UNAPPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: A 12 POINT CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING EVALUATION REPORTS

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Presenter(s): Jerome Gallagher (PPL/LER)
All right. Well, I think we'll go ahead and get started. So hello, everyone, my name is Jerome Gallagher. I'm with DevTech Systems, Inc. Hello everyone in the room and to everyone online. I work on USAID/PPL Program Cycle Service Center and for about the past six years or so I've worked in various capacities supporting USAID on its monitoring and evaluation efforts. So I've read many, many USAID Evaluations. I've lived to tell the tale and this is really a presentation based on my experiences in reading evaluation reports and –what to – how to spot evaluation problems, pitfalls, maybe how to avoid them, and how to fix them. So let's just get right into it. So here's our typical USAID branding slide. Just to note, I want to thank USAID for sponsoring this presentation, but I should just add a disclaimer, which is that the author's views expressed are my own and don't necessarily represent USAID's. All of you evaluators who have worked on the USAID evaluation report should be familiar with that disclaimer.

So the agenda for the presentation, first I just want to talk a little bit about what is unappreciative inquiry. Next I want to say all of it about why I think we need unappreciative inquiry. Next I'm gonna introduce the checklist. Hopefully you all have a copy of the checklist in front of you. If you're online, hopefully you've downloaded a copy of that checklist. And then I want to demonstrate some of the checklist items with some examples from USAID evaluations, real USAID evaluations, but I have omitted or changed some small details to protect the guilty. Finally, we'll end with some questions and answers – I hope we'll have enough time 'cause we only have this room until 9:45, but I'll try to get through the presentation quick so we can have time for that.

So first, what is unappreciative inquiry? Well, first of all it's just kind of a silly phrase that I use to refer to a critical or skeptical review and evaluation, particularly focusing on the credibility of the evaluations, findings, conclusions and recommendations. To me it's really about being a tough critic, or a tough but fair critic. And if there's a philosophical role model for unappreciative inquiry, it's Bertrand Russell. The great philosopher said that it's undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatsoever for supposing it's true. So why do I think we need unappreciative inquiry? Why do I want to talk about this? Well really, there's two reasons. The first reason is we evaluators, we love to talk about evaluation methods and approaches. So there's for instance goal-free evaluation. There is realist evaluation. There's developmental evaluation. Empowerment evaluation is a
thing, outcome mapping, contribution, Theory based – make it stop.

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So why do I want to talk about unappreciative inquiry? Because we live in a world that mostly consists of less than ideal variance of these methods and approaches. Our evaluations rarely live up to these ideals. Our evaluations do have often credibility problems. So the second reason is that again we evaluators love to talk about utilization, right? Every evaluator is familiar with utilization, focused evaluation, the main book on utilization evaluations.

There's also the book that summarizes the book. There's the primer, there's checklists, there's all kinds of other things about utilization focused evaluation. I think the biggest fear of an evaluator is that their evaluation is just gonna sit on a shelf and not get used. So why do I want to talk about unappreciative inquiry? Because prior to considering an evaluation worthy of use, commissioners of evaluations and reviewers of evaluations have a responsibility, I would say a moral or ethical responsibility to ensure that evaluation findings and conclusions are credible and well supported with logic and evidence. Sometimes an evaluation should be sitting on a shelf or maybe even buried under two feet of snow, or at least maybe fixed so it can be used properly.

So at this point, you're probably saying, "Jerome, we get it. We care about credibility. You're preaching to the choir. We care about credibility. We know all this stuff. But why do we need another checklist?" Well, for me because checklists are cool, right? There's *New York Times* best sellers about checklists, there's this great data visualization checklist everyone should check out, Western Michigan University has a whole series of checklists and evaluations. They're just cool things, right?

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So why not have a checklist? But also for me, I've found that available guidance on reviewing evaluation reports doesn't quite speak to me or my needs in reviewing evaluations. I find they tend to be a little bit too broad. They cover everything from checking the credentials of the evaluator to formatting the evaluation report, so too broad in scope. Or they're too general. They say things like make sure the evaluation findings are valid. Not particularly helpful. Or much of the guidance out there on reviewing evaluations tends to focus on specific methods, qualitative methods
or survey methods. But just in general, they didn't really speak to me and my experiences, the pitfalls that I tend to see in evaluation reports that I review here at USAID. So hence I created the evaluation, or the unappreciative inquiry checklist that you see before you. It has some downsides. One is that against the rules of checklists is not particularly objective. Many of the items overlap. They're not mutually exclusive as checklists should be. It's certainly not a complete list of all the things you should check for in evaluation report, even just on the narrow issue of evaluation credibility. But I do think it has a couple of advantages.

It's short. There's only 5 rules and 12 items to check for. It's really focused on credibility, not other things about the evaluation report. It's not specific to any particular method and it's really not a good example of a checklist at all, but I do hope it prompts critical thinking about potential evaluation problems, potential evaluation pitfalls, rather than just checking the box about an evaluation report. So I want to get into the checklist itself and some of the items. But first, just a brief interlude to note that USAID does have a compliance checklist for USAID evaluation reports. You can find it on USAID Learning Lab in the USAID Evaluation Toolkit. So please check that out. If you're writing an evaluation or reviewing an evaluation you want to make sure it's compliant with USAID policy. You can go there and find the compliance checklist, as well as a review template.

Back to the unappreciative inquiry checklist. So let's take a little bit closer look at the checklist and some of the items in the checklist. So first I just want to talk about some of the rules, my rules for reviewing a draft evaluation report. Rule number two, know yourself and your limitations. Before you pick up that evaluation report to read it, get in touch with your inner Socrates. Know what you don't know, especially if you know that you don't know a particular method that's being employed in the evaluation report or you're not familiar of the particular technical subjects matter in that evaluation report, get some help. My area of expertise certainly doesn't extend too far beyond light snark, so I'm not ashamed to admit that I seek a lot of help in reviewing evaluation reports, especially when they get into very technical subject matters. Rule number four, don't get caught in what I call the utilization trap. We evaluators are not always the best writers, especially when there's a really tight deadline that USAID likes to give for our evaluation reports. So it's really easy to pick up an evaluation report and sort of read that executive summary and say
this could really be written better, this could be more accessible, the graphics could be better, so it really gets used. Don't focus on utilization first. Don’t think about accessibility of the report first. ‘Cause if you do, you’ll never get to the issues above credibility of the findings. So look at the credibility of the findings first, then you can get into the issues of utilization and making it more accessible and clear.

And then finally, I just want to talk about rule number five, which is try to demolish the argument, not discredit the witness, which is basically look at the main conclusions of the evaluation report. Try not to nitpick small errors or question the motivations of the evaluators. Critique the argument, not the evaluators. Be a critic, not a hater. And I’ll just say that for me this is a tough one sometimes to follow. I can get really mad and upset about evaluation reports. But that’s why it’s a rule, right? Good people don’t need rules. For the rest of us, we need rules to follow. All right, so let’s get down to some of the things to check for in an evaluation report. I’m not gonna go through all of them. Let me start with number two – the question method mismatch.

So evaluations tend to have multiple questions that we are seeking to answer and they often kind of have multiple methods. The evaluation should show in the evaluation report which methods are being used to answer which questions and hopefully that match makes sense. So look at that match and see if it makes sense or not. Let me give you an example. So here’s a USAID evaluation that was conducted on an enterprise competitiveness project. The project was trying to increase competitiveness in targeted industries through training technical systems. One of the evaluation questions was, which of the project activities most advance the project’s purpose of growing, expanding competitiveness, efficiency of key strategic industries, leading to increased sales and investment. So that’s the evaluation question.

And if you read that question, you can start to think about what is sort of the methods – what’s the kind of data that might be needed to answer that question. A sales or investment – there’s gonna be some quantitative data, probably firm-specific data or maybe a sample of firms, competitiveness that might be even looking at internationally, at that country and how it’s competing internationally in those strategic industries. So you can start to get an understanding of what kind of methods and data collection you might need for this. When I look at the methods for this evaluation,
though, the team utilized a combination of data collection methods. A combination’s always good. Always a desk review. In depth interviews – of course we evaluators love our interviews semi-structured. Not fully structured or unstructured, we love the semi-structured ones. I love myself some interviews. And then key focus or focus group discussions.

But if you look at these methods compared to the question, I think you can see that there might be a bit of a mismatch to the methods employed and what is implied by the evaluation question. That doesn’t necessarily mean that there’s gonna be a problem in the credibility of the conclusions, but I think this hints that there might be a problem in how this question is gonna get answered. Can we hold questions till the end? Thanks.

So I’ll go to item number three. The nonetheless statement and the methodological limitations graveyard. One of the great things about USAID evaluation policy is that it requires evaluators to not only describe their methods, but also the limitations of their methods. And many of evaluators have really been following this policy and we’re seeing an increase in compliance on that. But we also tend to see is the use of the nonetheless statement, which is we have all these limitations.

Nonetheless, it’s all good – without explaining why – why these limitations don’t matter too much. Or they mention limitations, they’re very thorough in describing the limitations, but then they just leave them in that limitations section and then don’t address those limitations when they get to their findings and conclusions. Let me give you an example of the nonetheless statement. This is an example evaluation of a USAID civic engagement support project.

They were collecting baseline data for 43 participating communities and then also 15 control communities. Although they noted that they were randomly assigned, they said nonetheless they’re comparable. Why? Don’t really say. It’s like a get out of jail free card for evaluators. We need to have an understanding of why these limitations don’t matter if you’re gonna use the nonetheless statement.

Another example, here’s an evaluation of the USAID integrated health, nutrition, water and sanitation project (WASH). I was
integrating these to deliver services in 16 districts was the project. The evaluation to evaluate this project, used a variety of methods but they looked at six districts and they note some limitations. There were purposive of selection evaluation sites, lack of random selection of stakeholders, limited to generalized ability of the findings. So 16 districts, they only looked at 6, they note that they couldn’t generalize the findings. Great, so nice of them to actually describe that. When we get to the conclusion, though, they say in conclusion, efforts to integrate nutrition, health and WASH activities are achieving the intended result of improving access and quality of services. Does it say only in the six districts that we looked at? No it does not. They just left the limitations to die in the methodological limitations graveyard, so look out for that when you’re reading your evaluation reports. Let’s go to page two of the checklist. We’ll talk about item number five, tables and charts. So tables and charts are not a problem. We love seeing tables and charts in our evaluation reports. They’re actually a great thing to look at, to see where there might be potential problems in the credibility findings ‘cause they really lay out, laid bare the numbers that are supporting the findings and conclusions. So we want to make sure they’re well sourced, the numbers aren’t confusing, they’re just a good place to look to see if there might be credibility problems. I’ll give you an example.

This is an evaluation of USAID education governance program. I am obsessed with this evaluation. Maybe you’ll see why. So the governance projects, the evaluation question was do the governance interventions improve student achievement? Don’t typically think of education governance projects improving student achievement right away, but okay. That’s your question. Methods – oh boy. Lots of Methods, mixed methods. You can look further down the checklist, but what I have to say about mixed methods, they use key informant interviews, focus groups, pupil reading assessments, robust data analysis techniques – I love when the data analysis techniques are robust. Triangulation – that’s a wonderful magic word that solves all methodological problems. They have contribution analysis, which my colleague, Tania, likes to call decaffeinated Impact Evaluation. So lots of methods.

Then they had a conclusion based on their pupil reading assessments. Projects exceeded its target by two percentage points for improving student achievement in the local language compared to the 2010 baseline results. I think the evaluation was like 2013-2014. So great, a strong, bold conclusion. We like those kinds of
conclusions. Let’s look at the table that supports these conclusions. And just look at the first line. So they have an indicator, pupils who demonstrate progress toward achieving, I won’t say which country. It’s just the local language literacy. They had a nice baseline value, 46 percent literacy. They set a target of two percentage points higher and then their inline results from this particular survey were 50 percent. So two percentage point above their target. Any problem with this table? Look at that sample size. Twenty-nine. Right? Is this crazy? Yeah, so if you don’t think this is crazy, you’ve got some homework to do. That’s just way too low of a sample. So check out those tables and charts. Look at the ends. Understand what is the data that’s supporting those findings and conclusions. Let’s go to empty words and equivocation. Item number six, words matter. Unfortunately there are a lot of important words and evaluations like efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, quality, success. Big, important key words. If you see them, zone in on them because too often they’re either undefined, they’re empty or they change in meaning over the course of the evaluation, which is equivocation.

Let’s look at an example. Here’s a USAID municipal heating reform project evaluation, which is something we tend to do in our Eurasian missions, work on municipal heating. So this purpose was to assess, oh boy, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability of this project’s activities. Already you should be keyed up.

These are important big words. Let’s make sure we understand how this evaluation is using them. So the activities included demonstration projects and municipal energy plans. I want to focus particularly on this word efficiency. Because in their methodological section they defined it for us, which was rather nice for them to do and they defined efficiency as a measure of how economically resources or inputs are converted into results.

So we have a general definition here that they’re saying efficiency is results per input. Let’s see how they operationalize it, but okay. We have a general idea of what they mean by efficiency. So then we look at their findings or their conclusions for these municipal energy plan part of the project. The conclusion was in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, these component activities were generally of good quality. Not really sure what that means, so let’s
then go to the findings that supported that conclusion and these are the only findings they had on efficiency, which is that according to the project reports 21 municipalities had energy plans, which surpassed the target of 20 for the year. So here, efficiency equals meeting the annual outcome targets, not exactly how they defined it in their methodological section of their reports. Similarly for the demonstration projects, part of this program, the conclusion was that the activities were efficient and effective when they involved homeowner associations in implementations and contributions to fundings. Okay, let’s look at the findings that support that conclusion. Again, these are the only findings they had on efficiency to support these conclusions, which is that most of the demonstration projects were implemented in a timely manner. So here efficiency equals timeliness. This is just straight up equivocation, they’re just changing how they’re defining these terms throughout the evaluation report. So look at these key words, look at how they’re being used and defined throughout the evaluation. Let’s go then to checklist item number eight, invisible goal posts, judgments without criteria. This one drives me crazy. If you are gonna make normative judgments in an evaluation report, if the evaluators are going to make normative judgments – that is they’re gonna make a judgment, this is good quality. This is a success. This was effective. This was efficient. They’re not just measuring something, but they’re actually making a judgment, then you need to have criteria. You need to have a benchmark or a standard as the basis for that judgment. Too often we see judgments, but without any description of what the criteria was for that judgment. The goal posts are invisible. Here if we just go back to that last example of municipal heating reform projects, they didn’t just say try to describe how efficient or how effective the projects were. They said the component activities were efficient, were effective. Even in the findings, a timely manner – what was the standard of efficiency? What was the timely manner? Is it just no delays means it’s a timely manner? A delay of a month is still okay. You can still call something to be done in a timely manner. There’s no standards here for this judgment or at least no standards that are communicated in the evaluation report about the judgments that are being made. So if you see judgments made, look for what criteria was being used. If you don’t see that criteria, if you don’t see standards of benchmarks, go back to your evaluator and make sure they provide it. The auditor evaluationers among us should be particularly keen on this point. And then last, just do one more example, and this one really covers both the invisible goal posts and the last point I want to talk about, which is
the overly conclusive conclusion. This is probably the one that is I think the most important because many of the readers of your evaluation will only read the conclusions in the executive summary. They’re not gonna look at the annexes. If you’re the evaluation reviewer or the evaluation manager, you’re the only person who’s gonna read those annexes. But too often what happens is the findings, they’re messy, they’re nuanced, there’s limitations. But in the conclusion, it’s bold, it’s unambiguous, they strip away all the nuance. And what you get is a conclusion that’s unwarranted. It’s overly conclusive we want to avoid that. So just as an example, here’s a USAID local governance project – a three-year project. They worked with 21 municipalities on decentralization. The evaluation of this activity, document review, key informant interviews, 10 of the 21 municipalities they visited over a two-week period. Conclusion – until the project, the municipal assemblies and their communities fulfilled just the minimum statutory requirements, but with this empowering municipal assemblies initiative, the evaluation team that found that 21-pilot municipalities have fully functioning municipal assemblies. Fully functioning – nowhere in the report do they describe what the criteria is for deciding what a fully functional municipality is or not. And 21-pilot – they say this about all 21-pilot municipalities. They only looked at ten. They only visited 10 yet they’re saying it about the whole group of 21. It’s an overly conclusive conclusion. And let me tell you it is tempting for an evaluator to provide bold unambiguous conclusions. I’ve certainly fallen prey to it. It’s just the incentives are there for evaluators to provide overly conclusive conclusions. As reviewers, we need to watch out for it and make sure we avoid it.

So that’s the unappreciative inquiry checklist. I’ll stop there. I also have an unappreciative inquiry bibliography. You can download it from the webinar. It was sent out with the invitation or you can certainly ask for a copy from me. Just some of the sources that inspired me on unappreciative inquiry, so check that out. If you would like more copies of the unappreciative inquiry checklist, you can certainly email me at unappreciativeinquiry@gmail.com or if you just want to share your stories of reviewing evaluation reports of trying to apply the unappreciative checklist I would certainly love to hear those. So thank you for coming both online and in the room and thanks to USAID for hosting me today and I think with that we can open it up for any questions.
Anastasia: Thank you. Anastasia de Santos with E3. A question about the enterprise competitiveness project. Which country was it in? Or maybe I can guess is why I’m asking.

Jerome: So the question was where the enterprise competitiveness project is – so I don’t want to dig into the examples and call out specific evaluations. I could have drawn from a whole – there were a lot of evaluations I could have drawn to illustrate these points, so I think just trying to illustrate the point rather than call out to specific evaluations. That’s why I’ve omitted some of the details about where these evaluations took place.

Anastasia: I guess my question’s motivated by an observation that it’s sort of a pattern that I’ve seen not just in one country as you’re saying, and it’s interesting that the narrative that tends to show up in an evaluation of the claims, the implementer is going around making these kinds of claims about effectiveness, efficiency and impact when it’s not necessarily supported as well. Certainly we can apply a lot of your points outside of reading evaluation reports.

Jerome: Yes. Thanks for that. We want to be evidence-based and logic-based and logic-supported, not just in our evaluations but throughout how we communicate the effectiveness of our programs.

Tony: Hi, this is Tony Pryor. While I’m tempted to comment on your cat because it looks really grumpy, it must have seen a really bad evaluation. Let me go to the last point, the overly conclusive conclusion, and as you say it’s a temptation. But I think the big issue is it’s a temptation for the funder of the evaluation, it’s a temptation for the AID staff and not just for the person who’s reading it, but for their boss and their boss’s boss because they want to know what to do. And saying I’m sorry but it’s subtle and there’s a lot of variation and it’s very complicated is not actually very satisfying for a Mission Director. So one of the questions is, how do we draw sort of one-syllable, two-syllable conclusions from something that allows me to make a decision on an action and yet maintain subtlety?

Jerome: That’s a good question. I think we as commissioners of evaluations do need to communicate with our evaluators about that we want evidence and that we want our findings to be well supported, and if they can’t come to a conclusion, if they don’t have data or
evidence to support a conclusion they shouldn’t be making it. If they can’t answer a question because the question that we asked is unanswerable ‘cause we asked something that was way too big and we didn’t provide enough LOE to actually answer that question, I think we need to be clear with our evaluators that that’s okay that they need to be able to communicate with us that this is a problem or that there is difficulty in trying to answer these questions.

Tania: So this is Tania from PPL/LER, and my question is actually very closely related to Tony’s. I think he expressed it may be better than I could have. I think a lot of the things to be unappreciative about are related to the politics of commissioning and evaluation, whether you want to hear good results, whether the evaluator wants to give you something really positive and shiny, whether our reporting requirements don’t include enough sections on how, or requirements that the limitations would be addressed not just in the limitations question. So I don’t know if this is a question for you, Jerome, or a question for pretty much everybody else in this room and listening on the webinar. To what extent – what can we do here in LER to make these evaluations a little bit less unappreciated? Better guidance on what the report should look like? Is it better guidance on what is reasonable to commission within an evaluation? Some of these questions were totally crazy. The evaluator was doing a valiant attempt to answer them, but really they shouldn’t have been asked in that way.

Jerome: Let me just partly answer that by saying that really for this I wanted to just focus on you have an evaluation report. What are the things to look for? I think there are a lot of reasons, a lot of things that I can speculate about, some maybe with some evidence, maybe some that are far more speculative about why we tend to get the kinds of evaluations that we get at USAID. And I think there’s a lot that we could probably say about the quality of our RFP’s, of our statements of work for evaluations and ways to do that better. I have some other webinars that talk a little bit better about writing better evaluation questions. I think that’s one of the problems. So it’s difficult as I think there’s a lot of reasons for why we have these problems. But certainly, they’re not problems that are just because the evaluator’s not trying to do a good job or is trying to get away with something. I think there are certainly a lot of incentives and things that we could do better in getting better evaluations, including communicating our standards with evaluators, but also just producing better Statements of Work and
better RFP’s that really focus on questions that can be answered with evidence. And I think there are some questions online.

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**Mikell:** Hello, can you hear me? So our first question is from Awoke. Who normally makes the final decision on the quality and usability of the evaluation – the one who manages the evaluation or the one whose project activity is evaluated? Or both? I raise this question because I feel that sometimes there may be conflict of interest between these two parties. There’s a second half. Do you want –

**Jerome:** Let’s start with that one first. So for those who are not as familiar with USAID evaluation practices, here at USAID we tend to have projects are run out of technical offices we call them and evaluations are managed – commissioned or managed out of our what we call the USAID Program Offices. And so the COR of the evaluation, the sort of manager of that evaluation is usually a USAID staff member, at least according to our policy out of our program offices to provide some – a little bit of independence from the manager of the project that’s being evaluated. And it’s really that individual who has the responsibility to make sure that they’re getting a good quality evaluation. Certainly that individual should ask for help, get lots of reviewers to put eyes on it, but in the end it’s that evaluation manager in the Program Office who is ultimately responsible, who is the person who needs to go and read through those annexes to make sure that they’re getting a good quality evaluation. And another question online?

**Mikell:** Yes, and this one’s from Mercedes Stickler. All methods have limitations and most if not all evaluation findings are necessarily limited to the specific context of the project or data collected, whichever is smaller. Given the size and scale of many USAID projects that are evaluated, are there any rules of thumb for the scale or methods of the evaluation that would lead us to believe the results are more generally externally valid.

**Jerome:** Wow, that’s a good question. I don’t know if there are rules of thumb for when they’re externally valid. I think it also depends – it probably depends a lot on the type of project. I would certainly encourage folks to look at other evidence that’s already out there, other evaluations that have been conducted, particularly impact evaluations where the evaluators perhaps thought about the external validity, particularly if you’ve had – there are certain
types of projects that have been tested in lots of different settings, then that can certainly help answer that. But I think there’s a really good book on external availability by Cartwright – Nancy Cartwright I think on evidence-based policy I think is the name of it, which talks a lot about thinking through external validity and generalized ability, and that you really – it’s both thinking through the evidence that you have and making an argument for how that evidence fits into a broader context, understanding the context that you want to apply the findings to and looking both to the evidence and the context, the wider context you are hoping to generalize to. I don’t know if that quite answers it, but it’s a difficult issue. Certainly in the evaluation report I think stick to what was found in the particular place that you found it. And we have about one more minute before we have to vacate the room, so let’s have one more question.

**Male 1:** [Inaudible comment]

Another thing is how many resources and what types of funding and type is allocated to the evaluation team. I like to read an evaluation report when these things are made explicit, like in the executive summary even. The evaluation team had X amount of weeks in the field and their total budget was Y. You can very seldomly see this, and as a reader it’s very hard to have a context of what you’re reading, right?

‘Cause even if the questions are answerable, if they weren’t given enough time and money to answer it – sorry, I guess I wasn’t holding it close enough. It’s hard to gauge whether their task was able to be accomplished. So one, can we mandate that evaluators write this and number two, more of an observation for your checklist, it’d be good if the number one person that’s in charge of reviewing the evaluation reports like the COR, the manager of the evaluation starts with the scope, right? That should be always the first place to look for it ‘cause this was the blueprint for the evaluation. This is the springing off board. That’s a recommendation for the checklist and a broader question of can we highlight the resources and reports better.

**Jerome:**

So I think point number one in the rules for reading the report is know what you asked for. A lot of things happen between the time you put out that Statement of Work or you received the evaluation design from the evaluator, and then all the data collection goes on and then you finally get the report. So yeah, definitely go back
before you read that evaluation report and look at the Statement of Work, what was it that you originally asked for? What were you hoping this evaluation to answer? So certainly I totally agree. Go back with refreshing your memory on what you asked for. Can we mandate – that’s an interesting question. I think that’s a broader policy question for USAID about what we can mandate. I do think it’s a good thing, though, for folks to remember that for evaluations, particularly evaluations at USAID, it’s not just the mission or the office that’s commissioning the evaluation who is the reader of this. USAID evaluations particular are public.

They are put on our development experience clearing house, so we should always remember that there is this external audience for evaluations, or should be, and so they should be written for those who might be coming fresh to these documents. And so there has to be enough information in this document for a reader to both understand what it is that’s being evaluated, how it was evaluated, what the conclusions are, what are the findings that support the conclusions. I get frustrated sometimes because I see findings that I’m guessing are probably okay, but I just don’t know because they didn’t put enough information in the report so that I can sort of externally feel comfortable with those evaluation findings. How much we can mandate about putting in the evaluation report as opposed to just saying look, this is good practice for evaluators who adequately describe what they’re evaluating, how they evaluated it, how much resources they had, how long they were in country, it’s a hard thing to mandate every specific thing, but it’s certainly best practice. So I think we need to end there, so thank you everybody for coming. Thank you to everyone online and enjoy the unappreciative inquiry checklists. Thanks.

[Applause]

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