**AGENDA**

**Advanced Topics in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning**

**JW Marriott**

**Istanbul, Turkey**

**Monday, April 15 – Friday, April 19, 2024**

**Brief Description of Training:**

The purpose is to enhance the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) knowledge and skill sets of USAID professionals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Participants will learn more about USAID policies and procedures and enhance their knowledge and skills in COR capacities that are essential for accountability and successful A&A management: data collection, analysis, and utilization; decision-making based on evidence; planning and resourcing MEL; systemic learning; and integrating adaptive management into planning, design, and implementation.

The course will address advanced MEL topics and use interactive, practical approaches relevant to the MENA regional context. Topics will include data collection techniques in conflict-affected areas, randomized control trials, complex sampling methods, learning agendas, experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation design, advanced modeling methods for logic models, and new approaches to co-creation.

The core audience will be 16-25 USAID MEL specialists, program officers, and/or other technical staff from MENA Missions and Operating Units who have mid-level knowledge and experience and are interested in further developing their practical skills. The 4.5-day training will be held in-person, with several hybrid sessions open to a small number of virtual participants. The training formats are expected to include interactive exercises, experiential learning, workshopping, and guest speakers.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the training, participants will:

* **Learning Objective 1:** Compare several experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation designs based on their best uses and challenges.
* **Learning Objective 2:** Compare the challenges and subsequent approaches of various data collection methods when used in conflict-affected areas.
* **Learning Objective 3:** Use best practices for designing and managing learning agendas and developing learning questions at the strategy, project, and activity levels.
* **Learning Objective 4**: Recognize complex sampling methods.
* **Learning Objective 5**: Discuss new analytical and modeling methods and potential applications in MEL practices.

**Executive Training Agenda:**

| **Day 1** | **Monday, April 15, 2024**  ***Experimental/Quasi-Experimental Evaluation Methods for Specific Sectors and in Conflict-Affected Areas*** |
| --- | --- |
| 8:30 – 9:00am | Sign-in and Coffee |
| 9:00 – 9:15am | **Opening Remarks,** Name of Speaker |
| 9:15 – 10:00am | **Introductions, Pre-Assessment, and Ice Breaker,** Name of Speaker |
| 10:00 – 10:30am | **Session 1: Reviewing the Policy Context, Dan Killian**  **Session Goal:** By the end of the session, participants receive a refresher in USAID policies as they apply to the training topics for the course.  **Session Outcome:** Participants match the topics, methods, and approaches to be discussed during the course with the policies that apply to each.  **Brief Description:** Participants review the following USAID policies as they apply to the advanced MEL topics to be addressed during the course.   * GPRA/GPRAMA * ADS 201 * CDCS/PMP/AMELP * CLA * IE policy |
| 10:30 – 10:45am | ***Break*** |
| 10:45am – 12:00pm  ***Hybrid*** | **Session 2: Potential Outcomes,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction and demonstration on the theoretical and conceptual background behind causal inference.  **Session Outcome**: Participants will use the potential outcomes framework to calculate the simplest impact estimates for illustrative learning.  **Brief Description:** In table groups, participants receive a mix of instruction and brief exercises to learn about the applied uses of the potential outcomes framework. |
| 12:00 – 1:00pm | ***Lunch*** |
| 1:00 – 2:25pm | **Session 3: Evaluation Designs for Identifying Causal Effects** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Building on the potential outcomes framework, introduce the most common evaluation designs and recognize their strengths and weaknesses  **Session Outcome:** Participants will compare the strengths and weaknesses of selected evaluation design.  **Brief Description:** In small groups, participants will use scenarios to compare strengths and weaknesses of selected evaluation design. |
| 2:25 – 2:30pm | ***Brief Transition Break*** |
| 2:30 – 3:05 pm  ***Hybrid Session*** | **Session 4: TED Talk: Rescuing Impact Measurements in an Acute Conflict Zone**  **Session Goal:** To offer participants a dynamic, thought-provoking presentation on the challenges of obtaining impact measurements in an acute conflict zone.  **Session Outcome:** Participants discuss issues with impact measurements in conflict zones with the presenter.  **Brief Description:** A presenter gives a TED-style talk on impact measurements in conflict zones. Participants will have 10 minutes for Q&A with the presenter. |
| 3:05 – 3:10pm | ***Break*** (Ask participant to switch tables.) |
| 3:10 – 3:15pm | ***Energizer*** |
| 3:15 – 4:20pm | **Session 5: Managing Randomized Controlled Trials,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants will receive instruction and demonstration on the management of randomized control trials using real and realistic cases, including but not limited to health, education, and third-party monitoring.  **Session Outcome:** Participants will apply new knowledge in RCTs to real development or humanitarian assistance scenarios for the ME region.  **Brief Description:** In their new table groups, participants will receive a mix of instruction and demonstration, and then engage in a case study exercise to identify the threats and mitigation strategies they would take as managers of the RCT, as well as the strengths and challenges of using RCTs in these situations. |
| ***4:20 – 4:30pm*** | ***Daily Feedback and Wrap-Up, Name of Speaker*** |

| **Day 2** | **Tuesday, April 16, 2024**  ***Deep Dive: Data Collection Approaches and Methods in Conflict-Affected Areas*** |
| --- | --- |
| 8:30 – 9:00am | Sign-in and Coffee |
| 9:00 – 9:10am | **Overview of Day 1 & Knowledge Check**, Barbara Pando-Behnke |
| 9:15 – 10:00am  ***Hybrid Session*** | **Session 1: Statistical Matching,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Introduce concepts of covariate balancing and the propensity score theorem as a critical tool in estimating causal effects  **Session Outcome:** Participants will recognize specific analytical tactics for generating ‘as-if’ randomization.  **Brief Description**: Participants will receive instruction, an online demonstration to accommodate remote participants, and then in pairs work on a calculation exercise. |
| 10:00 – 10:30am | **Session 2: Where has all the money gone..?** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive an introduction to recent regulatory language around costs in evaluations and explore evaluation design options that include costs.  **Session Outcome:** Participants learn to expect and require cost information included in the evaluations they manage and appreciate how cost information can deepen evaluation findings.  **Brief Description**: Using lectures and guided discussion, participants discuss the recent regulatory guidance on incorporating costs into evaluation. |
| 10:30 – 10:45am | ***Break*** |
| 10:30 – 11:15am | **Session 3: Where has all the money gone..? Continued,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive an introduction to recent regulatory language around costs in evaluations and explore evaluation design options that include costs.  **Session Outcome:** Participants learn to expect and require cost information included in the evaluations they manage and appreciate how cost information can deepen evaluation findings.  **Brief Description**: Using lectures and guided discussion, participants discuss the recent regulatory guidance on incorporating costs into evaluation. |
| 11:15am – 12:00pm | **Session 4: Sampling, OMG!!** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction and demonstration in managing complex sampling methods, including counting, sampling theory, and ethics.  **Session Outcome:** Participants increase their comprehension of selected sampling theory and methods, including sampling theory, complex sampling, sampling for TPM, and randomization inference.  **Brief Description:** Participants receive instruction and discuss selected sampling methods (mentioned on the session outcome) with the instructor and each other. |
| 12:00 – 1:00pm | ***Lunch*** |
| 1:00 – 2:00pm | **Session 5: Sampling, OMG!!** Barbara Pando-Behnke  **Session Goal:** Participants apply new concepts and skills in counting, sampling theory, and ethics to real cases.  **Session Outcome:** Using their experience and refreshed or newly learned concepts and skills, participants mentor their peers on past or current challenges with managing IP sampling processes.  **Brief Description**: Four volunteers will come prepared with a past or current challenge managing an IP sampling process in either education or health. In NEW small groups, the volunteers will receive 20 minutes of mentoring from their peers to address (or how they could have addressed) these situations. |
| 2:00 – 2:05pm | ***Brief Transition Break*** |
| 2:05 – 2:40pm  ***Hybrid Session*** | **Session 6: TED Talk: Uses of Remote Technology and Artificial Intelligence to Collect and Analyze Data in Conflict-Affected Areas and Beyond**  **Session Goal:** To offer participants a dynamic, thought-provoking presentation on the combined use of remote technology and artificial intelligence to collect data and analyze data in conflict-affected areas, as well as other potential uses of these technologies in MEL into the future.  **Session Outcome:** Participants discuss different ways to use remote technology and AI to collect and analyze data to reduce risk and harm to beneficiaries and IPs, and other future uses of these technologies with the presenter.  **Brief Description:** A presenter gives a TED-style talk on remote technology and AI for 20 minutes. Participants will have 10 minutes for Q&A with the presenter. |
| 2:40 – 2:45pm | ***Brief Transition Break*** |
| 2:45 – 3:05pm | **Session 7: Data Collection in Conflict,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction and demonstration of data collection concepts, skills, and approaches to achieve sampling representativeness, reduce potential risks and harm to beneficiaries and IPs.  **Session Outcome:** Participants apply new concepts and skills to realistic situations set in conflict-affected areas, including TPM cases.  **Brief Description:** Participants receive a mix of instruction, demonstration, and in table groups, engage in an exercise to apply specific concepts, skills and approaches to real or realistic cases. |
| 3:05 – 3:15pm | ***Break*** |
| 3:15 - 3:20pm | ***Energizer*** |
| 3:20 – 4:20pm | **Session 8: Data Collection in Conflict Continued,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants apply data collection concepts, skills, and approaches to achieve sampling representativeness, reduce potential risks and harm to beneficiaries and IPs using real or realistic scenarios set in conflict-affected areas.  **Session Outcome:** Participants apply new concepts and skills (such as methods for soliciting responses to sensitive questions) to realistic situations set in conflict-affected areas, including TPM cases. Methods for soliciting responses to sensitive questions.  **Brief Description:** In table groups, participants engage in an exercise to apply specific concepts, skills, and approaches to real or realistic cases. |
| ***4:20 – 4:30pm*** | ***Daily Feedback and Wrap-up, Name of Speaker*** |

| **Day 3** | **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  ***Logic Models and Learning Agendas*** |
| --- | --- |
| 8:30 – 9:00am | Sign-in and Coffee |
| 9:00 – 9:10am | **Overview of Day 2 & Knowledge Check,** Name of Speaker |
| 9:10 – 10:30am  ***Hybrid*** | **Session 1: Logic modeling is dead! Long live logic modeling!** TBD  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction, demonstration, and exercises to analyze how their usage may be extended using new analytical modeling methods such as Directed Acycle Graphs (DAGs).  **Session Outcome:** Participants experience and then analyze a mock situation in which a logic model is extended to include a causal DAG.  **Brief Description**: Participants will experience a simulation exercise where they must use a given logic model and DAG to communicate with their team and the IP. |
| 10:30 – 10:45am | ***Break*** |
| 10:45am – 12:00pm | **Session 2: Learning agendas: theory and practice,** Presenter TBD  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction, demonstration, and can apply new knowledge and skills on learning agendas, the connection to results frameworks and MEL plans, and how to design learning questions.  **Session Outcome:** Participants apply their new knowledge and skills they learned through instruction and demonstration to either their own learning agendas or those of their peers in this workshopping session.  **Brief Description:** Participants receive instruction, then demonstration on developing or reworking learning agendas and questions. The content will include examples provided by volunteers. Participants will complete short exercises at appropriate intervals to keep them engaged. |
| 12:00 – 1:00pm | ***Lunch*** |
| 1:00 – 1:35pm  ***Hybrid session*** | **Session 3: TED Talk: Geographic Information Systems (GIS),** Jacob Milley  **Session Goal:** To offer participants a dynamic, thought-provoking presentation on the use of GIS to collect, monitor, and analyze data for learning agenda questions.  **Session Outcome:** Participants discuss different ways to use GIS to collect, monitor, and analyze data to respond to learning agenda questions with the presenter.  **Brief Description:** A presenter gives a TED-style talk on the uses of GIS for learning agendas. Participants will have 10 minutes for Q&A with the presenter. |
| ***1:35 – 1:40*** | ***Brief Transition Break*** |
| 1:40 – 2:20pm | **Session 4: Lightning Talk Panel Discussion, Barbara Pando-Behnke (facilitator)**  **Session Goal**: Selected participants share current or past learning agenda challenges and receive mentoring from their peers.  **Session Outcome:** Selected participants share current or past learning agenda challenges with their peers and respond to clarifying questions.  **Brief Description:** Fourparticipant volunteers present current learning agendas they are working on and the challenges they are facing with these. Their peers engage in a round of brief clarifying questions and answers with them. |
| 2:20 – 3:05pm | **Session 5: Learning Agenda Workshop,** Barbara Pando-Behnke (facilitator)  **Session Goal:** Participants develop active learning agendas with their peers.  **Session Outcome:** The previous participants who presented their learning agenda challenges work in a small group with their peers to further develop or modify their learning agendas and questions.  **Brief Description:** In small groups, participants work on learning questions with their peers. Participants will need their laptops for this session. |
| 3:05 – 3:15pm | ***Break*** |
| 3:15 - 3:20pm | ***Energizer*** |
| 3:20 – 3:40pm | **Session 6: Learning Agenda Workshop Plenary Discussion,** Barbara Pando-Behnke  **Session Goal:** Participants debrief the learning agenda sessions.  **Session Outcome:** Participants clarify for themselves their key learnings and takeaways from the sessions.  **Brief Description:** Participants engage in a facilitated discussion on their experiences with learning agendas. |
| 3:40 – 3:45 pm | ***Brief Transition Break*** |
| 3:45 – 4:20pm  ***Hybrid Session*** | **Session 7: TED Talk: Social Network Analysis,** Brian Calhoon  **Session Goal:** Introduce SNA as a potential MEL tool.  **Session Outcome:** Participants comprehend how SNA could apply to MEL.  **Brief Description:** A presenter gives a TED-style talk on social network analysis. Participants will have 10 minutes for Q&A with the presenter. |
| ***4:20 – 4:30pm*** | ***Daily Feedback and Wrap-up, Name of Speaker*** |

| **Day 4** | Thursday, April 18, 2024  ***Speculative Approaches to MEL*** |
| --- | --- |
| 8:30 – 9:00am | Sign-in and Coffee |
| 9:00 – 9:10am | **Overview of Day 3 & Knowledge Check,** Name of Speaker |
| 9:10 – 10:30am | **Session 1: Crazy Stuff 1: Gamifying MEL – Measuring Outcomes Through Behavioral Games,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Participants receive instruction on behavior change, engage with the content in a structured game, and discuss the experience.  **Session Outcome:** Participants learn about methods to measure behavioral change through gamification.  **Brief Description:** Participants receive instruction on behavioral measures which they engage with in a structured game. They debrief the experience afterwards. |
| ***10:30 – 10:45am*** | ***Break*** |
| 10:45am – 12:00pm  ***Hybrid*** | **Session 2: Crazy Stuff 2: Bayes’ Rules!,** Dan Killian  Session Goal: Introduce an alternative approach to data analysis.  **Session Outcome:** Participants learn and apply one of the most famous theorems in the history of statistics.  **Brief Description:** The session will revisit the ghosts of past statistics courses. In dimly remembering what we had learned about conditional probability, we will derive the famous expression and use it to test a hypothesis in a group setting. |
| ***12:15 – 1:00pm*** | ***Lunch*** |
| 1:00 – 2:15pm  ***Hybrid*** | **Session 3: Crazy Stuff 3: Bayesian Befores. Tell us what you know, NOW!,** Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Introduce specific applications of Bayes’ Rule.  **Session Outcome:** Participants complete an analytical co-creation exercise utilizing Bayes’ Rule.  **Brief Description:** After lecture content, participants utilize small group work to complete a co-creation activity and present findings in plenary. |
| 2:15 – 3:00pm | **Session 4: Crazy Stuff 4: Welcoming our new Machine Learning Overlords**  Dan Killian  **Session Goal:** Introduce concept of machine learning and review its most common applications in a development setting.  **Session Outcome:** Participants learn specific examples of machine learning algorithms applied to a USAID activity.  **Brief Description:** Relying primarily on lecture, participants learn about. |
| ***3:00 – 3:15pm*** | ***Break*** |
| 3:15 – 4:15pm | **Session 5: Cross-Cutting: Localization and its MEL,** Gretchen Birkel  **Session Goal:** Explore a cross-cutting application of MEL.  **Session Outcome:** Participants gain appreciation of the specific MEL framework for USAID’s localization effort.  **Brief Description:** Selected workshop participants will relate their experience with localization and how they integrated localization into their MEL plan. |
| ***4:15 – 4:30pm*** | ***Wrap Up, Final Evaluation, Post-Assessment, and Closing, Name of Speaker*** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Day 5** | Friday, April 19, 2024 |
| 8:30 – 9:00am | Meet-Up and Coffee |
| 9:00am – 12:00pm | **Applied Field Site Visit**  **Historic Preservation Site TBD**  Select a site awarded a grant from the Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation located in Istanbul. Possible sites include the Blue Mosque or Hagia Sofia. Site options will be screened to make sure they are accessible to participants. Participants will tour the site and complete an assessment form that will require them to use measurement concepts and skills acquired during the training. |
| 12:00 – 1:00pm | ***Lunch*** |
| 1:00 pm | ***Adjourn*** |