USAID Higher Education Learning Agenda

Samantha Alvis, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor, Higher Education
Center for Education
USAID/Washington

Objectives

- Present USAID's Higher Education Program Framework

- Discuss USAID Higher Education Learning Agenda priorities

- Understand the categorization of the learning agenda questions

- Learn how to help contribute to advancing the USAID Higher Education Learning Agenda

Higher Education Program Framework

Three Outcomes of USAID-Funded Higher Education Programming

- Developing the capacity of individuals and higher education institutions

- Strengthening partnerships and transnational relationships

- Promoting higher education as a central actor in locally led development

https://www.edu-links.org/resources/higher-education-program-framework
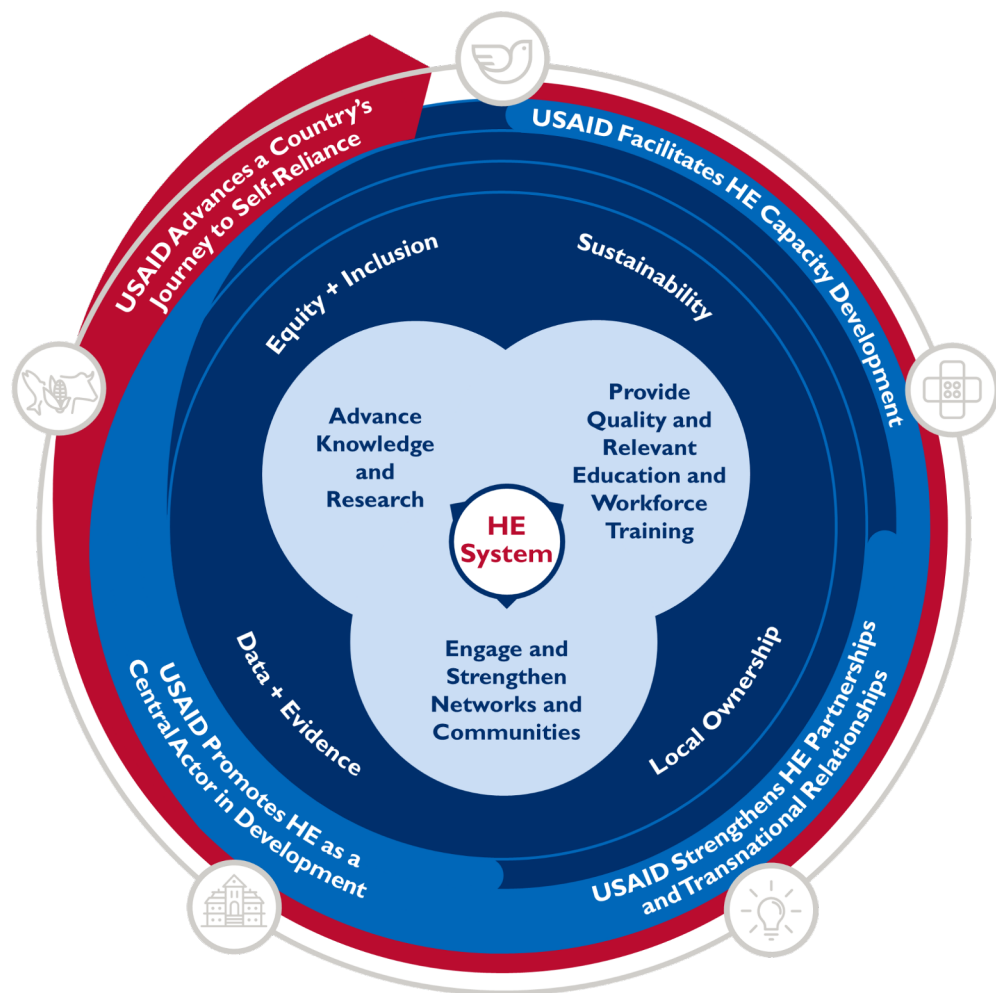
The Higher Education Learning Agenda

5 Themes

10 questions

USAID Higher Education
LEARNING AGENDA QUESTIONS

Management and Financing of Systems and Institutions

1. How can Higher Education (HE) systems and institutions become more strategic in planning, implementing, and monitoring core activities (e.g., enrollment, academic programs, research, and outreach)?

2. How can financing of HE systems and institutions become more sustainable?

Academic Programs

3. How can the viability and effectiveness of online and other forms of distance education be improved?

4. How can skills or competencies (e.g., technical and soft skills) for employability best be identified, analyzed, and incorporated into curricula, teaching, and learning?

5. How can the practice and culture of teaching become more learner-centered?

Research and Innovation

6. How can HE systems and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a more active role in the development and strengthening of national and regional innovation ecosystems?

HEI Outreach and Engagement

7. How can HEIs collaborate most effectively with the private sector to enhance the relevance and quality of teaching and learning, and research and innovation?

8. How can USAID best partner with HEIs to make use of local knowledge and expertise?

Access, Equity, and Student Services

9. How can HE access, retention, and completion rates be improved for underrepresented populations (e.g., women, indigenous and marginalized populations, and people with disabilities)?

10. What institutional and behavioral changes are needed to improve gender awareness and gender equity?

Higher Education Learning Agenda Development and Approach

The Agency-wide Higher Education Learning Agenda was developed collaboratively with over 100 individuals from USAID Missions, USAID Washington, implementing partners, and other stakeholders. These contributors supported learning agenda development and catalyzed a collective movement towards advancing the higher education evidence base.
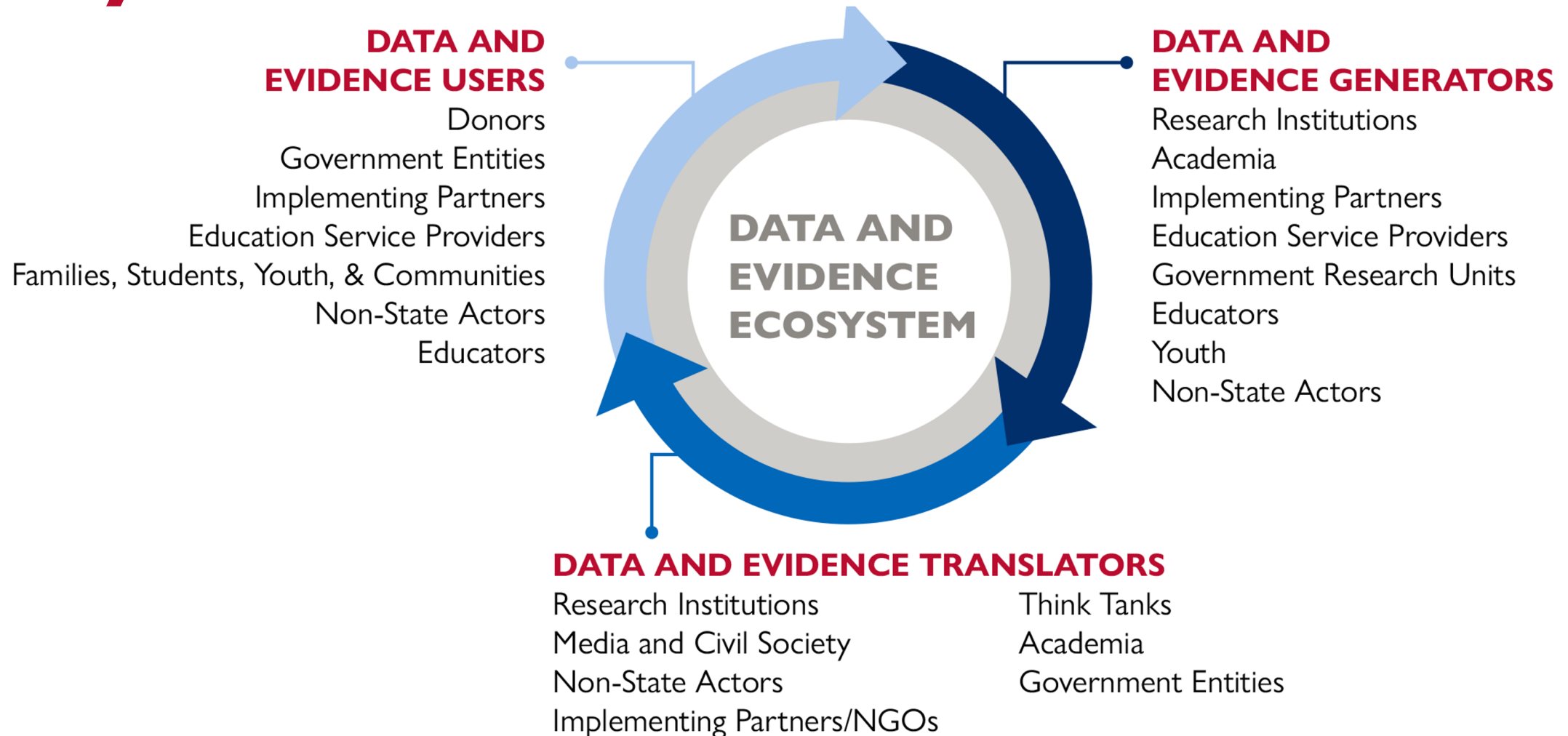
Questions in this learning agenda are diverse and require different approaches:

- **Evidence Generation:** Minimal evidence exists for these questions, which require generation of new evidence.

- **Evidence Gathering:** Evidence exists for these questions, but it is dispersed and requires gathering and analysis to transform it into usable information.

- **Evidence Dissemination:** Evidence exists in a usable form, but it is relatively unknown and requires targeted dissemination and socialization.

Visit edu-links.org/HELearningAgenda on EducationLinks for more information. We invite you to join us in implementing and learning through USAID's Higher Education Learning Agenda!

Photo: USAID

Goal: Improve the Data and Evidence Ecosystem

DATA AND EVIDENCE USERS
Donors
Government Entities
Implementing Partners
Education Service Providers
Families, Students, Youth, & Communities
Non-State Actors
Educators

DATA AND EVIDENCE GENERATORS
Research Institutions
Academia
Implementing Partners
Education Service Providers
Government Research Units
Educators
Youth
Non-State Actors

DATA AND EVIDENCE ECOSYSTEM

DATA AND EVIDENCE TRANSLATORS
Research Institutions
Media and Civil Society
Non-State Actors
Implementing Partners/NGOs

Think Tanks
Academia
Government Entities

Learning Agenda Development Process

LEARNING AGENDA JOURNEY
— THE ROAD MOST FREQUENTLY TRAVELLED —

THE PLAN!

2 CURATE EXISTING RESEARCH

4 DEVELOP A PLAN TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS

1 GATHER STAKEHOLDERS & IDENTIFY RELEVANT AREAS

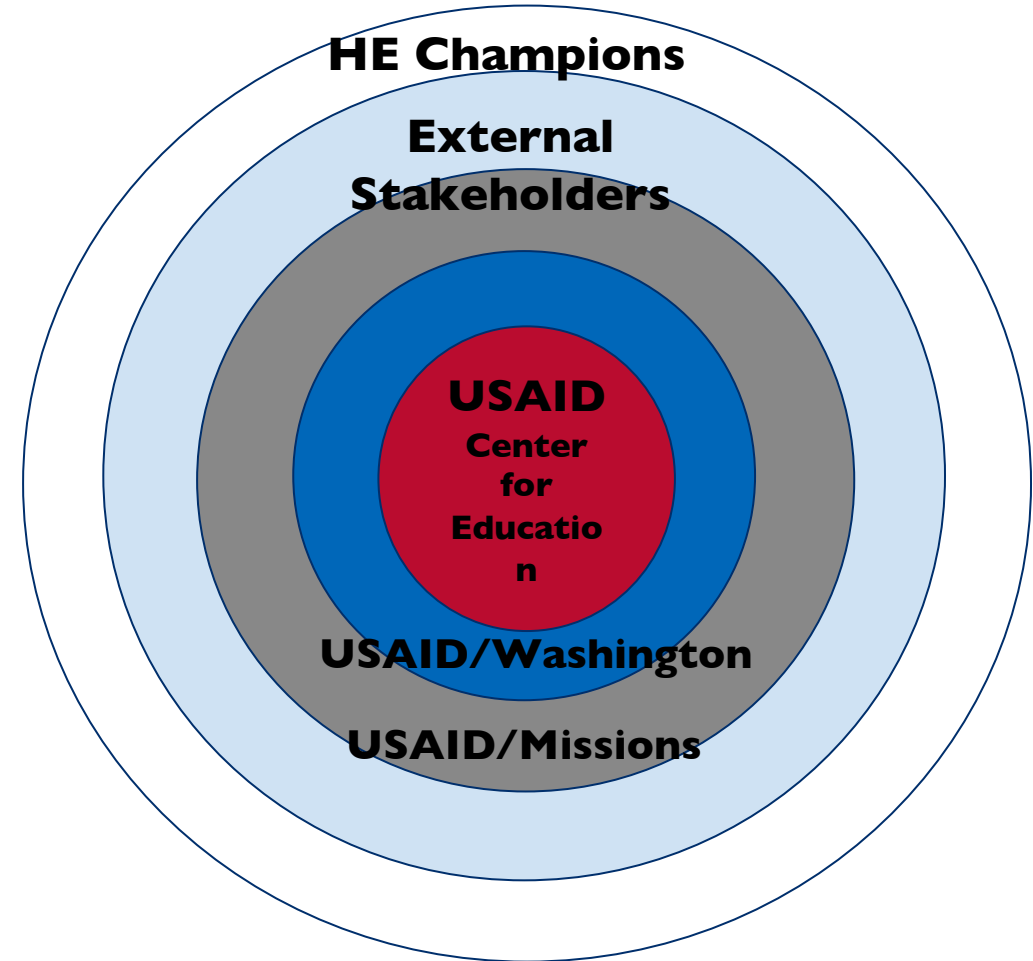3 FORMULATE & PRIORITIZE QUESTIONS

VISUAL BY KAT HAUGH

1. Stakeholder Analysis

2. Workshops to engage USAID staff, Implementing Partners, and the Higher Education community

3. Questions Finalized

4. Evidence Review and Gap Map

5. Implementation Plan

Engagement in the Development of the Learning Agenda

USAID/Missions = USAID Mission staff from 8 Missions

External Stakeholders = 60 partners, HE associations, HEIs from US and abroad

HE Champions = nearly 300 external stakeholders who follow USAID's HE work

HE Champions

External Stakeholders

USAID Center for Education

USAID/Washington

USAID/Missions

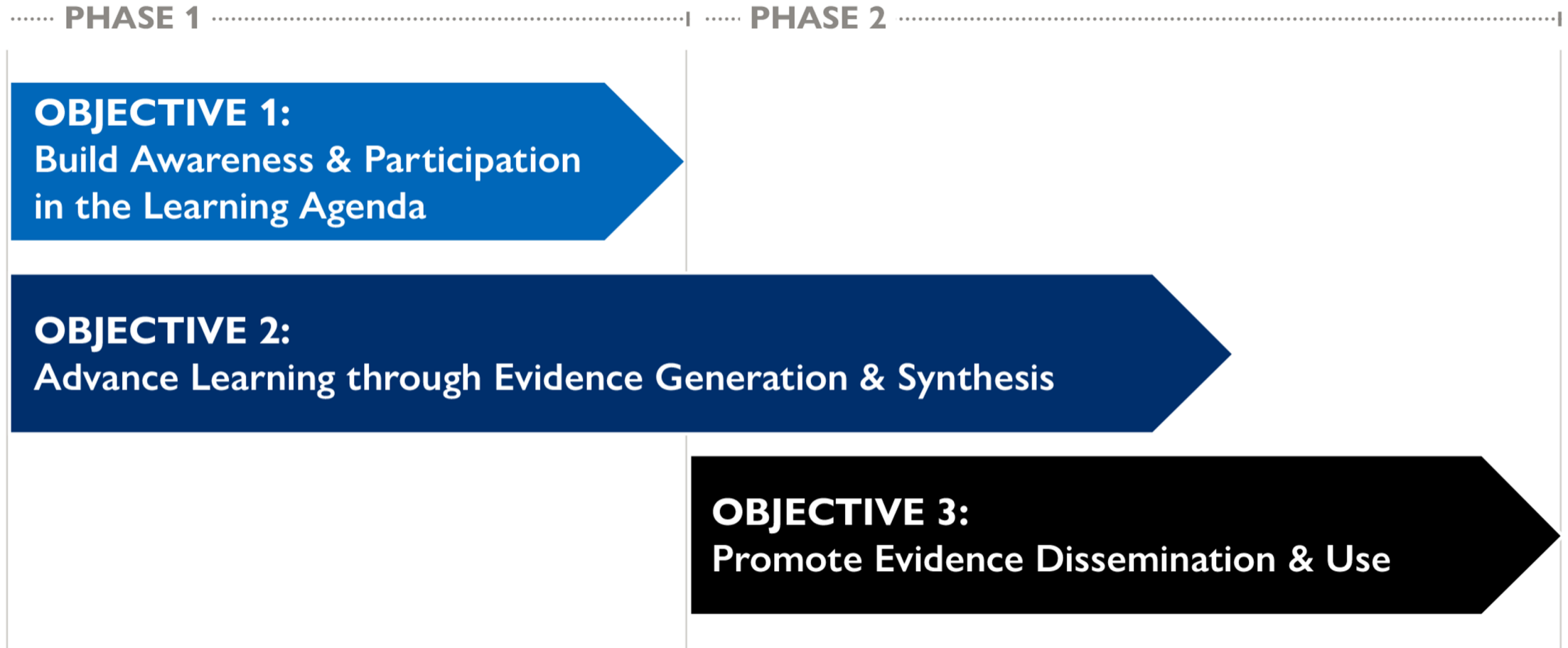# Learning Agenda Themes and Questions

	QUESTION	THEME
1	**Strategy:** How can higher education systems and institutions become more strategic in planning, implementing and monitoring core activities (e.g., enrollment, academic programs, research, and outreach)?	**Management and Financing of Systems and Institutions**
2	**Sustainable Financing:** How can financing of higher education systems and institutions become more sustainable?	
3	**Distance Education:** How can the viability and effectiveness of online and other forms of distance education be improved?	**Academic Programs**
4	**Skills for Employability:** How can skills or competencies (e.g., technical and soft skills) for employability best be identified, analyzed, and incorporated into curricula, teaching, and learning?	
5	**Learning:** How can the practice and culture of teaching become more learner-centered?	
6	**Innovation Ecosystems:** How can higher education systems and higher education institutions (HEIs) play a more active role in developing and strengthening national and regional innovation ecosystems?	**Research and Innovation**
7	**Private Sector Collaborations:** How can HEIs collaborate more effectively with the private sector to enhance the relevance and quality of teaching and learning, and of research and innovation?	**HEI Outreach and Engagement**
8	**HEI Expertise:** How can USAID best partner with HEIs to make use of local knowledge and expertise?	
9	**Underrepresented Groups:** How can higher education access, retention, and completion rates be improved for underrepresented populations (e.g., women, indigenous and marginalized populations, and people with disabilities)?	**Access, Equity, and Student Services**
10	**Gender:** What institutional and behavioral changes are needed to improve gender awareness and gender equity?	

Evidence Gap Categorization

1. **Generation:** Minimal evidence exists for these questions, new evidence required.
    - Q2 Finance
    - Q6 Innovation ecosystems
    - Q8 HEI expertise

2. **Capture:** Evidence exists, but is dispersed and needs analysis to transform it into usable information.
    - Q5 Learning
    - Q9 Access for underrepresented groups
    - Q10 Gender

3. **Dissemination:** Evidence exists in a usable form, but it is relatively unknown and requires dissemination.
    - Q1 Strategy
    - Q7 Private Sector Collaborations
    - Q3 Distance Education
    - Q4 Skills for Employability

Learning Agenda Implementation: Phases

PHASE 1 | PHASE 2

OBJECTIVE 1:
Build Awareness & Participation in the Learning Agenda

OBJECTIVE 2:
Advance Learning through Evidence Generation & Synthesis

OBJECTIVE 3:
Promote Evidence Dissemination & Use

QUESTION	AVAILABLE OR IN PROGRESS USAID PRODUCED KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS
Q1: Strategy	
Q2: Sustainable Financing	SHARE Multi-country Study - HEIGHTS (in-progress Kenya, Indonesia, Philippines)
Q3: Distance Education	Evidence summary + Fail Fest Event
Q4; Skills for Employability	Soft Skills Development to Advance Student-Centered Higher Education Evidence Summit - Evidence Gap Map update (in-progress)
Q5: Teaching and Learning	
Q6: Innovation Ecosystems	Higher Education and Innovation Ecosystems Primer (intern product) SHARE Multi-country Study - HEIGHTS (in-progress Kenya, Indonesia, Philippines) Evidence Summit - Evidence Gap Map update (in-progress) Case Study - BUILD-IT (Vietnam) Maker Spaces(anticipated Fall 2022, intern product) IP & Technology Transfer Discussion Note (anticipated Fall 2022, intern product)
Q7: Private Sector Collaborations	Primer on HEI-Industry Collaboration (intern product) + LAC focused Webinar Evidence Summit - Evidence Gap Map update (in-progress)
Q8: HEI Expertise	Learning from Evidence Ecosystem work under SHARE (on-going)
Q9: Underrepresented Groups	Primer on access, retention, and completion for women (Anticipated Fall 2022) USAID Higher Education Scholarship Toolkit - Adding Scholarship Evaluation Synthesis (Anticipated Fall 2022)
Q10: Gender	

I joined the USAID Higher Education Learning Network (*the* HELN)

https://www.edu-links.org/heln

LASER PULSE

Learning Agenda Implementation: Stakeholders for Collaboration

- USAID Missions and Operating Units (internal)

- Implementing Partners

- Researchers and Research Institutions

How You Can Collaborate, Partner with Us!

- Submit concept notes, applications, and proposals that incorporate learning questions

- Align research interests and complete research projects of mutual interest

- Inform us of knowledge and research related to learning agenda themes

- Keep up-to-date by checking our site: https://www.edu-links.org/resources/usaid-higher-education-learning-agenda

- Join networks and communities of practice

Contact us at helearning@usaid.gov