

United States Agency for  
International Development

Public Meeting on Democracy,  
Human Rights & Governance

Closing Remarks

Tuesday June 2, 2016

Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

*Transcript By*  
*National Capitol Contracting*  
*200 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22203*

## INDEX OF SPEAKERS

### **E**

Ehmann, Claire 3, 6, 7, 8

### **H**

Higgins, Nick 7

### **L**

Leslie, Jack 3, 10, 11

Levine, Neil 4, 6

### **S**

Smith, Gayle 10, 11

JACK LESLIE: [laughs] I don't know where Claire is. Should I just start without her? What should I do? I don't know where Jane is. We're missing Claire. Claire Ehmann. Do you know where she is? Because she's supposed to - she's supposed to -- [laughs] okay.

We're missing Claire, but we're going to start. We'll catch - she'll catch up. So we have - we have one MIA person here, but

I'm sure she'll make it before her job - summarize the breakup -  
- breakout session. Let me just introduce - again, for everyone  
who got a chance to see their own - in their own breakout  
session - the lead, Neil Levine, who's the director of the  
Center for Excellence for DRG here at USAID - moderated the  
partnerships breakout, which I had a chance to sit through. And  
we had a robust discussion. Claire Ehmann, we're waiting for  
her - oh, there's Claire. Come on up here, Claire. You've got  
a - I'll give you my mic.

CLAIRE EHMANN: I'll share a mic.

JACK LESLIE: Claire's with the Office of the Information -  
Chief Information Officer at OMB, and she's the White House  
Leadership Development Fellow. And Nick Higgins, who moderated  
the Evidence and Impact Group; he's the Division Chief at the  
Center of the Excellence for DRG here at USAID. And of course  
you all know Gayle. So why don't we start, Neil, with you? You  
get to lead off. Each of you have got about five minutes or so  
to summarize, and then we'll have a quick time for some Q&A and  
some final comments perhaps from Gayle. And we hope to be able  
to wrap it up by about 4:15. All right? Go ahead, Neil.

NEIL LEVINE: Well, first of all thank you for everyone who was

here for the partnership discussion. Gayle, they were true to the charge. It was a very rich discussion; I will not do it complete justice in summarizing it, but we have a beautiful graphic display that will hang proudly in the - in the DRG center for some time to come. I think, first of all, in terms of some of the foundational questions we've covered - and it was good to reach a consensus about the importance of defining what we mean by "partnership" and with whom and at what level, whether that is our partnership at implementing community, the U.S. and foreign actors with local actors, and really focus on that term, "partnering."

What does it mean to partner? The idea that we partner as a means to a purpose and to focus on what it is that we're trying to achieve, and then that should give us some definitional clarity. A really interesting question about where does the power ultimately reside when you partner, and to see that that power does flow, and recognizing the imbalance there. A lot of discussion, I think, about with whom do we partner and a real need to look for unusual suspects, look beyond our usual thinking to - particularly across sectors, which we've talked about before, in terms of places where participation and gains have been made in another sector. And they - but they've operated because the of way we're set up, in independence, and

so that - when we think about partnership we really have to be sweeping and to understand who comes to the table.

And also back to the idea of broad areas of inclusion in -- that the historically marginalized folks have the most to gain by being included in that. First, let's talk about minorities, but that could be extended to the poor LGBT regions, capital versus the periphery, and so cross-sector. And then to other things - points to conclude by - it was very interesting, and it echoes what we've heard in our integration case studies, which is, language is really important. When you're talking about broad coalitions there is a translation that has to occur to make sure that we understand what we're talking about the same thing.

And whether that's a technical translation or whether it's a cultural translation that, when we work in partnership we really need to pay attention to the language that we use, because that's a way of including or excluding. And I think there was an undercurrent to that, and I think that's - the committee's directed to pay some attention to that. And then, with any concern of a complex topic and appreciation of the risks. So we're working in tougher environments; we carry with us as our own constraints, as an arm of the U.S. government, when we partner.

And then an appreciation that, you know, we're on the side of democracy, human rights, and governance, but a lot of our partners weren't always wearing white hats every day. They have their own peculiarities; they have their own deficits, deficiencies. Some of that we're trying to fix. Some of them create incentives, perverse incentives and create bad behavior, and just a sense that we should be steely-eyed and pragmatic about facing those risks. Let me leave it there and turn it over to the next reporter. Ladies first, please.

CLAIRE EHMANN: [inaudible]

NEIL LEVINE: Or go by order of arrival.

[laughter]

CLAIRE EHMANN: I couldn't stop talking with my group. That's with my civil society partners.

NICK HIGGINS: So on the evidence and research conversation, we had a lot of - a lot of questions, a lot of enlightening discussion. There was pressure about how do we distill findings in our evidence so that that's really useful for our

practitioners in the field, taking these complex evaluation reports and making the most salient findings available to folks at the right time instead of operational times, and how do we attribute effects through our evaluations.

So we discussed impact evaluations and the strengths and challenges with those limitations with those - and the - and a feeling that [unintelligible] clear attribution of our effects the narrow, in some cases, and how do we look at tie-level impact, and how do we attribute that back to USAID effort? We talked about, how do we - how do we learn from evaluations, and how do we change our programs? What examples do we have as a sector of programs - program approaches - that we've changed or modified as a result of research and evidence?

And that sounds like an excellent discussion. There were points about training our staff so that the AID staff are fully aware of the evaluation policy and are better informed and trained in/with the evaluation methods and also the -- aware of evaluation findings and their work. There were was points about collaboration across the sector. How can we work better as a community to advance research and to support and leverage one another's efforts? And I think I'll leave it there.

CLAIRE EHMANN: Great. Thank you. Hi, I'm Claire Ehmann, and I was in the Innovation Group. And I - yeah, again, I'm so sorry; I just couldn't stop talking to my wonderful civil society group. We had a really great discussion about innovation. We tried to frame it talking around two things. One, around process innovations - like, innovation can mean new ways of doing business or using an old tool in a new way.

And we also talked, of course, talked about technology and innovation -- thinking about both the opportunities that new technologies can afford, especially with better participation and bringing in marginalized groups, but then also remembering about the risks of technology that government - you know, authoritarian governments can also use technology, and that we have a big digital divide. On the technology side we heard a lot of great comments around about meeting people where they are on technology.

Obviously in a lot of the countries where we work, really some of the innovation is actually going to be a more - not so much on iPhone but actually sort of in better processes. We heard about good examples how, in the Middle East, how social media really was a vehicle to actually get to some other marginalized populations that hadn't been reached before. And we also had a

conversation about, you know, how could we use technology maybe to better help with translation in English, for example? Right? When you're thinking about development projects, these are sort of skills that technology might be able to be useful.

On the process of innovation side, we talked about - a lot about user-center design, and thinking about this - you know, when you're trying to think about development projects, thinking about the actual user and then getting feedback and participation from users. And we talked a little bit about co-creation, some of the ways that you could do co-creation a little bit better, potentially doing a more democratic process of crowdsourcing, sort of human gauges in a co-creation. We also talked about the important part about resourcing innovation and, you know, resourcing the building to take some of these risks.

And then also on that process-innovation side we also similarly talked about, you know, thinking about the DRG sector, thinking about some of our other tools - put - trying to integrate DRG into humanitarian assistance, for example. We had a good example there about teaching people about civics when there's also - we're working on humanitarian assistance.

And then we also had a comment about political economy analysis, and how can we use political economy analysis as a process innovation to try to integrate democracy governance concepts into our other development sectors. And so again I really want to thank my group. We had a wonderful discussion. And I think I'll leave it there.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I'm a great leader.

[laughter]

JACK LESLIE: We have time for further discussion or questions or comments from all of you. Gayle, do you want - do you have anything you want to add?

GAYLE SMITH: No, I [unintelligible], but I want to say thank you to everybody. But I was - just ask if there are other points. I'm surrounded by extremely competent and enabled people. But if there were other points that were made that you all would want to raise, they may show up on the diagram. If you think it's important, then we'd love to hear those. Anybody's got anything to add?

JACK LESLIE: It looks like --

MALE SPEAKER: [inaudible]

[laughter]

GAYLE SMITH: I like that. I'm for that. I'm for that. We'll take that.

JACK LESLIE: That's great. Well, I don't see any other hands up, which is pretty unusual since we couldn't even get through them all in our partnership breakout. But thank you all for coming. Just a couple of - couple of thanks. Thanks first of all to the breakout leaders Nick and Neil and Claire. Thank you very much. Thanks to our friends, by the way - I - it's called Lizard Brain Solutions. I love the name of the group that did the - did the graphics here.

So to Brian, Barb, Ryan, and Dean in case you ever want to call Lizard Brain Solutions and find out who. Thank you to Jane Thomisee as always for putting all of this on, and to Gayle and her amazing team for continuing to push the boundaries of development.

Thank you all for coming. We're going to see - we hope you come

next time. It says July on my notes. Is it July? That's just like next month. Oh, good.

[laughter]

Well, we're going to be back here soon, so watch your emails from Jane. We hope to see you in July. Thanks very much for coming.

[applause]

[end of transcript]