Justin Prudhomme:

I suppose better now than later. Anyway, thanks Soojin, good morning everyone. As Soojin said, welcome to the second session of the 2020 US aid workshop on communicating democracy, human rights, and government. Hosted by US state senator of excellence on democracy human rights and government. We're going to kick off the session this morning with a video featured in the "Democracy as Campaign" that hopefully many of you are familiar with at this point. It's called Justice for Kosovo. The video features Afradita, the first female court president of the basic court of Pristina in Kosovo. Under her leadership, and with USAID support, she has made the court more transparent and efficient. Over to you, Soojin.

Soojin Ku:

Thank you Justin. Momentarily, you will see your screen shift and you will be taken to a new web browser with the video. Please click play when you're right at the screen. After you have finished watching the video, you may close your web browser and redirect to this e-connect page. Please do keep in mind that you have a full control over your own speakers volume, and with that enjoy the video.

Justin Prudhomme:

Okay hopefully you've all gotten through that or are just wrapping it up. I think it was a nice way to open the session today. Now we're going to hear from the director of the USA center of excellence on democracy rights and government, Tim Weisberger. Tim has worked in international development since 1988 and specialized in elections and democratization since 1992. Before joining US aid in 2017, Tim worked at the Asia Foundation for 20 years and before that held roles at the UN, the organization for security incorporation in Europe, and as a consultant in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. As a reminder, if you have questions for Tim you can type them into the chat box in your event screen. Thanks for joining this morning Tim, over to you.

Tim:

Thank you Justin for that introduction. I want to thank everyone for joining us today, for this session. I know this is the second of three that you have. Is the slide up on the screen now? I'm not sure.

Justin Prudhomme:

Yes, we see it.

Tim:

You see the slide, okay. So I want to start with a little bit about COVID, since COVID is the optic of the day. When this pandemic emerged, the people in USAID obviously responded very rapidly but the response was primarily how do we deal with this as a humanitarian assistance crisis. How do we address the effects of this at the health level, and the DRG center, we looked at it and we thought that we also needed to think about it as democracy rights and governance issue. I prepared this slide and we have prepared some papers, I think a lot of you have seen those. But what we believe at the DRG center is that development is a political process. It often requires governance interventions, political interventions, and we also think that democracy is essential to achieving real sustainable development.

Tim:

If you look at this slide, we say that when we talked about COVID and DRG, we said COVID is a democracy crisis. Autocrats are using the crisis to expand their control, postpone or cancel elections and expand digital surveillance. While malign actors like China are exploiting the pandemic to promote their authoritarian government's models. We also saw it as a human rights crisis, both for political rights and for the disproportionate impacts COVID has on the most marginalized in society including women. We were monitoring this as well and our partners have counted example after example of restrictions on speech, restrictions on assembly, a variety of other impacts on marginalized populations.

Tim:

Last, COVID is a government's crisis. In most countries, foreign assistance alone will be insufficient to meet the health needs associated with the epidemic response. We can't solve those health problems ourselves, so one of the most effective things we can do is help local governments help those national governments to understand how they can better address the problems in their own country using their own resources, being self reliant in that sense. I wanted to introduce you to that idea, I think that if you have not seen the paper we wrote on DRG and COVID-19, I'm sure that we can put the link to it in the notes here.

Tim:

Moving on from that, on another issue I wanted to talk to you about is the Cold War. I want to talk about the Cold War, that's strange. Interestingly, the Cold War was an ideological war. It was the last real challenge to democracy, where people presented an alternative government system as superior to democracy. That contest went on for a long time. It was an ideological contest, and at the end of it, people stopped really promoting democracy, they didn't really feel like there was any need anymore. In fact the guy we all know wrote a book about it called The End of History, that posited that everyone in the world now accepted democracy as the most appropriate form of government for all people. For the next 20 years or so, or 30 years I guess, we didn't really promote democracy anymore, we mostly just implemented it. We went out to the field and implemented that.

Tim:

But now we're in a different age. We're entering maybe a new Cold War, maybe a new ideological contest where we have authoritarian actors, malign actors, promoting an alternative government model which they say is superior to democracy. This ideological struggle has taken the form of an information war at least so far, and in that information war we have not really been very engaged to this point. As you know, US AID and others are talking about this issue, talking about great power competition and how we can begin to address this, but I just wanted to highlight to you that really there's a tip of the sphere in this. You are critical to our effort to start to push back to this and we can think about it as propaganda and I think if you look at actual definition of propaganda, the work that we're doing is like that.

Tim:

But the difference is is that one side is pushing out a false narrative, one side is pushing towards authoritarianism, one side is pushing disinformation, and the counter for that, the challenge for us is how can we counter that with truth, how can we counter that with real information, how can we counter the appeal of the authoritarian states with the appeal of democracy and freedom and articulate what people lose when they follow these authoritarian models. They lose the freedom to speak, they

lose freedom of assembly, they lose freedom to travel, and economically they may not gain as well. So I wanted to speak to you a little bit about that because I think that the world is ...

Justin Prudhomme:

Did we lose your audio Tim?

Tim:

Okay, I don't know why my microphone got muted, but you're really critical in this effort to push back on this and actually because we're so early in this process so that we're entering a new phase or a new age, we haven't really figured out how to articulate this much less how to program in it. So we the US Agency for International Development, USAID, the US government are relying on you to help us understand. How do we even articulate this? How do we move forward? What are the appropriate programs? How can we help people to be free? In places all over the world we see populations becoming subject to increasing authoritarian control, and we see people are going against democracy, and that's why what you're doing right now is so critical for the future of development assistance, of democracy assistance, of free people everywhere. So I wanted to thank you for your effort in that, and to challenge you really to help us to communicate why countries should be democratic, to compare and contrast the authoritarian model with the democratic model. With that I don't know if there are any questions, but I'm happy to take any questions. Over.

Justin Prudhomme:

Thanks Tim that was great. I don't see any questions so far but certainly we will keep the chat box open and as questions come in we can always either come back to you or come back here and get questions and answers and inform the attendees later.

Tim:

Great thank you.

Justin Prudhomme:

Thanks again. I'm happy to welcome Jennifer Hazleton as our next speaker, to give us an update on USAID strategic communications priority. Jennifer is the deputy assistant administrator for the USA Bureau for Public Affairs, LPA, Jennifer joined USAID in February this year so just barely got to know the office people and we all started to telework, and oversees a wide proponent of communications efforts including the strategic communications campaign. Jennifer's experience ranges from previous roles in government as a senior Vice president of communications and marketing at export import bank, roles in the private sector including news media, and on the Hill as director of communications for a member of Congress. Thanks for joining us this morning, Jennifer, over to you.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Thank you Justin, I really appreciate that and thank you for your hard work and Soojin's hard work and Jessica's hard work to make this event become a reality. We're all working really hard to adapt to the challenges that we find ourselves in and doing things remotely is one of the challenges but so far I think you guys have done a really great job in putting this event together, so thank you for that, and thank you for the invitation to come and speak. I greatly appreciate it. Good morning everyone, thank you for

being here today. Justin gave me such a generous introduction that I'm going to launch into my message for you this morning.

Jennifer Hazelton:

As you said, I oversee the strategic communications initiative at USAID. We develop and implement the strategies to advance the agency's key strategic communications priorities. So in addition to strategic comms, public affairs is responsible for a bunch of different things, including engaging with external audiences and stakeholder groups that Justin plays a key role in all of our efforts on that front, intergovernmental affairs, social media, particularly the US AID flagship handle the administrator and the deputy administrators handles, content creation and then we manage the ducks all around the world and their communication efforts and they really are key to getting our message out in the field, in the countries where we have missions so we really value them.

Jennifer Hazelton:

So collectively as a group we work together to advance the administrators' strategic goals. Through communications tactics and we're also here to message all of the good work the agency does to external audiences, and so that the American people know what their generous contributions, the difference that they're making all around the world. As you can imagine, there's never been a bigger time for expressing this good work than right now and how the United States government is responding to COVID-19. Tim touched on it quite well when he was talking about the difference between democracies and authoritarian regimes and some of the issues that we're hearing that other countries are having when they receive donations from China versus the quality of the product that America is sending to our partners around the world. That is certainly something that we seek to highlight, and we are taking an all of America approach when we're talking about the United States government and the work that we're doing.

Jennifer Hazelton:

I should say it's not just the government right, it's private sector companies, it's individuals, it's face space groups, it's NGO's, all of them combined are making a huge contribution internationally as the world fights COVID-19. In our role, in Justin and my perch at LPA, we feel it's very important that we do a good job in communicating those efforts around the world so people really have a clear picture of what the United States is doing to help. Our assistance is unmatched and this is a tradition that goes back to World War II and nobody can hold a candle to it, so making sure that we continuously stress that message is very important.

Jennifer Hazelton:

So what we try to do is, we're faced with the challenge of how to best weave the COVID-19 response messaging into our existing communications while also generating new messaging related to COVID-19. I'm going to talk a lot more about COVID-19 and our response in just a minute, you can see the first slide of a PowerPoint presentation, we'll get there in just a second. But before I do, I just want to talk to you guys a little bit about some of the other messaging initiatives we've got going on. Obviously COVID-19 is front and center but that doesn't mean our messaging in other areas isn't continuing.

Jennifer Hazelton:

One of the big strategy campaigns that we've got going on right now is promoting democracy and good governance through the agency's democracy IS campaign. This is the priority that you all are most

familiar with and the goal that we all share directly. From Burundi to Venezuela we're seeing lots of warning signs or results on the assault on democratic values, and our goal with this campaign is to highlight this and bring attention to it, and so the campaign centers around messaging that democratic governments are more effective governments and produce better outcome in all sectors of society and that citizen responsive government is a critical factor in development and we think it's not possible for any country to rise to its full potential without this. So that's campaign number one.

Jennifer Hazelton:

We're also developing a campaign to highlight our investments in the Caribbean and to raise awareness of our incredible efforts there. We're not just disaster related assistance in the Caribbean, we do a whole lot more and so we want to make sure that we get the word out on that and that people are aware that USAID has a broader role to play. We're promoting a model of international development that fosters transparency, accountability, and resiliency through no strings attached assistance. We want countries to evolve on a spectrum from recipient nations to donor nations, so that they are in a position at some point to offer assistance as well and to be able to stand on their own two feet and be self reliant, so we're messaging around that.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Then we're also promoting religious freedom in ethnic minorities and this is a bedrock principal of open democratic countries, and one on which USAID is keenly focused. There are examples all around the world of religious and ethnic minorities that are being mistreated and we've seen that from Christians in Iraq to the Muslim leaders in China and we believe that all minorities share something in common that they are systematically denied representation in government and so we're going to be doing more on highlighting this and I think this whole issue with COVID-19 has really brought the plight of the leaguers more to the forefront and so be looking for more from us on that.

Jennifer Hazelton:

So as you can see there are a lot of different balls in the air for LPA, we're continuing to try to message on our other priorities as we continue to put COVID front and center. USAID has really been on the front lines of the US government approach. We're talking constantly with the White House and the state department and the treasuries, the other parts of the federal government and given our unique role and our unique niche we are very well positioned to be a strong voice in how the United States government is responding. So with that I'm going to take you now through this PowerPoint that I have sent over, so we can talk a little bit in more depth about the agency's messaging response to COVID-19.

Jennifer Hazelton:

So the intro is that we've developed a new communication strategy and a campaign that demonstrates the work the US government and partner organizations are doing around the world. Again, that goes back to that whole of America, all of America approach. You'll see more of that, we're going to be talking about how America acts, America is in action, and we're going to tie that back to our historic role since WWII in humanitarian assistance around the world. In terms of goals, we're trying to increase awareness and knowledge about how the United States government is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, push back on this information from China and others on some of the talking points that they may be putting out that aren't necessarily accurate, amplifying messages and content on our historic and ongoing investments in global health, 140 billion dollars since 2001, nobody can hold a candle to us there,

develop a library of continence to better tell the story, and then again push back on disinformation on the response to COVID-19.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Our whole goal is to make sure that we're communicating, that this is a one American government response. This isn't just USAID, it's not just fate, it's not just CDC or HHS, we have one all of America response. All of our visuals and materials that we are producing for this to amplify this message I'll tie back to the all of America response.

Jennifer Hazelton:

So we have this message triangle and it's basically shows the intersection of the how, what, and why so we can advance to the next slide so I can explain a little bit more about this. So the what is what we're doing, how are we providing assistance, we're providing ventilators, we're providing money, we're providing PPE, we're providing all sorts of things. What are we doing? So making sure that we're highlighting that, and then the why, obviously, why are we doing it. Well, there's two reasons. The first reason is this is what we do. This is what the American people do. This is what the United States government does. It supports nations around the world in their development and in protecting their safety, but also a threat overseas is a threat here and I think COVID-19 has probably shown us that better than any example in modern times. This is a disease that broke out in one country and before you knew it a couple months later it's all around the world and it's affecting everybody. It really highlights how something that affects one country can affect the rest of us.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Then the how is how are we going to go about messaging it. It's a foundation built on decades of experience. Again, going back to the end of World War II and our first foray into humanitarian assistance. The global health system is built on a foundation that was built by USAID in the US government. Again, 140 billion dollars in assistance just since 2001. This is an agency that's been on the front lines of fighting other outbreaks, things that maybe didn't affect the United States, but certainly had a huge impact in other parts of the world like Ebola, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and now we've got COVID-19 and all of our cumulative experience in combating these other diseases has better prepared us to help the world now.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Our generosity again is unmatched. More than 1 billion dollars in assistance, already to this point since the outbreak began and more is on the way. Expect another announcement next week, more funding will be announced, it'll be more ventilators will be donated around the world and so our efforts, we're over a billion dollars right now, that's one billion just for US AID and state. Collectively the entire USG has spent about 10 billion and so our efforts are ongoing and we want to stress that we have a variety of ways that we're responding from improving health education to donating ventilators to increasing Z surveillance to training medical workers and then obviously we're trying to tailor our response and assistance to each country dependent on what they need.

Jennifer Hazelton:

We've also been involved in this inner agency approach across the USG to really harness all the different capacities within the federal government to best respond to COVID-19. So we're working the state, we're working the CDC, we're working with basically all parts of the federal government and this has

been a process that's been convened by the national security council. We've been an active participant in that and the whole goal is to make sure that we are responding as effectively as possible both domestically and abroad. So it is that whole USG approach.

Jennifer Hazelton:

Creative elements, so campaign name and slogan, I'll go ahead and break the news here. The campaign name is America Acts, #AmericaActs, obviously what we want to emphasize that all of America approach and so we feel like that campaign name will capture that. We are in the process of building out the cohesive design elements that will reflect the America Acts look and feel, and then we'll have a package of communication with our messaging with our top line, with our social media product, and they'll be able to amplify it across all of our missions.

Jennifer Hazelton:

I think that pretty much wraps it up for me. Again, I just want to stress that this is a huge effort, and that acting administrator Barsa has said that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a public health crisis but it's also a crisis of democracy, human rights, and governance and we realize that there are communities and there are countries that have weaker institutions and more fragile democracies and they're going to require additional support in order to recover, and that the effects of COVID-19 are going to linger long after the virus has been contained. We know this and we know this is going to be an ongoing effort. As Tim touched on earlier, some countries are seeing this as an opportunity where they are trying to advance authoritarian regimes using the crisis as that opportunity so we want to make sure that we continue to message that democracies are a better option and that democratic institutions help safeguard a country and it's future. With that, I want to say thank you so much and I appreciate the invitation and Justin I toss it back over to you.

Justin Prudhomme:

Great, thank you so much Jennifer. I think it's really great for our communications platform to see what USAID has focused on and really exciting that we've got the scoop on America Acts, saw the name here today. Thanks again.

Justin Prudhomme:

Next we're going to hear from a Senior Communications Advisor and Content Specialist, Sahar Kalifa. In her role at LPA as the highest developed agency messaging, oversees video story productions and manages development and implementation of strategic communications campaigns, including the Democracy Is campaign. Sahar is going to update us on that campaign now. Hi Sahar, thanks for joining us today. Over to you.

Sahar:

Hi Justin, thank you. Can you hear me well?

Justin Prudhomme:

Yes we hear you clearly and please let us know when you want slides to advance.

Sahar:

Great thank you and thanks everyone for joining today. In the next few minutes I'm going to go over the democracy Is campaign and provide you an update on where we are, as Richard mentioned yesterday democracy work was a priority to our former administrator who requested that we spoke of communications on this team and to our current acting administrator as well. We launched Democracy is in January and we are now halfway through our campaign as it runs through September. As Jennifer noted, this is one of our priority messaging and we are moving forward with this campaign while also being sensitive to the current situation and communicating on our COVID-19 response efforts. We do have this part tool kit and please make sure to check that tool kit that includes our top line messages, themes and visual content as we keep updating and adding new films and graphics every month that you are welcome to use. Please also feel free to use the hashtag Democracy is when sharing your democracy stories and tag US AID's handles if you'd like us to reshare those.

Sahar:

One of the things we were trying to do with this campaign is feature democracy heroes. We were focusing on using recipients from around the world who have taken responsibility and helped their communities to promote democracy efforts. We will be showing one, I think we already showed one film but we will be showing one of the films from the pull shortly, but first for those who don't have the background I'm going to go through this PowerPoint and give a quick overview of the campaign and it's goals.

Sahar:

So if we are ready to look through the PowerPoint, as I mentioned before, you would see US AID launched Democracy Is on January 2020, this is the agency's democracy focused communications campaign and it highlights the work that USAID and you are doing to advance democratic societies. With the importance USAID places on democratic governments can be seen in the programs we advance every day. The campaign is running until international day of democracy, which is on September 15 and that's when we would conclude the campaign.

Sahar:

If we're looking at the goals, the goals of the campaign is to reinforce USAID's commitment to strengthen democratic governance, to develop an integrated message framework with a clear cohesive message, to provide messaging tool kit and content tool kit to better tell the democracy story. One of the things that we've heard from our communicators is that it's very hard to tell the democracy story. Other sectors there's more tangible results. Democracy takes longer and one of the things we wanted to do and we've been talking about this in our training with our communicators in the field is help them tell the story of democracy based on the successes that they have.

Sahar:

Then the other goal was to produce content to humanize the impact of USAID's democracy work, and that's why we focused on storytelling and the videos that show the heroes from the field. As Jennifer mentioned before, we use the message triangle to help our communicators share the messaging, so we have the what, why and how and we use it here as well. What is our goal here, USAID is reinforcing its commitment to strengthen democratic governance and is investing in democracy work around the world to advance the free, peaceful and prosperous world. That's what we're trying to achieve.

Sahar:

Why? So the ongoing quest by people around the world for democracy and freedom guides and inspires our work at USAID. Citizen's response to governance is a critical factor in development and it is not possible for any country to rise to its full potential without it. Then how are we doing it, USAID has projects around the world that promote and I'm just going to quickly go through these. We have democracy in governance, projects around human rights, justice and rule of law, projects that focus on civic engagement and independent media, elections, inclusion and empowerment. Then the key deliverables that we were trying and are still trying to get out of this campaign is again the unified message framework where communicators can easily share those messages in a unified voice, a social media tool kit that includes all of the content talking points, social media content, visual content to promote each month.

Sahar:

If you look at the tool kit we have a scene that's highlighted every month and a story that we highlight every month. We have a folder with plenty of graphics that you are welcome to use and download with the different scenes and the different heroes. We have a new website that houses all the democracy contents, a series of films highlighting the democracy heroes, and a library of new content that includes graphics, photos, gifs, stories et cetera. So before we go back to Justin, I just wanted to intro really quickly the Nepal video that we're going to show. It's a short film, two and a half minutes, in Nepal US AID aims to ensure that women and marginalized communities have equal access to the post earthquake reconstruction resources, and our chain of command who is our hero in this film is a strong advocate of all Nepalese to be involved in the governance process. So over to you Justin or Soojin who will guide us to access the film.

Soojin Ku:

Absolutely, thank you Sahar. Again momentarily you will see your screen shift and we'll be taken to a new web browser with a video. Please click play and watch the video. When it's finished you may close your web browser and redirect to this e-connect page. Enjoy the video.

Justin Prudhomme:

Okay hopefully you've all managed to get through it or are just wrapping up. Another beautifully produced video, thank you for that presentation and for previewing that video Sahar. Now you heard mostly from us, and now we're going to hear from some of you, our partners in promoting democracy. First up is Christine Zano, Program Manager for IRI focused on the Latin American and the Caribbean region. Over to you Christine.

Christine Zaino:

Hi everyone, thanks so much for having me. As Justin said, my name is Christine Zaino, I'm a Program Manager in IRI's Latin America and Caribbean division. So today I'd like to share a little bit about how IRI has been supporting legislative continuity during the COVID-19 crisis. So in March and April of 2020 and ongoing of course, IRI has been able to quickly adapt our programming to support our partners and beneficiaries to continue their operations during all these restrictions that we're facing. So I wanted to share with you today three examples of how IRI has used its US AID funding and programming to support legislatures in Armenia, Bosnia, and Guatemala to continue working virtually.

Christine Zaino:

First in Armenia, we were working with the parliament committee on education and we recently in April helped them to host a zoom hearing which was their first experience with this on issues related to distance education during the state of emergency. IRI provided a lot of technical assistance to them to help set all of this up using virtual platforms and the "how to" of all of that. This was not only successful in the sense that they were able to continue working virtually, but by using an online platform for this hearing created a more inclusive and participatory process than the parliament was usually able to use. Not only were over 120 people able to attend the virtual hearing, but thousands more, about 17,000, were able to view the live stream. There was engagement not only by the members of parliament but also teachers, members of the media, and other citizens who were interested in these issues of distance learning and most notably there was an immediate government action taken. The ministry of education a few days later published new distance learning guidelines, incorporating feedback that had come to this hearing, so that was a great success in Armenia.

Christine Zaino:

In Bosnia, we have been working with IRI with the parliamentary assembly, with European integration and security caucus and this has been since 2018. We've been working with this multi party caucus on a range of issues which have included things like mitigating hate speech, providing cyber crimes, fighting terrorism, radicalization, and managing increased migration. Of course, like everyone else, had to adapt a bit their agenda in order to deal with the emerging issues around COVID-19. So in addition to these other areas that IRI has been able to help the caucus on over the years, we've most recently helped them work on amendments to allow the parliament in Bosnia to continue to operate virtually during COVID-19. This was our big success in this program that on April 28th, the proposed measures that came out of this caucus that IRI supported, was approved by a vote of parliament in A1 legislature to continue to function using virtual methods.

Christine Zaino:

Third, we come to our support in Guatemala which is the program that I work on. We've been supporting a number of various congressional committees on those included in migration committees, small and medium business committee, probity and transparency and human rights committees. We've been working with them to use zoom and other virtual communications platforms to continue working and to continue to hold their community sessions without meeting physically, and so we've been helping them with tools for remote work, digital communications with constituents, how to conduct digital transparency and accountability measures, how to adapt the legislative agenda to meet the most pressing needs of their constituents and all citizens during the COVID-19 crisis, and also how to adapt how they use their oversight role while working virtually.

Christine Zaino:

Another specific success I wanted to point out that the Guatemala congress program was involved in, was the legislative exchange that IRI hosted, bringing together several of our legislative partners from around the LAC region including Guatemala, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Panama and the Dominican Republic, to provide a space for them to share experiences on working remotely during COVID-19, best practices, and to discuss some of the law proposals that their different countries have been discussing to try to help mitigate and manage the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

Christine Zaino:

So very rapid fire overview of those three legislative programs that IRI has been supporting, and I also want to quickly highlight IRI's global podcast and we have a new series, Democracy First Responders, that's talking about how a number of countries, Cuba, Georgia, Lebanon, Nepal and Zimbabwe have all been highlighted. I think we have a new one that was just out today, I don't recall what country it was, and this is available on Sound Cloud, Apple Podcasts and Google Play, but it highlights how some of these countries are being affected during COVID and the threats to democracy we've been facing and how these different democratic actors and activists are fighting back and fighting for democracy in these unusual and particularly peerless times for democracy because of this global pandemic. So thank you all so much and if there are some questions I'll be happy to try to answer them as best I can or direct you to someone who knows a lot more about them unless it's Guatemala.

Justin Prudhomme:

Great, thank you. Just on the topic of questions, just because we're running a little bit behind, if people want to type in their questions we will be sure to distribute them later and hopefully we can get a follow up email to this conference. But thank you Christine, that's appreciated. Next up is Jerry Hoff, the director of government relations and communications at NDI. Take it away Jerry.

Jerry:

Thank you Justin, and thanks for this opportunity everyone. I just wanted to say with your support we've been able to really manage in the last two months doing a 180 and trying to communicate with all of our partners, so let's go to the first slide here. In Jordan, we have one of our premiere programs, which USAID is funding and it basically helps people from middle school through university and beyond graduate school to learn basic democratic principles about democracy and to engage with the government. So when COVID hit, we sponsored an online competition for students and asked if you were a decision maker, what would you recommend for responding to COVID? We had 21 entries that were received and in six weeks, the Ana Ushari program held 640 virtual sessions with 1800 university students, 66 training sessions for 300 teachers and 20 ministry of ed officials, and 11 sessions with 550 elementary and secondary school students. So we really were able to reach a very broad group of people trying to engage with the Jordanian government.

Jerry:

In Kosovo, we held 8 online training sessions focusing on women CFO's, we collected data on domestic violence, we launched e-petitions online, meetings with mayors and MP's, and we also are now on our 4th survey, 57 countries and the negative trends we are seeing and it won't surprise you as Tim pointed out, decreased transparency, increase in violence against women, widespread this information, limits on party activities and rising ethnic tension.

Jerry:

We were also asked to brief the house foreign affairs committee this month, 20 members of Congress, this was the first online briefing that they had held before they were able to do rule changes to bring themselves back in to the more normal business. I mention this just because it was really interesting to us, we had Madeline Albright, our President Derek Mitchell, and we joined with Dan Twining from IRI, this is the first virtual briefing that they held and this was the first topic with authoritarian opportunism and the challenges of COVID. To all of us it shows a high degree of interest. We also had a podcast with Karen Bass and Pat Merlot our election expert about the postponed elections, hoping they are not indefinitely postponed, but just more temporarily getting back on track.

Jerry:

You can see a round robin all the different countries we have working in LGBTI activists round tables in Colombia, when the counselors in Guinea, public opinion surveys in Serbia, in Georgia helping legislators communicate with the public on COVID. Malawi, developing a legislative response for the parliament, in Jordan, again legislative policy. In Myanmar, helping MP's gather the health and economic data of their constituents. We also struck quite a nerve with Beijing, we reached our 17th NDI report on the status democracy in Hong Kong, it was immediately denounced by Beijing and threats were issued against NDI. Of course we've been sanctioned along with IRI, NDI and others, Freedom House and the NED, we did a contrast in terms of the documenting on China's disinformation campaign around COVID and the elections in Taiwan, which had 250,000 views. And of course the new changes that are being announced even today will have major impacts on all of our work.

Jerry:

Finally, we had a big launch this year on women in politics and political leadership and COVID threw a curve ball but we were still able to reach out in March and April. We want to do this on the anniversary of the 25th Beijing Conference and of course with the women's right to vote amendment that passed on the anniversary this year. So an Albright video on women's leadership reached 3.4 million people and President Mitchell's video launched in the campaign had 2.7 million views. So with that I'll leave it open.

Justin Prudhomme:

Great, thank you Jerry. That was informative but also really impressive, the viewing stats are high. Again, any questions we will be sure to answer them, it will probably have to be in a follow up email but please do type them in. So rounding off our panel presentations is going to be Noah Wildeman. He is a senior advisor at management systems international. Go ahead Noah.

Noah Wilderman:

Hello, can everyone hear me?

Justin Prudhomme:

Yes we can.

Noah Wilderman:

Great, I'm going to go fast. Hi, thanks again for this opportunity. I'm Noah Wildeman, senior advisor, digital creative at MSI. There we go. So basically I think the most appropriate word to define our COVID response across our USA projects is pivot. The What is the pivot, the who is really our partners at different levels, at the local level, the regional level, national level including government ministries, et cetera. So to Tim's point he made earlier, how do we articulate this response in messaging, local partners I think understand this context, their local context, their messaging better than anyone. So I think continuing the support that we're giving in a lot of transitional stabilization post conflict environments that we work in like Colombia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Armenia, COVID-19 responses are really organic thing to integrate and to pivot towards.

Noah Wilderman:

So in Sri Lanka, this is a great example of a local organization that can do the work better than other organizations. For instance, the police were just not being effective at bringing the desired results with

spreading information. Often the police don't have the perfect relationship with communities, and so local organization Credo that we've already been supporting for a number of years, they went out in the community to create the awareness and were really effective at doing so.

Noah Wilderman:

Our local partner in Bangladesh, the Institute of Theater Arts Bita, is a non-governmental organization with a ton of experience specializing in cultural action, stimulating student mobility, and so another organization we've been supporting and they integrated their COVID-19 response into their communications and created animated videos that share tolerance messaging, raising awareness and other kind of COVID-19 critical information.

Noah Wilderman:

One of the places where COVID-19 integrates I think most organically is our work in Colombia, where we have multiple projects both MSI and Tetra Tech and we're working at all the levels, both in very isolated post conflict communities. At the national level there's a ton of things we're doing, so for instance we're doing telework training for 52 officials in Katatumbo. We are also helping set up key tools for home schooling to provide equipment for educational institutions. We're working in rural areas to support their smaller health institutions. I'm working on an interesting interactive graphic now that highlights the intersection between dealing with the impacts of mass Venezuelan migration and COVID-19 response, which in an already really resource constrained environments especially in those border regions is really serious.

Noah Wilderman:

We got our big kudos, the White House asked mission director of Colombia to share a few examples of successful COVID-19 response and 3 of 6 of them were Colombia transformed activities under our project. Another project where we're doing great support more at the mission international level in our Kenya and East Africa dock support program. I just did a training for 59 ministry of health and other officials so they could better go out there and use video to locally tell their own stories related to COVID-19. I really believe in building partner capacity to do that work and find it's really authentic and compelling. Kenya is doing a lot of great work, they're compiling resources also for the mission, and the COVID-19 kind of depository.

Noah Wilderman:

Another small thing I just want to point towards is this is an organization "Kuack" in Puerto Rico, one of those small conflict affected communities in Colombia that we're not currently supporting but is self-reliant enough that they've become this trusted institution in their community. They're going out there, they're handing out food, they're making videos and it's just really amazing to see daily activity.

Noah Wilderman:

Finally I just wanted to mention it's not really in the democracy and governance space but communicating important data, which obviously does relate to making programmatic decisions that affect what governments do, what they respond to, where they find the priority is. In Nigeria, we're visualizing cases in depth. Another Tetra Tech unit has an AI powered chat bot that's being used by small business association administration. It's called Axilium. So there's a lot going on and any questions you guys have, reach out. Sorry so fast.

Justin Prudhomme:

That's great, really interesting Noah, thank you and thanks to all of our partners. I'm sure there's a lot of examples you could also come up as to how you're promoting your work but I wanted to thank all the partners who did present. It's really interesting to see how you're doing it in these difficult times. I also want to thank the rest of our presenters from USAID, and with that I'm going to pass it to Soojin. I look forward to seeing you all here again tomorrow for the third and final session.