

Data Collaboratives for Local Impact (DCLI)
Côte d'Ivoire Semi-Annual Review (SAR) #2, Abidjan, 03/14/19 – 03/21/19
SEJEN Feedback Report

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The [Data Collaboratives for Local Impact](#) (DCLI) Program launched two projects in Côte d'Ivoire¹ in May 2018 to build the Ivorian data ecosystem, addressing challenges of HIV/AIDS, health, economic growth and gender equality through an increase of data supply and demand, technical capacity to use data, and an enabling environment.

The Data Analytics Center (DAC) project led [by SEJEN CI](#) (Sejen)², and supported amongst others by ENSEA (École Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Économie Appliquée) is supporting the implementation of the DCDJ-led data fellowship program and beginning to address needs identified by the PEPFAR team in Côte d'Ivoire, the MCC Compact and the government of Côte d'Ivoire.

Des Chiffres et Des Jeunes (DCDJ), a consortium led by Development Gateway (DG)³, is building the enabling environment of the Ivorian data ecosystem, implementing a data fellowship program for more than 100 fellows, and administering grants that support fellows and community innovators in implementing ideas to empower organizations and communities to use data in support of the fight against HIV/AIDS and connected data-driven development efforts.

The overall purpose of this second Semi-Annual Review (SAR) was to assess progress against key technical milestones set out during the previous SAR (September 2018), and those set forth in the pre-SAR expectations memo of March 13, 2019. Items specifically targeted for presentation and review were to:

- Assess progress toward overall program goals
- Present and discuss the next 6-month work plan
- Assess project alignment with M&E framework
- Internalize findings and consider action plans to achieve DCLI objectives on HIV/AIDS and health, economic growth and gender equality, informed by the ODRA analysis and initial subnational assessments
- Assess status and contribution of the fellows program (impact of 1st cohort, placement and management of 2nd cohort, recruitment of 3rd cohort)
- Assess progress and next steps relative to PEPFAR, MCC and other USG and donor opportunities
- Assess progress and next steps on sustainability measures, including progress on the SEJEN Foundation (and action plan to complete its establishment).

¹ These two projects are part of DCLI's broader portfolio, which includes three projects in Tanzania: the [Data Lab](#) (dLab), the [Data for Local Impact Innovation Challenge](#) (DLIIC) and [Data Zetu](#) (DZ) – and a cross cutting partnership with the [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data](#) (GPSDD).

² Other important partners include: DCI (Development Consultants Incorporated), UMKC (University of Missouri Kansas City), ACONDA VS, Heartland Alliance, and UST (University of St. Thomas).

³ The DG Consortium also includes two Ivorian partners – COS-CI (Collectif des ONG de Lutte contre le SIDA en Côte d'Ivoire) and FPS (Foundation Performances Sociétales) – and one international partner, SBC4D.

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- Review the communications strategy and action plan and evaluate its effectiveness, engagement and program identity.
- Assess team functionality, most notably the sharing of the new workspace between the two programs, leadership health and review of internal finance and administrative system for the program.

2. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sejen team has undergone a significant change since the last SAR, specifically on issues that are core to its existence. The team is creative, dynamic, and professional, with a definite esprit de corps. Team members clearly understand their roles, responsibilities, and take ownership for their projects. There is a strategy for making the team stronger through cross training and team building activities.

On the programmatic side, the work plan and M&E parameters are well-aligned. Additionally, SEJEN and DCDJ are in far better accord, working together more closely and with a much-improved understanding of the synergies between the teams. A few of the gains witnessed since the last review are listed below:

- Sejen's maturity: The program has built a strong technical team, hired and trained a group of data scientists, trainers and project managers. The program has also developed a strong organization: the Sejen team members show great purpose and a sense of identity that was lacking at the last SAR.
- 6-Month Plan: Sejen presented a more detailed and integrated plan for the next 6-month period, including both public-good projects as well as a strategy to develop partnerships in the private sector, that reflect a better understanding of the program and their contribution in it. The business approach also integrated elements of M&E important for the program, demonstrating a strategic understanding of the project's goals.
- Partner-supporting activities: Sejen has continued its approach to PEPFAR and MCC partners as prescribed in the NOFO and have presented several high impact projects that are ongoing:
 - Data synchronization project: Sejen worked with PEPFAR's partners ACONDA and HAI to develop an electronic data synchronization process that reduces the process from a month to 2 days along with developing a dashboard for this data.
 - Deduplication project: Sejen's engineering team has conducted pilot analysis on the database of one of PEPFAR's partner ACONDA sites to determine the prevalence of duplicate ID and its impact on analysis. They plan to extend this analysis to all ACONDA's sites and other implementing partners.
 - Fingerprinting project: A concept to try to eliminate duplicate IDs in the PEPFAR systems was developed by Sejen and successfully tested in the virtual laboratory. UNAIDS (ONUSIDA) has approached Sejen with a request to pilot the concept on their systems and a quote is being developed.

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- Village selection project: Support to the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the College de Proximite (CdP) site selection. Sejen worked closely with MOE staff to identify, complement and demonstrate how existing data could be used to select school locations. This work forms a base for analysis of DREAMS objectives.
- Big Data HIV concept: A concept has been developed and validated by PEPFAR. Although the priorities might have changed, the methodology is solid and can be leveraged for other PEPFAR priorities, such as gaining insights as to risk factors for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).
- Communication: Sejen's website, outreach and marketing are ongoing. Sejen's website is up and basic brochures were developed. Sejen has also leveraged its data skills in order to better understand its stakeholders, PEPFAR partners, and different training cohorts.
- Collaboration with DCDJ: Sejen and DCDJ have ramped up collaboration where it makes sense. Sejen provides training of fellows and is asked to offer relevant input during recruitment and curriculum development. Recently, Sejen decided to send its trainers to the subnational areas along with DCDJ in order to understand training needs for the upcoming community cohort.
- General Management: Sejen has made significant inroads in addressing some of the administrative, financial management and reporting challenges that were obvious during the last SAR. The last disbursement request was completed in mid-February with limited interaction and will fund Sejen until late April. Moreover, Sejen has a plan to continue improving on this area. Our review of the Admin and Financial status have shown clear signs of progress, however with room for improvement.

Recommendations resulting from the SAR seek to build on this progress to drive impact over the next year and are provided below. Additional details for each area is included in Section 3. The excitement of so much progress also needs to be moderated by the DCLI team's realistic view of potential issues and other observations or areas where risks still exist. We present below a few areas of concern that Sejen should monitor closely:

1. Strategic alignment with DCLI goals: SEJEN needs to think on and explicitly draw connections between their work and PEPFAR goals. Integration of M&E into the business plan is a good step forward in making the project's success reportable. Continuing the proactive effort to program around and include considerations around women is positive and strongly aligns with DCLI and PEPFAR goals. Utilize the guidance provided by PEPFAR on COP19 to prepare for a strategic workshop with PEPFAR in May 2019 to ensure project activities best support PEPFAR's COP19 focus on linkage and retention, rapid roll-out of DREAMS-like interventions, and addressing structural barriers such as user fees, stigma and discrimination.
2. Leadership health: Out of the original six key personnel listed in the contract agreement, only two are currently based in Cote d'Ivoire. Two members have completely left the program and the remaining two are remotely involved. The DCLI team believes that arrangement puts an unfair - and in the long term unsustainable - burden on the CEO and recommend that Sejen

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revisits their current leadership to balance the program responsibilities, but also better leverage the skills of the key personnel.

3. Business integrity: Sejen needs to provide a long term solution to the finance lead position. Ultimately, our recommendation would be to free the funds until a suitable replacement can be found. This issue also impacts leadership health as discussed above.
4. Sejen Foundation: Sejen should make a final determination of the legal elements of establishing the Foundation and start the process. In terms of the organization's mandate, Sejen should ensure that it is not too broad; the technical focus needs to be about data analytics and data science to advance social good and sustainable development. The precise language should be agreed with the DCLI team in advance of submission of legal papers to form the Foundation. There is an opportunity to begin integrating DCDJ program elements that the Foundation may want to sustain; a plan for integration of these elements should emerge prior to the next SAR.
5. Overconfidence: There is a risk that with this its new-found energy, SEJEN could overextend itself, and so activities and new ventures undertaken must be tied back to cost-benefit analyses, project concept notes and strategic use of available human capital. Critical in the coming year is to strategically and firmly align SEJEN resources with PEPFAR priorities (including the DREAMS program), guided by results of the ODRA, in coordination with the DCLI team and PEPFAR local operating unit (OU).
6. Generating revenue: Financial reporting shows that the firm has reached a steady burning rate and will continue with the similar level of expense in the future. With the project at mid-course, it is important that Sejen starts generating revenue, while remaining focused on project objectives, and consider means to diversify its revenue sources by looking at other means of funding.
7. Internal control systems: Our review of financial and administrative systems showed a good base of internal control systems to manage finance, procurement and human resources. However, there were also a few weaknesses in the established systems that can easily be fixed.
8. M&E Framework: Progress has definitely been made and must continue in order to align the work plan with the measurable characteristics of the M&E plan.
9. Communications - Now that a strong communications lead has been hired, the communications strategy needs to be finalized (initial presentation was excellent) and integrated into the SEJEN projects so that use-stories can be documented.

3. ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. Strategic alignment with DCLI core goals

WORKING:

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- a. Integration of M&E into business approach demonstrates M&E commitment and a more focused alignment of activities to overall strategic objectives originally written in the NOFO.
- b. Proactivity in seeking how to address women (a very specific constituency of PEPFAR) for data science.
- c. Proactive, creative ideas (and lots of them).

RECOMMEND: PEPFAR alignment

- a. The initial work of analysis of the CdP having been completed, Sejen should work to ensure that the Ministry of Education can sustain the technical effort and data-driven decision-making going forward. Having the MoE as a data partner is important for ecosystem development; working with them to open data sets would be a positive shift for transparency of results reporting. The opportunity to create change using data represents a strong vector for positive change which can be leveraged for the DREAMS program. It will be necessary to engage in close consultations with the PEPFAR DREAMS program to ensure that the work done so far, and any follow up activity with MoE, supports the DREAMS program's geographic priorities and its focus on addressing risk factors for girls dropping out of school.
- b. Redirect the Big Data effort to a similar effort focused on the DREAMS goals.
- c. SEJEN projects should more clearly show how these activities impact PEPFAR's activities (cost reduction, efficiency in reporting, etc.)

2. Technical capacity

WORKING:

- a. Clear ownership and responsibility over projects allowing staff members to take action and ownership of projects, with clear delegation of authority and activity management.
- b. Looking for opportunities to support DCDJ directly where applicable. For example, the suggestion to support DCDJ in developing questionnaires to better assess needs at the community level during field missions is commendable.

CAUTION:

- a. SEJEN should be cautious to avoid overselling its capacity, ensuring strong technical expertise to deliver projects to better build its reputation and credibility.

RECOMMEND:

- a. Need to hone the technical aspects of the Virtual Lab – what can people get from this lab that they can't from other free, online resources?
- b. As with most data scientists, delivering the information in an engaging non-technical way is hard. It will be important to involve the Communications team!

3. Strategic Planning (Project planning, work plans, Monitoring & Evaluation)

WORKING:

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- a. Better coordination with DCDJ through more regular and better planned collaboration and communication is yielding more consistency and results.
- b. Several partnerships completed or underway that can add value to the startup for better positioning and visibility. Recent partnerships with Cote d'Ivoire Electricite (CIE) and the Port Authority of Abidjan (PAA) are good examples.
- c. Program logic is clear and contains measurable objectives. The current work plan with results-driven framework better reflects the Program Logic and its outcomes to achieve project objectives.

CAUTION:

- a. There is a need to better conceptualize projects and document cost-benefit analysis for all projects to ensure the most optimal choice when mobilizing human and financial resources for an activity, especially in light of competing priorities (social good vs profit making). In addition, this should align with M&E metrics and targets.

RECOMMEND:

- a. The balance of energy, time, and resources allocated to promoting SEJEN CI as a corporation and working on DAC as a project should be coordinated with DCLI to ensure project objectives are met while moving toward sustainability.
- b. The ODRA results present a strategic opportunity to achieve aspects of “ecosystem building” to address challenges of HIV/AIDS and health, economic empowerment and gender equality. Development of ministry processes to open data, re-working aspects the open data portal for target sectors, etc. -- the Ministry of Health (in cooperation with OpenDCH) and Ministry of Education (guided by needs of DREAMS) are useful partners. This is a requirement of the project and should be actively targeted, in concert with DCDJ.
- c. SEJEN has some metrics for monitoring and measuring results for some of their activities which can be readily translated into M&E indicators with the proper framing and project definition. Where possible, the M&E framework should establish baselines and measure progress on project objectives, including achieving sustainable HIV/AIDS epidemic control.
- d. In order to facilitate the integration of M&E into well-defined projects, there should be consensus within the team on each project and its objectives. Lack of clarity will undermine projects and the ability to report on them in a meaningful way.
- e. SEJEN should work with DCDJ to strategically leverage the DCDJ Fellows, particularly to achieve results that advance sustainable HIV/AIDS epidemic control. A plan for better interaction with the data fellows post-training should be investigated and discussed.

4. Communications

WORKING:

- a. Professional branding and presentations - team exhibits maturity and rigor in their presentation of themselves and work

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- b. Hired a great communications duo.

RECOMMEND:

- a. Communication budget and strategy: A clear communications calendar, work plan and budget are needed to map out all of the integrated, planned activities for the next year in which there are significant milestones: conferences, Data Day, etc. A strategic timeline is critical to determine what is feasible in the time available (podcasts, billboards etc. may be an overreach).
- b. Integrate the Communications team into meetings and activities. This will aid the systematic capture of progress
- c. Make sure all the basics are done so that the team has the necessary information to communicate (websites, brochure, taking points, branding guidelines)
- d. Capture use stories and set targets
- e. Include communications metrics in M&E
- f. Make sure to engage PEPFAR, MCC, and the U.S. Embassy; and to clear items with the Embassy, especially large public events.

5. Financial and Administrative Systems

Per MCC usual practice, the SAR included an informal review of financial and administrative systems. Sejen has made visible progress in establishing its internal control systems: daily attendance forms filled by employees are used for determining payroll; there are manuals for HR, procurement, financial policy and operations. In the absence of a strong and visible CFO, a consultant has been hired to support the appointed financial and administrative manager. However, the issues of strong financial leadership remain important and need to be addressed.

However, there were also a few weaknesses or oversights in the established system that can be easily fixed: Complete documentation of exchanges with accountants on payroll, procurement transactions process, decisions on per-diem rates, etc. Asset lists should be kept updated and tags placed on all furniture and computer equipment.

Although new to this work the financial and administrative assistant has shown great discipline. Overall, there is a base of internal control systems at SEJEN, but there is also room for improvement in both clarifying some rules and/or socializing them with the team.

Additionally, the firm has reached a steady burn rate and will likely continue with similar levels of expenses in the near future. With the project at mid-course, it is imperative that Sejen starts generating revenue and should consider diversifying its revenue sources, by looking at other means of funding such as grants.

4. TDY / REVIEW PARTICIPANTS

- Agnieszka Rawa, MCC DCLI Managing Director (*March 14 – March 19*)
- Mitch Blaser, MCC DCLI Regional Coordinator (*March 13 – March 19*)
- Linda Tiemoko, MCC, DCLI-CI Cote d'Ivoire Country Program Coordinator
- Rudolph St. Jean, MCC DCLI Data Science Project Manager (*March 13 – March 21*)
- Valeria McFarren, MCC DCLI Communications Lead (*March 14 – March 19*)
- Sydney Garfinkel, MCC DCLI M&E Lead (*March 14 – March 21*)
- Kerry Leehan, MCC DCLI AAAS Fellow (*March 13 – March 19*)

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5. FINAL SAR SCHEDULE

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
From To		11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar	16-Mar	17-Mar	18-Mar	19-Mar	20-Mar
8:30	9:00	TRAVEL	TRAVEL		Welcome / Recall	Welcome / Recall	Welcome / Recall		Welcome / Recall	Welcome / Recall	TRAVEL
9:00	9:30			[Open] Outside/technical meetings	[1h00] DCLI Internal work session	[1h30] DCDJ - ODRA, Data pol. & Subnat. Eng. update, Comm. mapping	[1h30] Communications & Strategy (DCDJ, SEJEN, Valeria)		[1h30] DCDJ Partners' presentations		
9:30	10:00				[0h15] Launch					[0h45] DCLI - DCDJ SAR #2 Feedback (AR, RSJ)	
10:00	10:30				[1h15] DCDJ - Present progress highlights	[1h00] DCDJ/SEJEN/DCLI discuss ODRA, Subnat. opportunities	[0h30] Break		[0h30] Break	[0h45] DCLI - SEJEN SAR #2 Feedback (AR, RSJ)	
10:30	11:00				[1h00] DCDJ - Present progress highlights (cont'd)	[0h30] Break	[1h30] M&E Plan and ITT progress Report (Beatrice, SG)	[Open] DCLI Mini-Retreat	[1h30] DCDJ Work plan for the next 6 months - Maps activities with outcomes/Grant Mechanism Pres.	[0h45] SAR #2 Conclusion	
11:00	11:30			[1h00] Lunch		[1h00] Presentation of PEPFAR COP19 (Larry)					
12:00	12:30				[1h00] Lunch @ENSEA		[1h00] Lunch		[1h00] Lunch @ENSEA	[Open] Outside/technical meetings	
12:30	13:00			[1h30] SEJEN - Present progress highlights -Action Plan -YTD Results	[1h30] SEJEN Report of ongoing Projects (Big Data, De Dup/FingerPr, Viab, MOE)	[1h00] DCDJ - Present Fellows prog., training update, and Place. Plan	[1h00] SEJEN Foundation Creation Status - SEJEN mgmt. only		[1h30] Use Stories & DataRev (KL, VM)		
13:00	13:30				[0h30] Break		[0h45] DCLI - SEJEN Mgt Meeting (AR, RSJ)				
13:30	14:00			[1h30] SEJEN - Present progress highlights -Finance -Team status	[0h30] Break						
14:00	14:30				[1h30] SEJEN Work plan for the next 6-months - Maps activities with outcomes	[2h00+] Fellows' presentations - Work value and expected result(s) (29 fellows + 2 hosts)			[Open] Outside/technical meetings	[1h00] Lunch	
14:30	15:00									[1h00] DCLI Team Coordination, [Softel] RCM/Post Outbrief	
15:00	15:30										
15:30	16:00										
16:00	16:30										
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17:30	18:00										

SEJEN-led
 DCDJ-led
 Joint sessions
 DCLI only