PRACTICAL
INNOVATIVE
On-the-Job
Technical Support

PIVOT

Practical, InnoVative, On-the-Job Technical Support (PIVOT) is a demand-driven, holistic, and immersive learning-by-doing approach to mobilizing Agency-wide strategies and priority frameworks. Through targeted Mission support, PIVOT seeks to strengthen and reinforce the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of USAID staff, renovating organizational culture at the Mission-level to achieve greater development impact. Notably, PIVOT is designed to build key technical skills while enhancing collaboration, learning, and adapting (CLA), and leadership development in a brave, equitable, and engaging environment that encourages experimentation, reflection, and feedback.

Critical to the PIVOT approach is the utilization of action learning and behavioral science techniques. **ACTION LEARNING**, in contrast to traditional learning, is a multi-directional and dynamic approach to improve knowledge and skills as well as to influence long-term behaviors. It is designed to create an environment where learners, participants, and instructors alike, share knowledge and skills, question course materials, and reflect on their individual and collective experiences to understand "what we know." Action learning is proven to increase the likelihood of real-world application and enhance the potential of renovating an organization's culture over time by creating a space where peers can collaborate on and engage in real life challenges and opportunities.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE is the study of human behavior through observation and experimentation. This field helps us understand how people are motivated—and how learning processes can be optimized to promote individual, team, and organizational change. Behavioral learning research has produced the 70:20:10 framework to describe where and how people learn best. This states that 70 percent of learning occurs from on-the-job experiences, 20 percent from peer interaction, and 10 percent through traditional learning. This framework reinforces the value of action learning, which offers a space for peers to

collaboratively engage with real life challenges and opportunities.

Taken together, these techniques as employed through the PIVOT approach contribute to change and cumulative impact at three distinct, but intertwined levels: (1) enhancing individual skills and learned behaviors, (2) empowering high-trust teams, and (3) renovating Mission cultures.[1] Importantly, **MISSION OR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE** informs the way people "perceive, think, and feel." It is the people within each Mission who—consciously or unconsciously—develop, realize, and sustain that culture. Thus, changing Mission culture, or individual and team behavior, is not easy. Nor is it a quick process. Creating an enabling environment for Mission culture renovation requires thoughtful and systematic engagement with structures, processes, and their interplay at the macro, meso, and micro levels. Collaboration from members at all levels of the organization is key to successful culture renovation. Furthermore, thought leaders agree that collaboration must start at the very beginning of any change.

---

1. Cultural renovation is a holistic approach to assessing and strengthening, removing, and/or improving behaviors, knowledge, skills, and processes within a given environment to encourage and bring about healthy cultural change. It seeks to build upon what works while remaining vulnerable and open to change what does not. In addition, cultural renovation embraces continuous care and maintenance to ensure one's culture evolves and adapts in response to the dynamic context in which it exists. This definition is based on Kevin Oakes' Culture Renovation theory and approach to renovating the workplace culture.
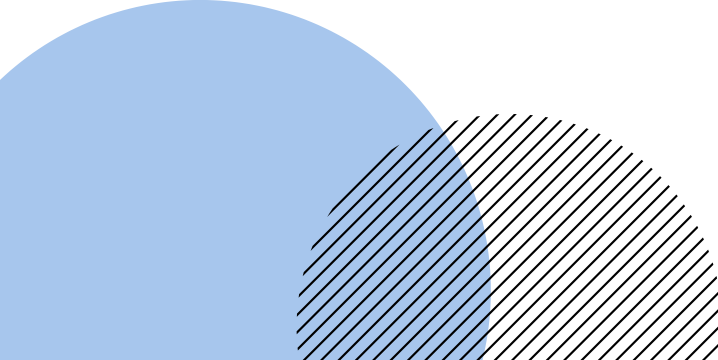
HOW HAS PIVOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO DATE?

To date, the PIVOT approach has been leveraged to support the launch of two of USAID's Agency-wide strategies: the Private-Sector Engagement (PSE) Strategy and the Climate Strategy 2022 – 2030.

PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT, PIVOTS 1.0 AND 2.0

Responding to the call for cultural and operational transformation to expand PSE Agency-wide as a pathway to self-reliance, USAID's Africa Bureau Division for Economic Growth, Environment, and Agriculture (EGEA) launched a PIVOT Cohort program in March 2019—PIVOT 1.0—to build internal capacities and support PSE readiness in six Africa Missions. Grounded in best practices and research evidence from PSE capacity building, staff development, and organizational change literature, the PIVOT approach provided an innovative alternative to the Agency's existing capacity building efforts to help staff shift from resource management to resource mobilization and address identified field staff needs for PSE. Following the success of this inaugural cohort, PIVOT launched a second cohort in 2020—PIVOT 2.0—with Ethiopia and Tanzania as participating Missions.

As a result of PIVOT 1.0 and 2.0, USAID saw statistically significant gains in participants' knowledge and skills related to PSE and CLA, among others. USAID also experienced the emergence of high-trust teams, where new relationships formed across Missions to enhance support, motivation, innovation, and accountability for PSE. Notably, PIVOT 1.0 and 2.0 Missions reported increased organizational readiness for PSE, including increased engagement with external and internal private sector stakeholders.
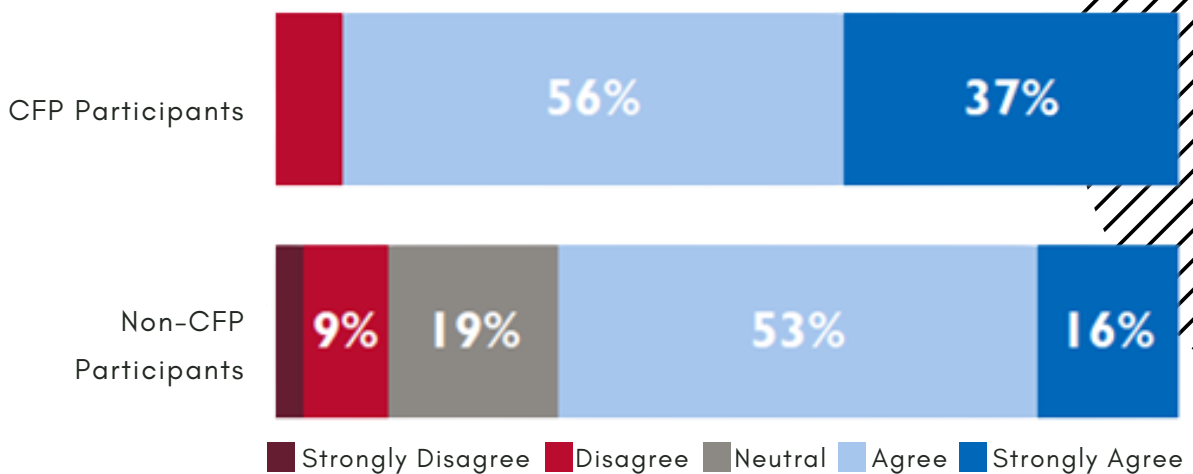
CLIMATE STRATEGY 2022 – 2030, CLIMATE AND FINANCE PRACTICUM

Leveraging the success and lessons learned garnered through PIVOT 1.0 and 2.0, in 2022, USAID's Africa Bureau deployed a third cohort—the Climate and Finance Practicum (CFP)—across six Africa Missions. CFP was designed to mobilize Mission resources to support climate action. Specifically, CFP sought to strengthen participants' knowledge and skills related to climate, climate equity, and the application of a climate lens across Mission programming; expand participants' familiarity with how to pursue and mobilize finance for equitable climate action; increase participants' understanding and utilization of USAID's CLA framework to improve programming; and build and refine leadership skills to equip USAID staff to be catalysts for change and to establish strong teams within their respective Missions.

Following the CFP, individuals demonstrated an increased awareness and understanding of climate change, the application of a climate lens, how to finance climate action, internal and external collaboration, and flexibility throughout the program cycle, among others. For example, 93 percent of participants—including team leaders, team members, supervisors, and Front Office champions—agreed that the CFP experience increased their ability to explore and implement systematic approaches to addressing climate change, which is essential for the successful implementation of USAID's Climate Strategy.

"I have the ability to explore and implement systematic approaches to addressing climate change."

CFP Participants: 56% Agree, 37% Strongly Agree

Non-CFP Participants: 9% Disagree, 19% Neutral, 53% Agree, 16% Strongly Agree

Legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

In addition to building technical knowledge and skills, the majority of CFP participants expressed that the CFP improved leadership skills, indicating, for example, that they frequently integrate active listening to effectively facilitate meetings. Taken together, individuals who participated in the CFP were as—if not more—confident in their role and ability to create agency within their office to promote climate action as a sample of the Agency's non-participating climate integration leads (CILs). This finding is significant considering that CILs are among the Agency's staff with the most relevant knowledge and skills for climate action and have a clear role in operationalizing the Climate Strategy. **Ultimately, the improvements garnered as a result of the CFP have contributed to increasing individual agency and expanding and diversifying the Agency's pool of leaders and champions for equitable climate action.**

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED THUS FAR?

While the implementation of the PIVOT approach varied between cohorts due in part to the technical focus of the respective whole-of-Agency strategies, dedicated resources, and external circumstances, i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic; a number of overarching lessons learned have emerged.

PIVOT'S HOLISTIC, WHOLE-OF-HUMAN APPROACH TO ACTION LEARNING MEASURABLY BUILDS CAPACITY, CONFIDENCE, AND MOTIVATION.

Action learning is proven to cultivate a growth mindset for continuous learning, facilitate meaningful behavior change, and empower individuals as leaders for renovation. Across

both PIVOT 1.0 and 2.0, participating Missions showed statistically significant gains in knowledge and skills related to PSE, CLA, and PSE/Journey to Self-Reliance policy implementation. In addition, participants reported improved capacities and increased usage of PIVOT leadership skills. While sufficient time has not passed to determine the full impacts of CFP, participants demonstrated an increased awareness and understanding of climate change, the application of a climate lens, familiarity with how to finance climate action, internal and external collaboration, and flexibility throughout the program cycle, among others.

Furthermore, the majority of CFP participants expressed improved leadership skills. In addition to active listening, as noted above, participants also reported increased collaboration with a diverse group of individuals and recognition of the influence of power dynamics at play. By acquiring and applying knowledge and skills such as mindfulness, self-awareness, power dynamics, active listening, and apologizing, CFP successfully encouraged participants

to bring their whole self to work, while motivating them to make room for others to do the same.

LEVERAGING A DIVERSE POOL OF MISSION STAFF, PIVOT FOSTERS THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-TRUST, HIGH-POWERED TEAMS TO CHAMPION ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE.

Foundational to the PIVOT approach is the recognition that diverse leadership, knowledge, and skills are essential to achieve the Agency's goals. Across all three cohorts, Missions were encouraged to formulate their teams by drawing on staff with distinct functions and responsibilities, including from technical and supporting offices, different hiring mechanisms, and varying levels of sectoral expertise.

Participants not only perceived this approach to be a strength of PIVOT, but it contributed to building strong teams and enhancing collaboration across Missions. According to results garnered from social network analyses during PIVOT 2.0 and CFP, cohorts

"PIVOT is different in a very significant way: It develops skill sets that USAID staff usually don't get time to work on such as leadership skills, effective feedback, how to work with different personalities in the Mission... These issues can keep us from doing any kind of work well. We are applying these new skills to engaging with the private sector and implementing the PSE policy."

PIVOT 1.0 Participant

contributed to building a network of tightly-knit individuals. Furthermore, individuals within this network were accessible to one another despite their varying roles, hiring mechanisms, and levels of seniority—including Agency leadership and Missions' Front Office staff. While PIVOT 1.0 did not include a social network analysis as part of its iterative learning approach, participants noted that the structured opportunities for peer learning and collaboration helped build cross-office relationships within Missions and across Missions, which participants reported resulted in enhanced support, motivation, innovation, and accountability for PSE efforts.

"Just being more self-aware of working styles and colleagues and how you can be more effective as a team complementing each other. It is a soft skill I learned from PIVOT and continue to use every day."

PIVOT 2.0 Participant

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF MISSION LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED TO EFFECTIVELY AND EQUITABLY MOBILIZE RESOURCES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE.

Evidence collected across all of the three PIVOT cohorts to date demonstrates that support from the Front Office as well as direct supervisors is critical to foster the enabling environment for participants to engage in a PIVOT program and apply it to their day-to-day work. Building consistent communication and feedback loops with leadership ensured that participants' perspectives and priorities were taken into consideration, that leadership was informed about activities, and that PIVOT priorities aligned with Mission priorities. This is turn authorized support for organizational change.

"The emphasis on Front Office engagement from the beginning, having a Front Office champion made a huge difference, having those check-ins with the Mission Director was really critical."

CFP Participant

THE PIVOT APPROACH SETS CULTURAL CHANGE IN MOTION TO IMPLEMENT WHOLE-OF-AGENCY STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS.

As compared to traditional individual-based training models, PIVOT's immersive learning-by-doing cohort approach better prepares participants to implement new concepts and techniques into their work. Grounded in evidence, action learning further increases the likelihood of real-world application and enhances the potential of renovating an organization's culture or behavior over time. Following PIVOT 1.0 and 2.0, participating Missions experienced significant increases in their Mission's organizational readiness for PSE. Specifically, learning-by-doing focal

activities like PIVOT's Change Management Plans helped field staff apply new knowledge within their job contexts and served as a basis for their Mission's PSE Plan and Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) planning efforts. Similarly, the integration of an Action Learning Project provided CFP participants with a tangible opportunity to apply their new knowledge and skills to a real-world problem, one which participants self-selected and which was prioritized by their Mission. Across all PIVOT cohorts, meetings with private sector companies provided mentored opportunities for staff to practice and refine their new presentation and relationship building skills, and hear private sector perspectives.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR PIVOT?

USAID's Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) will launch the first global call for USAID Missions to participate in the "PIVOT Climate Champions Practicum" in January 2023, fostering champions and Missions for equitable, ambitious climate action. The Practicum will strengthen the capacity of USAID staff to implement the Agency's Climate Strategy and build specific skills around key cross-cutting and emerging themes in the Agency's climate work—climate systems, climate justice, and climate finance. The Practicum will extend over a period of nine months, building on the foundation established through PIVOT 1.0, 2.0, and the CFP. Subject to funding availability and demand, DDI will host a second, nine-month PIVOT Climate Champions Practicum starting in September 2023.

Notably, the Practicum will be a cohort-based, action learning, whole-of-Mission experience designed to provide Mission support and enhance Mission staff's technical skills, CLA, and leadership skills in efforts to renovate Mission culture to achieve ambitious and equitable climate action. By participating in the Practicum, Mission teams will:

- **Play a critical role in leading whole-of-Mission efforts** to advance the U.S. Government's climate priorities and implement the Agency's Climate Strategy;
- **Develop a clear-eyed vision** for the Mission's best opportunities to contribute to climate action in its country or region;
- **Identify and pursue opportunities** to mobilize public and private finance for climate action, engage critical populations in locally-led climate action, and/or support the achievement of ambitious mitigation and adaptation efforts;
- **Build technical skills** required to design, manage, and mobilize effective climate programs and activities;
- **Build capacity in CLA and leadership** for change management; and,
- **Build strong relationships** within USAID and with other key stakeholders.

CONTACTS

AMY LOVEJOY
Change Maker,
Imagining Risks Worth Taking
Phone: 202-276-0883
Email alovejoy@usaid.gov

GEOFF BLATE
Senior Climate Policy
Advisor
Phone: 202-712-0844
Email: gblate@usaid.gov

RONNIE SULLIVAN
Capacity Building and
Knowledge Management
Specialist
Phone: 913-515-4396
Email: rsullivan@usaid.gov