**CPI Requests: May 23rd, 2016**

1. Write a supplement to our old PD outlining specifics of randomization that have arisen in recent discussions, e.g. screening, lotteries, and delayed rollout. I believe it is important to produce this supplement before Friday when I will meet with CI for the last time during this trip. By then, CI will have had a mini course on experiments and will understand our jargon.

[Ariel]: The Rapid Work Plan is helpful in that it describes some of the multi-stakeholder dialogues around both electoral issues and government service delivery issues. It seems that this is a core part of what the program will be: citizen engagement via public meetings/dialogues, run by subcontracted CSOs. This is mostly under activity 2.2 right now, although some of the electoral-related activities also touch on this (1.4). There is also the actual government responsiveness to these meetings (activity 2.3) and the media piece (activity 2.4).

I think we should push CI to require that candidate CSOs identify targeted communes in which the CSOs are likely to operate in their proposals/sub-grant workplans. CI can further push the CSOs to rank/rate the readiness/appropriateness/etc of the communes for these kinds of dialogues, and to commit to a number of dialogues they expect to conduct within the first 12-18 months. We then use this as our randomization sample. If there is over-subscription, we can randomize a group that will be eligible for either later dialogues (or no dialogues, if CI opts to go in a different direction after the first 18 months).

I don’t have a ton of confidence that the media interventions will actually work, but we could try to collect information on the broadcasting ranges of the targeted radio stations and do some quasi-experimental there (instrumenting strength-of-signal with topology, etc)

[Phil]: How fast do you think they can get the local dialogue meetings up-and-running? If they are serious about improving political accountability, then one test of that would be more rigorous local elections that lead to turnover of incumbents who are seen to be unresponsive to priority public needs. One thing we could consider—though there may not be enough time before local elections—is to encourage CPI to include local audits of how effective communes are in provision of public services. This would include information on levels of local government spending and the quality of services offered. Paula Pickering, Dan Nielson and several others have just run an audit study in Uganda around the elections and found some really interesting results on support for the incumbents—both incumbents benefitting from being seen to be responsive (i.e., receiving a positive audit) and being held accountable for unresponsiveness. To me, this seems like the best test of their theory of change. We could learn a lot from what Paula and Dan did and work to replicate. Lisa, any chance local elections will be delayed again?

We could also study the mid-term and short-term effects of the audit studies and dialogue. To see if change in citizen priorities for voting and incumbency rates lays “the ground work for more accountability from elected officials to constituents.”

1. Define the roles for CI and the field coordinator. How will they work together?

[Lisa]: Here’s what I’m thinking so far: Bachir’s main duties will be to ensure that implementers (side note: does this include NORC-affiliated personnel *and* CI’s own teams??) conduct the prescribed interventions in assigned locations. He will observe some of the dialogues and report on participation levels, variations, etc. He could keep us abreast of anything that impedes compliance, e.g. flooding, terrorist attacks (esp. a problem in Diffa). Without a detailed work plan, it’s difficult for me to say more, e.g. what Bachir’s role would be for the radio quasi-experiment. I would like to have a better answer for CI on Friday. Anyone else have ideas? “Attend all PRG-PA meetings” is probably a given. How often do we want Bachir to check in with us?

[Kathy]: I would agree with your assessment. I would like to see him develop good relationships with the NORC and CI teams and join them in the field when feasible just to observe, watch, and send reports back to us. His time in the field will help us know how well the randomization is being followed and what exactly is going on vs. what they tell us is happening. I’d also like to see him visit the field on his own in areas where both CI and NORC are working to run backchecks on NORC’s surveys and have causal conversations with local residents regarding CIs work (without being too intrusive…not sure if we want to tell CI we are doing this or not). Basically I see him in the field quite a bit either with implementers, NORC, or on his own.

1. Specify the indicators and measurement tools interest us. Please refer to the Project Description. Proposed indicators included “50% of party platforms in local elections reflect the priorities identified in the citizen dialogues” and “75% of survey respondents report perception that they are promoting collective action.” There were several others. I am not sure how CI decided on specific percentages, but changing those benchmarks would presumably not change the survey instruments.

[Lisa]: I still don’t see which indicators map onto commune-level dialogues. My priors are weak. I was hoping CI would offer their own rationale. On a theoretical level, I am not sure what dialogues are meant to do.

[Phil]: Administrative data of election outcomes would be great. Lisa, any idea the incumbency rate in local elections? We could also collect data on citizen voting priorities at baseline and see if they change after the audits and dialogue.

1. Clarify how often we hope to collect data, and how this will involve the NORC-affiliated survey firm. CI is uncertain about how long they will work with each CSO. What will be our evaluation plan if CI ends a partnership with a CSO after six months? Will we still be able to collect useful data? Can we write contingency plans into the work plan to collect data at time intervals that adapt to CI’s operations? Sounds messy. Please advise.

[Ariel]: Our plan was to collect three rounds of data (baseline, midline, endline) over a three year period. The NORC-subcontracted survey firm will carry out the surveys, based on instruments, protocols and parameters we provide to NORC (sampled clusters, within-cluster household sampling strategy). During the surveys, Bachir and our team will provide (indirect) support and supervision. We could also include in their workplan collection of direct observation of a subset of the multi-stakeholder dialogues, structured FGDs, and collection of some administrative/government data.

To the degree that we can collect data that can feed into CI’s M&E plans, we are quite happy to do this – they will hopefully see this as an opportunity to offload part of the work of data collection. We are happy to share draft questionnaires with them, integrate timelines as closely as possible, etc.

To the degree CI makes only tentative or partial progress in a part of our sample, that will obviously reduce the overall ATE we detect over the full sample.

While we prefer to have the full sample defined at the beginning, we could offer to roll part of our sample to maintain flexibility and coverage.

1. Schedule future check-ins. USAID and CI ask: When will Ariel and Phil visit Niger? Can AidData join a Skype meeting on Tuesday or Friday?

[Phil]: I need to figure out rest of my summer schedule as my wife, Kate, is going back to school but I should be able to work in a week-long trip at some point—ideally once the program is more fully formulated and they are moving forward to implementation. I am also happy to spend time in Washington working with Counterpart folks there on design.