that are gonna hold us up? With procurement, for instance. Do we have to go out here to do procurement? Okay. Let's ... is there another structure we can use to make this work?" And, yeah. You gotta work around them, because that helps reduce the time to implementation. Without a doubt. It's not one size fits all at all. It's dynamic. It's the private sector. They need tools. And so these challenge grants were really great, and what are we really to achieve? We're really trying to achieve jobs? Let's pay them for jobs. You figure out how you create that job. I don't want to get involved in your business, okay? But I'll give you a bottle of Coke for every time you create a job, or whatever that is in stuff like that. And, just to put things in perspective, we had to create 6000 jobs, direct jobs in the first three years of the project, okay? Which, if you do the math ... and full time equivalent is 260 days. So, you would have had to produce 2000 jobs the first day of the contract to get the 6000 at the end of the contract. That's the reality. And so you've got to really be creative to be able to come up with ways to achieve those objectives.

In terms of milestones, design and implement, I've always been a lover of design and implement. I think that was the way to go. I think it gives the mission a lot of flexibility and leeway, to be able to adapt to time and time change. In a way, because of ... even though ... I can't say that Isaac drafted the scope of work, but he probably had a pretty good ... The fact that we had that assessment period ... okay, you will assess and select, you will show us your methodology, you will show us your assessment, you will show us and justify the selection of your value chains, really gave us that design and implement piece. The problem goes back ... and that was in section F of the RFP ... but going back to section C, you can see other

people started adding things in. Initially, the first part was exactly what you're talking about. It was high level. We want to achieve this. These are our objectives. How are you gonna do it. But, then, you have to work with this guy. You have to do this. You have to ... Then comes the prescriptive part. And that's where, I think, when we're designing projects, we tend to run astray of really what the overall objective is. We're just trying to ... it's like laws in the United States. They add all these little sub clauses in type thing. So even though laws has to do with X it's actually dealing with Y, Z, and W all the way down the road type thing.

Isaac, do you want to add anything to that? Is that ... any comment you want to make? No?

Isaac Michel: My name is Isaac Michel. I work for USAID, and I'm the contracting officer's representative for the LEVE activity. First of all, I will apologize for being late this morning, 'cause I trusted my GPS to bring me here, but I spent maybe 15 minutes outside, trying to find my way in the district. *[Laughs]* So, I would also say that Ken, Robin and I, we disagree on many things, many times. And I wish that you'll not surprise them if I disagree again this morning on some issues that he mentioned, because I do agree with you that I think to me that we have put enough flexibility in the design of the LEVE contract to make it work. When it comes to the use of the appropriate implementing mechanism for the LEVE contract, I think this is really a negotiation between the contracting officer and the technical office. That means we need to agree on which way to go.

But one thing that Ken didn't mention here is really to look at the size of the activity. When we are designing our activity, what should be the right size of this activity? As you can see, we targeted to work in three big sectors. And for each sector you will see there are a lot of, several value chains. And when you have a project that big, and you have some specific targets to reach, then it makes your life complicated, I would say. That means, if I were to design a project like this one again, would I be putting all three sectors, or would I, I would say, design three different activities instead of one, because each of the sectors, they have their own constraint, thee have their own opportunities, and I think to me, I would really look at the size of the contract before I go into the procurement. Because this is why we had a very complicated procurement. I'm sure Ken talked about that. We spent about two years to get this done. I suppose if we had done three activities, I'm sure we wouldn't have that much complication in the procurement process.

Moderator:We will go to a couple of more webinar questions. Just a reminder to everyone in
person, please speak into the microphone fairly close. A few webinar participants are
having a little bit of trouble hearing the questions. And Ken, if you wouldn't mind,
you've been doing this a little bit, just repeating a little bit, or paraphrasing, the
question for the webinar participants, that would be great.

So, we had two questions, one from Indra and one from Kimberly, about building trust with stakeholders. And Indra was wondering if you could elaborate how your team built and maintained trust among the stakeholders, and what were some of your greatest challenges. And Kimberly took it a little further and asked if there were any interim indicators, particularly in the start-up phase, while trust is being built, that you monitored.

Ken Smarzik: Interesting question. This is where theory really hits the road. It's ... in theory we'd like to have measurement of progress, particularly around building of trust. But trying to do it when you're implementing, and you're trying to achieve jobs is ... and you're busy ... ongoing discussions on other indicators and stuff like that, you tend to forget about these types of things. And I know DIFID has moved along the lines of trying to figure these types of things out probably more than we have and stuff. But, in terms of trust ... I don't want to say I give up on Haiti, but it's an environment where you really have to drill down and find like thinking individuals within each of these value chains, with the constraint being that the value chains aren't often that well structured. Where ... I think the one area where we have started building some trust is in the apparel sector, with ADIH, and moving towards some agreement that they need a policy, sort of an overarching policy ... Haiti has no sector policies, none that I know of, anyway.

So here's a sector that needs major government involvement, major investment, but can achieve possibly in the range of 300,000 jobs in a very short period of time, but there's very, very little collaboration. So it ... But ... I think by us taking about it for the past two years, by us doing little activities with the associations, with the people that are sort of the key entry points to the sector, we're starting to see the industry talk a little bit more about some common objectives and some common problems. And ... But there's still the fear that, because of the ... because it's such a fragile environment, that I've really gotta protect myself before I can really embrace

and help somebody else. We have some larger firms that are reaching out, that are embracing, that take on some of these activities themselves. And you realize that that's not sustainable. You really need some sort of different organization to do the lobbying or the advocacy for the sector.

So ... How we did it is just constantly keeping the same message, and not really moving forwards. We don't ... The one area we're talking about is the development of the policy. We thought we had a champion to develop the policy and the leader. It was the wrong person. It was the wrong institution. But we kept talking about the need for a sector policy. And so I think now we're starting to see a little bit of trust build in the apparel sector. I don't think we ... We've done a little bit in the construction sector by linking the _____ to the construction firms, where it's basically opened a whole new world to them. And it wasn't that there was no trust between the construction firms and the _____. There was no knowledge that either existed. And by simply putting them together, we have some activities that are taking place where trust is now common. The one's helping the other, and they're moving forward.

Audience Member:Thank you. My name is Gary Walker. I'm the Senior Youth Advisor at the Bureau
for Food Security. I also was the team leader for the midterm evaluation of LEVE so
I have a inside track for questions, I guess, Ken.

Ken Smarzik: Cut the mic. [Laughter]

Audience Member: Anyway ... cut the mic, right. First I have a comment, and then two quick questions. The comment is on your slide showing time and results, where you have the gradual and then sustained achievement versus the conventional where you have the decline. My concern on that is the vertical, right line, that is the end of the project, because in Haiti, as you said, it takes time to build trust. You've built a team that I saw of very capable people. And I think one of the key ways to build trust is where you have your staff are neutral, helpful people working with a firm that may never have had somebody to talk to before, in confidence, where they didn't feel there was a hidden agenda, or that they were looking for their own personal benefit or something. Takes time to establish that and build it. You're doing that. Now, just as that line gets up there and starts being sustained, there's that vertical right line.

And so, one of the questions is, in Haiti, where the private sector is not going to be at the takeoff phase and not need this kind of assistance in the future, if your project ends, it's gonna create a hole. It will also be ... the cost effectiveness of the project will be less because it won't be there. And all of that institutional capacity in your team will be lost. So, I, for one, am concerned about the duration of this compared to the needs in Haiti that continue. And also, in the future, with Matthew and everything else, there are other parts of Haiti that also could benefit from a project like that. So that's question one.

The second question is, because I'm the youth advisor, and AID has a youth and development policy, and a program now, there's about a half a billion dollars going into what's called Youth Power, which is trying to develop what we call "positive youth development." In that last slide, the pictures you had there were, everybody was young. They were also all male. And I wanted you to comment a bit about whether, if we added, or perhaps from your perspective, burdened, projects like yours with by requiring youth indicators, ages, disaggregated age 15 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, whether that would yield information that would allow AID to better target youth. And also, if you could comment on gender, I think perhaps you haven't mentioned that.

And then the last question is, with the jobs created in terms of, I realize in Haiti, perhaps any job is better than no job. But we also are interested in job quality. And particularly, for example, let's take the tomato production, where you have seasonal workers picking tomatoes, and you also have small-scale producers feeding into the tomato cooperative, what ... how are you doing in terms of the quality of jobs, and the sustainability of jobs? I realize that it's full time equivalent, but sustainability and also the amount that they're being paid, because the picture you showed on the tomato production, as you know, that is one huge farm owned by one owner, and you're basically getting laborers in, picking tomatoes, being paid on an hourly or a kilo basis. So those are three areas. The movement of youth as an indicator, the quality of jobs, and the duration and the built capacity, and what's gonna happen in the future.

Ken Smarzik: So, any comments from the webinar? Did they hear that? They got the question? Okay.

So I just wanted to point out, Gary, this is actually a group of women building a

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wall. And the winning plumbing team here ... oh sorry, oops ... There it is. Yes, they were all male plumbers. They won the prize ...Just, I have to digress, 'cause this is a great ... this is something you don't look for. You just ... just happens. These guys participated. They're our latest addition, the last addition to the schools, the five or six schools that participated in the skills Olympiad during MATCON. The won the plumbing award. The enthusiasm, and the pride when we were handing out these things was ... brought tears to your face. And I don't tear up very easily. These guys tweeted this out on their social network site, and they had 100 percent increase in plumbing applicants the next season. And they keep coming back to us. And so there was an indicator that we didn't know ... we were gonna ... we would attract. But all of a sudden, we found some numbers for that, for that ______ indicator. So that's just ...

Gender. We have neither gender nor youth objectives, hard targets. Okay? But we are lucky in that, in terms of gender, 75 percent of the workforce hired into the apparel industry are women. Okay? And, particularly the Korean firms that are coming in, they don't want to bring in bad habits. So they are looking for young entries. So they are actually looking for women in the 20-to-30 year range that have not worked in a factory before, so that they can start from new. They start with a fresh mind. They can train them to do things their way, which I don't think is that much different from other way, but they seem to be locked into that, stuff like that. So again ... and we just started, Isaac ... we just started breaking those out in our data collection, so I'll actually start producing those figures and stuff, 'cause this is the kind of thing the way I guess we could have known that was gonna happen. But the question is, how do you collect that type of data without getting too personal and going to the firms. Remember, we're not collecting this data directly. The beneficiaries, the firms, are giving us this data. So there's always a bit of a tension as to how to get the level of data that we need, or that we're being asked for.

In terms of quality of jobs, ... Let me back up. In terms of gender, at the ... we have not done anything in terms of encouraging schools to hire, or to accept women over men. Okay? We're letting that follow the pattern that it's followed until we figure out how to do that correctly. But, in St. _____ it was, of all the plumbers tested in St. _____, the women tested the highest, and they were hired by DFS Construction, right? In terms of ... And so it's ... That St. _____, that opened their eyes. They, "Oh, wow. The women did better than the guys." So maybe next time around, and we can go back and follow up and ... This story's just unfolding. So what we wanted to do was have it complete, and then present it to the broader

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audience, to stimulate other _____, other professional schools to do the same thing.

In terms of quality of jobs, that was our biggest concern in the construction are, 'cause there was very little we can do with basic laborers. There's no uptake there. That's why we're trying to move a little bit more into the skilled trade area, and improve that ... the Haitian participation in those higher level jobs that are currently being fulfilled by, a lot of them by expats from other countries, from other neighboring countries.

There are other programs, like Better Work that look at the quality of the workers, particularly in the apparel factories. And this is all ILO related. So they're doing a lot of work in terms of making sure that all the working conditions are correct, and stuff like that. We have, on the apparel side, looked at doing more supervisory and mechanic training, again, to give ... there is currently no real career path in the apparel sector, basically 'cause you don't need one, 'cause mostly it's just all labor-based. But if you diversify what these factories do, and you move to something, what they call full package, that is ... and there is one firm doing this ... they import their cloth. They put their design together, and they're selling their designs to Walmart buyers. Okay? And once they win that, then you've got a whole chain ... designers, cutters, pattern makers ... that all of a sudden come into a sector where they never used before.

On that side, what we did in the development of our strategy to begin with the apparel sector is that we are supporting the small designers where most of that design capacity, pattern making, more technical jobs vs. labor, would come from to supply the growing industry, if it moves to full package. And for Haiti, it has to move to full package. It can't continue doing what it's doing. Okay? We've got a second chance. We did this in the '80s. We failed. But we have a second chance, now to bring it back out of the pure labor market.

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Moderator: We're going to go back to the webinar. There I am. These are two questions that came in about partnerships. One again, from Indra Klein, and another one from Carlos Salazar. And Indra was wondering if you could elaborate on some of the partnerships developed, both NGOs and local businesses that facilitated the ability of the project to move forward, as well as to keep on track. And Carlos specifically was asking about the role of local governments, or the role of the local government in the project.

Ken Smarzik:Okay. Local government? Can you ... I'm looking at Robin. I'm scratching my head
on the local government side. This is ... oh, yeah. You're gonna introduce yourself.

Hello, everybody. My name is Robin Padberg. I'm the Chief of Party for the LEVE Robin Padberg: project. When you take a look at these sectors that we're working in, and specifically when you take a look at the entire value chain, it is impossible to circumvent the local government. You have to figure out a way, even if it's problematic, even if it's challenging, even if it provides delays, you have to figure out a way to make it work and to get these people onboard. A critical aspect of what we've been talking about in the textile and apparel sectors this morning, for example, is being able to get that local government onboard and working with us towards really creating a holistic policy, a sector policy, but also putting together the different aspects of what you might want to be looking for with regards to A, an enabling environment, such as the exemptions that were provided by the central bank to be able to actually encourage the construction of these industrial shells that we were talking about this morning, but also to start working with them with regards to the actual management of facilities that they do have, and how those facilities are being put into play, how they're using the different tools that they have at their disposal to be able to create investment incentives for local and foreign groups that are coming in, and they're taking a look at the sector to say, "Okay, you're coming in. What do you need? Do you need qualified labor? Okay. How can I get you to that? You need electricity, you need the shell, you need fiscal incentives, whatever it may be." Just being able to work with these folks, to be able to get to the point where you've got an environment now which is really attractive.

And I think that right now, as we start to get towards the midpoint of this project, I think we've built enough credibility with some of these actors in the local government and where you're starting to see this change taking place. And I think that, hand in hand with that, goes the ... and coming back to Gary, your question, at the end of the day was to say, "Well, there's this hard line where the project ends. Well, what do you do then?" Well, if we're the ones doing this and leading the charge on all of this, then it does end. Then there's a problem. But by, coming back to what Ken was saying earlier, by being able to work through associations, such as the Haitian Associations of Industries, ADIH, you all of a sudden get a partnership with that private sector to be able to lead the charge and to move some of these

initiatives forward, and ultimately create ownership. They need to take it on, and they need to move it forward. And we're there to facilitate that. And I think that that's really the key.

Ken Smarzik: To answer the first part of the question, tell you a little bit about how the partners selected or were chosen. We did it in two ways. Number one, through the assessment, we started talking directly to people that had ... that were working the different value chains, and we started identifying them. We use a matrix where we have all the indicators and all of the lead firm criteria. And we populate that matrix to see whether or not that's an optimal profile of person that we want to work with and support. And then we just ... I was very ... initially with the assessment we, if you will, preselected certain activities, because we wanted to respond to ... one of the contractual lines was balance quick wins with long term growth, long term impact. And so we wanted to get started quickly, so we used the assessment period to identify some of those quick wins. Caribbean Harvest was one of those quick wins during the assessment period. Okay? But which has to be justified through all your procurement phase, then. 'Cause how did you select, and how do you select? Well, we selected, but here's a matrix and ...

And then we also did issue open calls for expressions of interest within the three sectors. And we had people propose their concepts to us, while at the same time, what Gary actually pointed out, we have two person teams in each sector. And these guys are wandering their sectors every day. Okay? Most of them are out of the office, and they're basically either taking care of activities that are ongoing, addressing issues, or finding out who's doing something new, something different, and what's evolving. And so that's the way those partners come to be.

Once we looked at their ... we look at their concept and we think, "Huh. This is interesting," in response to creating jobs. It's gonna increase sales. It's gonna increase linkages with either SMEs or MSMEs, then, "Yeah, let's go forward and let's flesh this out a bit." And, "Are you prepared to pay your share?" "Yes." "Are you prepared to take a lead on this thing?" And, "Yes." "Do you need technical assistance?" "Yes." "Okay, what kind? We can help you with that." "I need some help with my books. I can't do any counting, 'cause we need to see their financial statements." "Ah, well, we can ..." We had the whole objective three, what they call "Human Institutional Capacity Development" that we can then make resources available to them to get them at least up to a minimum level of being to report back out not only financials.

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We need the financials for some of the indicators. We pull some of the indicators directly off the financial statements of the companies.

I think that covers it. I think ... I just got ... I had a different tacked on to the response on the local government is that we don't work with local governments directly, but private sector actors do work with the local governments, 'cause they live in those communities. And that is really their job, and their responsibility. And I know, at least with the industrial parks, they work very, very closely in hand with the local authorities, so everything gets smoothed out in terms of when they're constructing, when they're getting electricity hookup, and stuff like that, road work done, et cetera, et cetera.

Moderator: I think we probably have time for one more question, and we'll take it from in room.

Audience Member: I'm Katy Vickland with Creative Associates. Wonderful presentation. My question is, how did you introduce adaptive management to your field team? How did you train them to utilize it, and did it resonate with them? Did they ... what are the strengths and assets that they see from using this technique to manage the program?

Ken Smarzik: Okay. So basically, how do we get a team of people working flexibly and managing in an adaptive manner? Like I was starting to say initially, some of the people we hired were straight out of the private sector, so they had no idea of how a USAID project worked. They're great. They just picked up on this concept like ... The ones that had previous USAID experience, particularly in the Haitian environment which was grant heavy, they needed a few baseball bats, a little bit of rum, a little bit of cuddling, a little bit of coaching. But it's just constant. It's constantly sending a message in, all of the discussions, all of the retreats, all the presentations. I had one ... and Robin knows who ... I had one guy in ... "I found this thing today. I want to give him a grant." "Oh, yeah?" And you just start to question. You basically pull pages out of Eric's book. You start asking questions. And finally the guy ... just a long list of ... "What's the problem? Okay. How do you think the guy can solve it? Do you think the guy has a chance to solve it? What does he need to solve it? What would be the outcome if he solves the problem and stuff like that?" And you basically send him back to the drawing board. So, he may have the right outcome,

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but he doesn't know why he's there. And send him back.

And then it's ... We do this monthly activity review. We try to keep it to a monthly activity review where we go through all of our 200 activities, with each of the teams. And it's Robin, myself, and another woman and Christina, the MNE person, and the grants person. And we sit down, and we say, "What's happening? And why is it not working?" And we help them through problems that they may be ... "Well, the guy's not responding to my calls. The guy's stuck." And we basically work out those problems and equip them with the ability to be able to do it on their own next time, inshallah. So.

That's it.

Moderator:Okay. Thank you so much, Ken, and Robin, and Isaac. [Applause] And please mark
your calendars. Our next Microlinks event will be a webinar on November 9, where
we're going to dig into some findings of some systemic change monitoring tool trials
that we did under the LEO project, so to some of these MNE questions. How do
you really know, in terms of maybe early indications that systemic change is
happening, and you need to keep pushing to get those exponential results later, or
maybe not? And also, we will have a colleague from USAID joining us on the
webinar to talk a bit about the new program design, ADS, and the systems inclusion
in that, and implications of that for our work going forward. So, an invite will be
coming out soon. Please join us. And with that, we'll close for today. Thank you so
much.

[End of Audio]