CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE
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<tr>
<td>CONVINCE</td>
<td>Common Values Inclusive Education</td>
</tr>
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<td>CEAT</td>
<td>Civic Education Assessment Tool</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DALE</td>
<td>Desarrollo Autónomo Liderazgo Efectivo (Translation: Autonomous Development of Effective Leadership)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAI</td>
<td>Government Accountability Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>Impact evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSDA</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills, dispositions, and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC</td>
<td>Massive open online course</td>
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<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>P2PU</td>
<td>Peer to Peer University</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomized controlled trial</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Healthy democracies rely on strong civic education programs focused on building an educated citizenry. As American academic and diplomat Amy Gutmann wrote, “education, in a great measure, forms the moral character of citizens, and moral character along with laws and institutions forms the basis of democratic government.” Strong civic education programs are directly linked to higher levels of political engagement. As citizens have more access to opportunities for civic engagement, the country becomes more democratic.

Many democracies around the world have become more reflective on ways to build civic education inside and outside of the classroom as a means of ensuring a stable and democratic future. Governance and democratic participation are increasingly augmented and affected by the existence of digital technologies. Online forums, news, and social media offer the potential for access to a wide variety of information sources and democratize participation and information creation. Digital technologies also affect, in positive and contested ways, possibilities for democratic participation, privacy, campaigning and voting, and other aspects of civic and political life. Finally, political actors across the spectrum from democracies to authoritarians may exploit digital technologies as weapons in the fight for power, both domestically and internationally, in ways that may damage democratic institutions.

Civic education, or civics, can educate citizens to be literate in media ecosystems: to understand the underlying technologies, regulations, and financial inputs that shape information environments or the content moderation rules of influential social media platforms. It can help citizens understand how to participate in the creation of media and the use of social media platforms, forums, and other online media forms. It may also educate citizens on how to critically read and understand the news and civic information, both as it relates to the media and technological ecosystem in which it appears and with an eye to accuracy, sourcing, transparency, and legibility. This primer will use the term information ecosystem literacy when addressing these issues, which will refer to understanding how to read and navigate information environments, including a grasp of the social, technical, economic, and political forces that shape information production and dissemination as well as how those forces affect what information people can access and how to read and interpret that information.

Civic education programs are also increasingly impacted by digital technologies. These changes bring both opportunities and risks. Online civic education programs can provide participants with a variety of opportunities to engage with perspectives they may not have access to in offline environments, but online civic education efforts must also compete for attention with every other aspect of life online. And online education has its own considerations, from cost, access, privacy, and security to the careful shaping of virtual environments that support learning. Civic education programs should be designed in ways that reflect an awareness of these factors and that include elements to mitigate any negative impacts. Programs should be built, to the extent possible, on best practices and learning regarding the shaping of learning environments for civic education, whether those opportunities take place online, offline, or as a hybrid.

Technological shifts touch upon many aspects of civic education, just as they touch upon many aspects of education in general. While technology does not fundamentally redefine civic education, it does change how civic education can be taught in both classrooms and interpersonal settings. Throughout the primer, the term digital technologies refers to the digital recording and transfer of information (bits), instead of the analog recording and transfer of information (atoms), and is marked by the ability to create identical copies at a low cost.

As digital technologies change the practice of civics, they will also change what needs to be taught in civic education. Civic education curricula that include the experience of mediated citizenship will also explore the impact of technology on the processes of governance, from polling and voting mechanisms to campaigning and political advertising.

1Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education (Revised Edition). (Princeton University Press, 1999), 49.
WHAT IS CIVIC EDUCATION?
Civic Education is education, training, and awareness-raising programs which focus on sharing information, practices, and activities to build the knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes necessary for individuals to fulfill their democratic responsibilities, understand the role of government, and assert their rights.

FIGURE 1: HOW TO STRENGTHEN CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Devote the necessary resources for teacher and facilitator training
- Expand online and online-offline hybrid civic education programming
- Expand civic education curricula to counter current global challenges to democratic governances
- Be mindful of, and attempt to mitigate, the potentially negative effects of both online and offline civic education
- Integrate opportunities for online and offline activism
- Utilize impact evaluations from previous interventions to make evidence-based programming decisions
- Use active and participatory pedagogical methods in all civic education programming
This primer focuses on exploring and demonstrating how to build, execute, monitor, and evaluate civic education programs for both youth and adult students that have meaningful effects on a variety of important democratic orientations, including political knowledge, skills, and competencies; support for democratic norms and values; and participation in voting and other forms of political behavior. These effects are largest—and in many cases only seen—under certain conditions; for example, when programs provide frequent exposures to civic education programs, when instruction consists of active and participatory methods, when teachers and facilitators are well trained, and when individuals learn about politics with “hands-on” collaborative activities in their local communities. Contextual conditions related to a country’s level and trajectory of democratic development and its institutional receptivity to citizen input are also important facilitative factors. In this way, education has much potential for the development of supportive democratic political culture and mitigating of recent global trends away from democratic governance; however, this potential is difficult to realize without careful program conceptualization, design, and implementation.

The primer summarizes the current evidence outlining the changing landscape of building civic education programs in three specific arenas: classroom-based programming, outside-of-school and post-secondary programming, and adult education programming. Along with the evidence, this primer focuses on sharing design considerations and a series of recommendations for civic education programming in the digital age. These recommendations are visualized below:

**EVIDENCE: KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS OF CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The evidence presented throughout this primer also strongly suggests key factors for the success of civic education in the digital age, including:

> The frequency and intensity of the individual’s exposure (understanding “one-off” workshops and community events are not effective).
> The kind of pedagogical methodologies that are used in civic education instruction (i.e., open, participatory, and interactive methods versus lecture-based information provision).
> The quality of teachers and facilitators conducting the instruction.
> For certain variables—notably institutional trust and satisfaction with democratic processes—a political context with better-performing political institutions.
CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE PRIMER

This primer is a reference tool for the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) personnel and its partners interested in developing and implementing civic education programs. Significant developments in digital technologies over the past few decades have affected both how citizens interact with states and how civic education can be taught. Therefore, this primer also explores the opportunities and challenges for civic education brought about by technology. USAID and its partners can use the primer to build a common understanding and definition of civic education in different contexts.

HOW TO USE THE PRIMER

The primer contains information on defining civic education in a digital age, why it matters, and the efficacy of civic education programming in opening and closing political spaces. It also highlights the key elements in designing and implementing classroom-based programming, youth programs outside the classroom and in universities, and programs targeting adult populations.

> In developing the primer, the authors have drawn on many sources for information, including key research and proven practices in the field of civic education.
> Each section shares the latest evidence for each type of program and outlines approaches to developing high-quality programs.
> It identifies lessons learned from past civic education programming to create a set of recommendations.
> The primer also includes four case studies illustrating examples of different approaches to civic education programming from different regions of the world.
> The primer includes an assessment tool with a set of questions that will help USAID and its partners work with communities to design more effective civic education programs.
INTRODUCTION
1.1 CIVIC EDUCATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

As defined by the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education:

Education for democratic citizenship means education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices, and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills, and understanding and developing their attitudes and behavior, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity, and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.4

A similar definition from the International Encyclopedia of Education states that “civic education is broadly concerned with the development of citizenship or civic competence by conveying the unique meaning, obligation, and virtue of citizenship in a particular society or the acquisition of values, dispositions, and skills appropriate to that society.”5 Importantly, this definition emphasizes the development of democratic skills and values appropriate to a given society. The primer returns to this notion throughout, as the set of knowledge, skills, and values necessary for individuals to fulfill their democratic responsibilities and assert their rights has expanded considerably in the contemporary digital age.

Democratic “political culture” is a configuration of attitudes, beliefs, values, and participatory orientations among ordinary citizens that reflects support for democratic principles and institutions and that facilitates the informed participation of all individuals in the political process.6

Democratic political culture matters. Political scientists have long suggested that the stability and effectiveness of democratic regimes depend in part on the existence of a democratic “political culture.” Building supportive democratic political culture is an especially urgent task—one that may be addressed through civic education programs that promote political knowledge, engagement, and support for democratic norms and values among ordinary citizens. Consistent with the dictum that “good citizens are made, not born,” theorists ranging from the 20th-century pragmatist John Dewey to more recent political philosophers such as William Galston have stressed the fundamental importance of schools in cultivating democratic citizenship. As such, civic education is a mainstay of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools in democracies around the world, with classroom components and outside-the-classroom components such as service-learning and youth leadership training as well. As shown in sections 2 and 3, USAID and other international donors contribute in multiple ways to civic education in formal school systems, from working with education ministries on the development of new curricula to sponsoring teacher training programs and to creating programs that develop student leadership capabilities and education programs targeted specifically toward marginalized and underrepresented populations in vulnerable situations.

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LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> What are common challenges when developing civic education programs in a digital age?
> What context-specific factors support the development of effective civic education programs?
> What context-specific factors hamper the development of effective civic education programs?
> What are effective strategies to mitigate these challenges?
> How are digital technologies reframing the purpose and structure of civic education programs?
> How do we keep track of the evolving literature on the effectiveness of digital technologies in civic education programming? How does this evolution impact the development of civic education programs?
> What are effective strategies to ensure civic education programming involves and impacts marginalized communities?
> Where does the work of civic education programming usually take place? Are there non-traditional formats to take advantage of when designing civic education programs?
> What are we seeing on the horizon as possible in the digital age for civic education? Are there opportunities to capitalize on some of those connections and conversations when building civic education programming?
> Are there opportunities to capitalize on some of those connections and conversations when building civic education programming?
> What are the particular challenges for developing and delivering civic education programs to women and girls?
Marginalized and underrepresented populations may include, but are not limited to, poor and ultra-poor households, women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, displaced persons, migrants, Indigenous peoples and communities, children in adversity and their families, youth, older persons, religious minorities, ethnic and racial groups, people in lower castes, persons with unmet mental health needs, people of diverse economic class and political opinions, and more. These groups often suffer from discrimination in the application of laws and policy and/or access to resources, services, and social protection and may be subject to persecution, harassment, and/or violence.

However, civic education is not limited to the classroom or formal school system, nor is it limited to programs targeted toward young people. In new and transitioning democracies, the urgent need to develop supportive political culture and resilience against democratic backsliding has led to the proliferation of donor-sponsored civic education programs targeted toward adults. These efforts began in the early 1990s with voter education programs designed to facilitate “free and fair” elections in post-transition societies. At the same time, the expansion of satellite and cable broadcasting and Internet technologies shifted the structures of public information dissemination, bringing news and information to many more people, lowering the cost of creating information, and bringing about an era of transnational communications. Internet technologies also allow for communications between individuals and groups, facilitating discussions, debates, and information exchange at the scale of societies. In many countries, access to communications technologies that facilitate constant public dialogue is now ubiquitous and commonplace. This fact has powerful implications for citizen participation in civic activities and for civic education as a field.

Over the past three decades, the scope and intended outcomes of adult civic education programs have expanded considerably: programs now include, among other things, instruction about the social and political rights of women, neighborhood problem-solving activities, programs designed to dampen support for election violence and vote-buying, the cultivation of political tolerance, trust in democratic political institutions, promotion of the peaceful resolution of political disputes, voter mobilization, and engagement with the political process. These programs take various forms, from town hall meetings and community workshops to artistic creations to programs delivered via the mass media and digital technologies. At the same time, digital technologies have reframed what civic education is, helping to move it outside of classrooms, beyond formal curricula, and into broader public discourse about the nature of civic participation. Civic education overlaps with civic participation, grassroots activism, political mobilization and journalism, and information initiatives involving citizens. These activities are often augmented by or wholly reliant upon digital platforms for their organization, creation, participation, and dissemination approaches.
Civic education both in and out of the formal school system is now firmly entrenched as an important component of efforts to foster the development and maintenance of democratic regimes worldwide. These efforts are urgently needed, given the enormous challenges faced by both new and established democracies throughout the world. These challenges include:

> **The rise of authoritarian politics and the closing of political spaces.** Data from the Varieties of Democracy project’s 2022 democracy report show disturbing trends away from democratic governance worldwide, as the number of liberal democracies totaled 34 nations, home to only 13 percent of the world population, while the number of closed systems has risen to the point where electoral autocracies represent the most common regime type, home to 44 percent of the world population.

> **Declining public support for democracy.** The declining public support for democracy, trust in political institutions, and political participation is accompanied by what Varieties of Democracy terms “toxic polarization” (i.e., a lack of respect for counter-arguments and associated aspects of the deliberative component of democracy). Such polarization increased over the past decade in more than 32 countries, including many established democracies in Europe and North America.

> **Disengagement of youth and marginalized communities.** Youth and marginalized communities are disengaging from democratic political processes, as demonstrated in numerous recent surveys of young people in the various regional Barometers and the World Values Surveys.

> **Erosion of human, civil, and political rights.** The erosion of human, civil, and political rights is another main challenge posed by the global democratic decline that may be addressed through civic education approaches that build knowledge of rights and asserting rights. For example, civic education may help address not only democratic backsliding generally, but also the accompanying backlash against gender equality policy achievements.

> **The complex role of digital communications.** The complex role of digital technologies and social media platforms in how civics is enacted in online spaces; the rise of misinformation, disinformation, and harassment, which undermines trust in democratic political processes, the rule of law, and the exercise of media freedom; and the increasing ubiquity of online and public surveillance and tracking, which erodes privacy, enables new forms of digitally facilitated population controls, and exacerbates existing political inequities.
BOX 3: COMMON CIVIC EDUCATION MYTHS

**MYTH:** Civic education takes place only in the classroom.

**FACT:** A substantial portion of civic education activities take place outside the classroom in service-learning and leadership programs for students and programs promoting democratic citizenship targeted toward the general adult population and to marginalized and vulnerable communities.

**MYTH:** Civic education may succeed in teaching people about democracy, but it is not possible to change people’s dispositions to participate in democratic political processes.

**FACT:** Evaluations of the impact of civic education programs often show larger effects on actual political participation than on political attitudes and values. This pattern is especially pronounced in programs bringing youth and ordinary citizens in contact with local officials so that individuals can “learn by doing” politics at the local level.

**MYTH:** Civic education consists only of instruction in factual political knowledge about political institutions and processes.

**FACT:** The overwhelming majority of civic education programs go well beyond the provision of basic political facts to include information on rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship, the promotion of democratic values such as tolerance and the rejection of violence, and the need for direct citizen involvement in community and national affairs.

**MYTH:** Civic education is less relevant in the contemporary digital age; young people’s attention spans are more limited and they have access to numerous alternative sources of political information.

**FACT:** Civic education can and has evolved to encompass digital programming that is compelling and impactful in stimulating youth and adult engagement in both offline and online forms of political participation.
CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A THEORY OF CHANGE

Civic education is designed to influence a core set of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and attitudes (KSDA) that support democratic political culture. These outcomes are well documented in the more than half a century of political science research into democratic political culture and participation. Gibson et al.\(^7\) describe well the “democratic citizen” as someone who:

...believes in individual liberty and who is politically tolerant, who holds a certain amount of distrust of political authority but at the same time is trustful of fellow citizens, who is obedient but nonetheless willing to assert rights against the state, who views the state as constrained by legality, and who supports basic democratic institutions and processes.

Included in Figure 2 are the specific orientations within each of several categories of democratic citizenship. One set of orientations encompasses the individual’s “civic competence,” following the long-standing presumption that political knowledge, civic skills, and perceptions of political efficacy or perceived personal influence constitute important resources for meaningful democratic participation. Digital skills and literacy are included in this cluster of outcomes as well. Another set of orientations encompasses the individual’s adherence to a set of democratic values and norms such as political tolerance, or the extent to which citizens are willing to extend procedural democratic liberties to individuals and groups with whom they may disagree; support for democracy as a form of government against alternative non-democratic alternatives; rejection of political violence as a means for resolving conflict; rejection of vote-buying and clientelistic politics; and institutional and social trust, where citizens should support basic social and political institutions, though not without, as noted above, some degree of healthy skepticism and willingness to hold elites and the system as a whole to account. The expectation for civic education’s impact on these outcomes is positive, with the exception of institutional trust, as shown in section 4—civic education may in certain contexts highlight poor institutional and incumbent performance which falls short of democratic ideals. Finally, civic education also encourages individuals to take part in democratic politics in various forms, especially at the local level. Participation may include traditional offline as well as newer forms of online political involvement. Importantly, the effects of civic education may also have indirect effects on political participation through its direct impact on civic competence and democratic values. These effects are far from guaranteed, however. Box 4 lays out key factors that facilitate or inhibit achieving these intended impacts.

FIGURE 2: CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A THEORY OF CHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals of Democratic Civic Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Competence</td>
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<td>Democratic Participation</td>
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<td>Democratic Values</td>
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<th>Micro Impacts</th>
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<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
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<td>Civic Skills</td>
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<td>Civic Attitudes</td>
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<td>Civic Behaviors</td>
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<th>Macro Impacts</th>
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<td>Civic Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective Governance</td>
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<td>Democratic Stability</td>
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Facilitative Factors:
- Frequency of Exposure
- Pedagogical Methodology
- Quality of Teachers/Facilitators
- Political Context: Poorly functioning versus well-functioning institutions

As the theory of change above shows, civic education effects are expected to vary depending on a set of facilitative or inhibiting factors, among them:

- The frequency and intensity of the individual’s exposure.
- The kind of pedagogical methodologies that are used in civic education instruction (i.e., open, participatory, and interactive methods versus lecture-based information provision).
- The quality of teachers and facilitators conducting the instruction.
- For certain variables—notably institutional trust and satisfaction with democratic processes—a political context with better-performing political institutions.

Civic education is also expected to have both short-term *micro-level* impacts on individuals who are exposed to civics instruction (i.e., increased knowledge of the political system) as well as longer-term *macro-level* impacts on the democratic political system itself (i.e., increased political participation as a whole). Development of deeper knowledge, skills, support for democratic values, and engagement with the political process, should generate positive impacts on more effective and accountable political institutions and on overall democratic stability and resilience.

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**AN INCLUSIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM**

This toolkit, prepared by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), is about creating change through activism and accountability. It is about creating change at the individual, institutional, and socio-political level by providing young people with the knowledge and skills to help shape the future of their country. It was developed at a time when the Middle East and North Africa were witnessing a second wave of mass protests movements led by youth and women. Specifically in Lebanon, youth have long been disillusioned with a political system dominated by patronage systems and patriarchal norms, and they have seized on the protests as an opportunity to garner systemic change and leverage the entry points created by the protest movements.

**1.3 CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**THE RISE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND FORMS OF MEDIATED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Digital technologies can be defined as the digital recording and transfer of information (bits), instead of the analog recording and transfer of information (atoms), and are marked by the ability to create identical copies at a low cost. The first digital technologies began to emerge in the 1950s with developments like the introduction of the television, the installation of transatlantic telephone cables, and the development of jet-propelled aircraft to name a few, dramatically reshaped and transformed cultures across the globe. Advances in digital technologies and their effect on information systems have steadily advanced over the past 70 years. Digital technologies affect the design, function, and affordances of information systems, as well as the economics and scale of access. They also shift the scope of participation beyond national boundaries to encompass global, networked societies.

*Mass media* refers to a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication. In most modern states, mass media political economies have also been designed to include the shaping and promotion of civic participation, values, and education. States since the 1920s have both designed and employed mass media in varied forms to encourage civic participation,
including through the funding of public, state, or nonprofit broadcasting and its attendant content, such as news focused on the coverage of the functions of governance, educational programming, and entertainment that provides the necessary cultural framing and narratives for the imagining of citizenship.

Digital methods of media production and distribution became more common beginning in the 1980s and brought notable shifts in affordances. Today, communication technologies have become primarily digital to the extent that, for the past 15 years, the modifier “digital” can be assumed when discussing mass communications technology.

BOX 6

When thinking about how digital technologies have changed information ecosystems, it is helpful to note the following conceptual shifts:

> From one-to-many broadcast channels to many-to-many communications networks.

> From a scarcity of media content for consumption by large audiences to a competition for people's attention from abundant and varied information sources.

> From representative sampling of media audiences to understand behavior and attitudes to the growth of surveillance of information producers and consumers increasingly augmented by machine learning and “artificial intelligence.”

> From mass media networks that controlled the limits of public discussion to social media platforms that emphasize mass expression but also create opaque rules and systems that shape how participants engage with each other.

> From a clear distinction between mediated and unmediated social spaces to the existence of always-on, virtual, and augmented lives, in which mediation can be a constant companion to all activities.

While the effects of technological change on democratic practices are undeniable, the exact nature of those effects remains contested both in everyday understanding and in academic and expert literature. There may be numerous anecdotes and examples that purport to show that social media platforms increase polarization and populism, and that misinformation has a significant effect on democratic politics. As with any emerging field, it may take time to gather enough evidence to claim settled knowledge. Research on these topics is also complicated by methodological challenges and a lack of access to good data. There is, however, a nuanced analysis of the interaction between mass media and social media in creating narratives and positions in American civic life.8 This is the context in which the practice of civics exists today. Civic education is competing for attention with many other aspects of human knowledge, very often in information-rich media environments. This fact affects both the practice of civics and possibilities for civic education. Information is both produced and available globally, across states, and in many languages.

**BOX 7**

**Misconceptions concerning the prevalence and circulation of misinformation:**

> Scientists focus on social media because it is methodologically convenient, but misinformation is not just a social media problem.

> The Internet is not rife with misinformation or news, but with memes and entertaining content.

> Falsehoods do not spread faster than the truth; how one defines (mis)information influences the results and their practical implications.

**Misconceptions concerning the impact and the reception of misinformation:**

> People do not believe everything they see on the Internet: sheer volume of engagement should not be conflated with belief.

> People are more likely to be uninformed than misinformed; surveys overestimate misperceptions and say little about the causal influence of misinformation.

> The influence of misinformation on people’s behavior is overblown as misinformation often “preaches to the choir.” To appropriately understand and fight misinformation, future research needs to address these challenges.

People can see how others live around the world, leading to comparisons, raising demands, uniting similar causes across borders, and following trends in the practice of civics such as innovations in protest or direct action. Increasing opportunities to connect, organize, and share information are lowering barriers to participation, expression, and organization.

However, this visibility into other ways of living may also play a role in conflicts among people and states, in a process known as “context collapse,” the flattening of multiple audiences into a single context—a term arising out of the study of human interaction on the Internet, especially within social media. At the same time, more and more states are enacting information controls in attempts to limit the creation of and access to information they consider to be harmful, leading to new forms of restriction, censorship, and surveillance by states.

**Modern states often rely on institutions that have created elaborate procedures for managing information, sometimes over decades or centuries. Digital technologies in contrast allow for direct, unmediated experiences and connections between people.**

In many cases, the institutions of governance have yet to adapt to the fact of constant public expression as a part of civics.

The spread of technological diffusion is also unequal across many population characteristics such as economic status, language, gender, disability, race, and age. Communications platform preferences—for example, the preference of older generations for television and younger generations for mobile platforms, and the relative accessibility or inaccessibility of different platforms for different users—lead to different experiences of reality and different relationships to civics.

How citizens can access information about how they are governed and how those technologically mediated environments are shaped also plays a significant role in how citizens understand their relationship to governance. Economic, legal and regulatory, and political forces affect not only narratives but the fields in which civics plays out. These forces are always in play, although it is helpful to look to extreme circumstances to more clearly see their effects. For example, competition for advertising revenue drives both commercial mass media and social media environments toward sensational images and horse-race coverage of politics. But authoritarian governments use information controls such as censorship, blocking, and filtering and employ mass surveillance of both digital and physical environments while building alternative narratives via disinformation campaigns and using criminal penalties to restrict access to accurate information.
Technology also affects the functioning of democratic systems and institutions. Potential positive effects include increased government accountability and support for human rights by improving communication among activists and between civil society and governments. When developed without democratic values in mind, technology has the potential to threaten a range of human rights, especially of populations in vulnerable situations (for example, due to arbitrary and/or unlawful surveillance or poorly designed or biased governmental actions).

The potential modalities of interaction afforded by digital technologies are as vast as the permutations of connections between nodes in a network. And yet, despite all of these possibilities, it is important to recognize that technological choices still need to serve the values and goals of societies to be of use for civic education. It is critical to make technologies and their uses more democratic and rights-respecting. It is also important to contextualize and understand how technologies may shape or bias one’s understanding of events or influence how one may participate in civic life. Electronic voting machines may increase the speed and ease of vote tabulation, but if those machines can be hacked and do not have paper records, their use will increase distrust of electoral results. A conversation on Twitter is reflective of the subset of people who are on Twitter, but one should not assume it also reflects the attitudes of the whole of society. For every application of technology in civics, citizens also need analytic tools to understand the way that building, regulating, and distributing technologies will affect their impact.

(RE)DEFINITIONS: CIVIC EDUCATION AS IT RELATES TO VOTER EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP, DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES, AND MEDIA ECOSYSTEM LITERACY

Civic education can educate citizens to be literate in media ecosystems: to understand the underlying technologies, regulations, and financial inputs that shape information environments or the content moderation rules of influential social media platforms. It will help citizens understand how to participate in the creation of media and how to use social media platforms, forums, and other online media forms. It will also educate citizens on how to critically read and understand the news and civic information, both as it relates to the media and technological ecosystem in which it appears and with an eye to accuracy, sourcing, transparency, and legibility. This primer will use the term “information ecosystem literacy” when addressing these issues, which refers to understanding how to read and navigate information environments, including a grasp of the social, technical, economic, and political forces that shape information production and dissemination as well as how those forces affect what information people can access and how to read and interpret that information.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

Accessible technology can support civic education in numerous ways, from exponential scaling of courses on educational platforms to micro-focused discussions at local levels, documentation and feedback processes, safety and security for vulnerable populations, and alternative mediums for non-literate populations and differently-abled individuals.

Key opportunities for civic education when considering the application of digital technologies include reshaping, expanding, and coordinating digitally mediated and augmented approaches with traditional civic education interventions. Cross-sectoral programming, such as integrating online civic activism into educational programs, can support learning about different activist approaches and can have both pedagogical and participatory goals.

Technology can also expand the reach of civic education interventions. Examples of this approach would be projects that seek to expand their participation through online classes, such as the EU’s CONVINCE project, highlighted in Box 8, which runs massive open online courses (MOOCs) through the Global Campus of Human Rights. While there is no evidence of its effectiveness yet, the CONVINCE project aims to reach not only traditional practitioners of civic education programs such as teachers but also any citizen who is interested in enrolling in their courses.

Other digital technology spaces—such as forums, polls, or peer-to-peer education platforms—are also available for use for civic education delivery. An example of this approach is the Institute H21 public polling system, used to gain a nuanced understanding of civic interests.

BOX 8

The European Union’s (EU’s) Common Values Inclusive Education (CONVINCE) project seeks to provide teachers, other education personnel, school leaders, as well as the education institution community as a whole with tools and methods to deliver inclusive quality education to all and better deal with citizenship-related issues both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. Topics covered include:

> Civic education and democratic school culture.
> Teaching in multicultural learning contexts for intercultural dialogue.
> E-safety issues—misinformation, digital responsibility, and Information Communication Technology critical thinking.
> School leadership and “the whole-school approach.”
> Inclusive education as a tool to prevent violent radicalization and extremism.
CHALLENGES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

For any technology-based intervention, it is most important to first match the approach to the level of knowledge, skills, and resources of the community in question. As highlighted in Box 9, challenges in the application of digital technology include a lack of understanding of the affordances of specific platforms, a poorly defined or misconstrued understanding of the problem being addressed, security considerations, regulatory roadblocks, and an inability to build meaningful feedback loops to understand the effects of and make improvements in programs.

BOX 9

Key challenges for civic education when considering the application of digital technologies include:

- A misunderstanding of the function, potential, and longevity of technologies; a misalignment of resources; or an assumption that technological approaches can fix human problems.
- Structural impediments to civic engagement in the media and technology environment such as lack of access, cost, censorship, and other information controls.
- A misunderstanding of the underlying causes of problematic aspects of information ecosystems such as misinformation, distraction, and polarization.
- Difficulty engaging with relevant target populations in the face of competing demands for attention or in the case of a mismatch of resources to goals.
- The current context of designing belief systems around disinformation and the ability to only focus on accessing information from one perspective.
- The use of general-purpose communications technology platforms for civic education, which may create privacy and safety risks and potential harm for users.
- Sustainability challenges, with online forms of political engagement over time failing due to a lack of resources, changes in the underlying technology, or various forms of interference such as political opposition, suppression, or hacking.
- COVID-19 impacts on civic education delivery, making in-person meetings and classroom settings difficult or impossible, which has, in turn, required implementers to adopt and scale technologies for remote learning. Such remote learning approaches are typically inequitable; users without access to robust Internet, computers, or tablets at home or those without technical proficiency face serious challenges to participation.
- Technology developed and adopted without due intentional consideration of how to ensure its accessibility can create needless barriers for users with disabilities and can be much more difficult (and expensive) to fix and retrofit than building in that accessibility in the first place.
- Gender-based digital exclusion can be caused by a variety of factors, including hurdles to access, lack of education and skills and technological literacy, and inherent gender biases and socio-cultural norms. As a result, the gender divide in Internet use is widening, posing challenges to ensuring that women and girls are not bypassed by technology-based civic education interventions.

Civic education focused on democratic participation in closed or authoritarian political environments is inherently adversarial, and may be risky for all involved. Frequently, such efforts involve programs without overt public presence. They may involve creating avenues for sharing information and discussion, providing educational materials, or supporting travel so that participants can study in other countries. Grassroots activist communities in closed societies can and do organize their own civic education and activist efforts, and may be wary of being in contact with international supporters or foreign donors, as those relationships may cause them risk, further politicize their activities, and bring accusations of foreign interference. Governments with closed political systems have threatened, arrested, and imprisoned individuals for participating in civic education activities sponsored by foreign governments and have also arrested and imprisoned foreign practitioners, often for importing illegal technologies or illegally disseminating information.
In digital spaces, civic education can sometimes work with individuals and groups in closed societies, but significant risks remain. Physical and digital surveillance may be comprehensive and security difficult to achieve when governments actively seek to restrict civic education activities. In such cases, the possibility of anonymity and technical competence in digital security should be a baseline for any activities, whether they are conducted by grassroots activists based on their own initiative and funding, or with the involvement and support of outside groups. External funders should be especially careful not to build programs based only on their own ideological and geopolitical imperatives, but need to work with the mutual agreement, security frameworks, priorities, and appetites for risk of any partners living in closed societies.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The changing landscape of civic engagement, along with the current global challenges facing both new and established democracies, led to a series of recommendations for USAID civic education programming in the digital age:

**Use active and participatory pedagogical methods in all civic education programming.** There is overwhelming evidence that civic education has the potential to change individual attitudes and behaviors when active methods are utilized—and often only when active methods are utilized. This means providing opportunities in both online (“online” in this primer means interactive environments, not “click and go”) and offline programming for younger students to engage in group activities, role-playing exercises, games, and simulations related to democratic learning, and it means including similar activities for older youth and adults along with opportunities to interact with local political officials and institutions via service-learning leadership programs, participation on local boards, or community-oriented civic engagement.

**Devote the necessary resources for teacher and facilitator training.** There is also overwhelming evidence regarding the importance of high-quality teachers and facilitators for civic education to “work.” This means that there is a need for considerable investment in teacher training, with this need being increasingly urgent given the complexities involved in online civic education delivery. USAID should take advantage of new instructional resources for teaching digital citizenship and digital and media literacy provided by organizations such as the International Society for Technology and Education and also invest in ensuring that teachers understand the effects of digital technologies on governance more broadly.

**Expand online and online-offline hybrid civic education programming.** Given the prevalence of digital technology in citizens’ daily lives, it is essential for civic education to “meet people where they are” to impart messages fostering democratic values. This is especially relevant given forms of online political engagement ranging from blogging to creating petitions and mobilizing social networks and establishing new online groups to support political causes. Utilize accessible online civic education, either by itself or as a component of traditional interventions, as a means to further both online and offline political participation.
Expand civic education curricula to counter current global challenges to democratic governance. Traditional civic education curricula stressing political knowledge, civic competencies and participation, and support for democratic values continue to be important for fostering democratic political culture. But these areas must be complemented by content devoted to countering anti-democratic trends in contemporary global politics (e.g., extreme political polarization and populist nationalism) and the spread of disinformation and misinformation via social media and other means of digital communications.

Be mindful of, and attempt to mitigate, the potentially negative effects of both online and offline civic education. The expansion of civic education into the online realm brings with it immense opportunities as well as risks of (unintended) negative consequences. Online programming of any sort, including civic education, takes place in spaces where individuals may be exposed to harassment and surveillance and may be susceptible to misinformation. Additionally, online programming fails to include those populations without access to digital technologies or the Internet, and civic education in these instances runs the risk of exacerbating pre-existing political inequalities. This can also occur in offline programming for youth and adults, as individuals may “self-select” into civic education programs based on their prior political interest or supportive democratic orientations. Design programs in ways that reflect an awareness of these risks and that include elements to mitigate their negative impacts. A recent report entitled “How Dare They Peep Into My Private Life” reviewed EdTech products used across 49 countries during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that 89 percent of these programs appeared to engage in data practices that risked or infringed on children’s rights. This is a critical factor when building hybrid civic education programs.

Integrate opportunities for online and offline activism. A key component of civic education is to better understand the role of activism. Offline activism is grounded in close personal relationships between people and their acquaintances. Historically, activism relied on the development of strongly tied networks. With the advent of new digital technologies, there are multiple opportunities for online activism, focusing more on loose clusters of relationships via social networking and other digital technologies. Design programs to study the cost and benefits of both types of opportunities for participants, with appropriate digital security components taken into consideration.

Utilize impact evaluations from previous interventions to make evidence-based programming decisions. There is a large amount of evidence, based on rigorous impact evaluations (IEs) in both the policy and practitioner literature, on what does and does not work in civic education programming. Draw on this literature in program design and implementation by following some of the impact-based recommendations above and in the evidence reviews for specific sections in the primer. As this knowledge base should be expanded with IEs of future programs as well, USAID should consider establishing a formal repository where IEs of USAID and other donor civic education programs may be stored and cataloged and where the materials utilized in successful (and unsuccessful) programs may be accessed by Mission personnel and relevant partners. This will allow future programs to be designed and implemented in ways that build on successful past interventions to maximize their potential impact.
A STORY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN ACTION

NDI implemented the Civic Forum, operating under the theory of change that citizen-led activism coupled with community needs augments citizen participation in democratic institutions. This program is an example of how civic education can increase citizenship competencies, the space for public participation, and accountability between citizens and public officials. The approach combines civic education and participatory practices that enable citizen engagement beyond the life of the project. Accordingly, the approach is not just about knowledge, but also action.

Civic Forum combines educational discussions, experiential learning, and citizen-led campaigns to address a wide range of local-level community issues, including waste management, accessibility for persons with disabilities, improved local-level transportation services, and greater freedom of expression. A Civic Forum program typically lasts between 18 and 24 months and is divided into four phases.

> In the first phase, local facilitators recruited and trained by NDI reach out to community-based organizations and other local groups to find individuals interested in joining a Civic Forum discussion group (typically 15–20 individuals per group).

> In phase two, participants complete a civic education curriculum adapted to the specific country and context and begin to identify entry points for citizen involvement in the local political cycle.

> In phase three, groups identify an issue in their community that they want to organize around and collaboratively determine what a solution would look like.

> Lastly, in phase four, the groups design and execute a campaign around their identified issue. This often includes mobilizing other community members, working with other groups, and learning negotiation techniques to communicate with individuals in power.

Utilizing a dynamic, integrated approach to civic education and citizen advocacy, many of the campaigns developed by Civic Forum groups have solved their identified issues. For example, in Moldova, where the Civic Forum Pune Umarul ("Lend-a-Hand") program has operated since 2012, community groups successfully worked with mayors to implement water quality testing at public wells, with "traffic light" signage to indicate safety. However, even in scenarios where campaigns have yet to accomplish their objectives, Civic Forum groups can still claim success in the working relationships they have built with decision-makers, a new awareness of their issue in their communities, and their own engagement in democratic political activity.

Activists from Tigheci distribute a leaflet with information about the local budget and a call to action for citizens to submit the priorities they think should be included in the next year's budget.

Photo: NDI
2.1 WHAT DO WE KNOW: EVIDENCE REVIEW

Does civic education in the classroom achieve its intended impact on school children? Do students exposed to civics instruction learn about democratic governance, develop the skills and dispositions relevant for democratic citizenship, and develop positive orientations toward political participation? If so, for what kinds of individuals, for what kinds of instruction, and under what conditions are the effects of civic education most pronounced? As might be expected given their importance to democratic political systems, these questions have generated numerous studies in the academic and policy-based literature over the past few decades in both primary and secondary school settings and in advanced and developing democracies around the world. The sheer volume of studies in the field makes it difficult to provide definitive answers to the questions of impact. Nevertheless, several key findings emerge from the vast literature.

- **Classroom-based civic education can work to alter students’ basic knowledge about democratic political systems, but it proves more difficult—though not impossible—to change political values, skills, and participatory dispositions.**
- **The effects seem greatest under certain pedagogical conditions, namely the prevalence of open classroom discussion and the use of participatory and interactive methods conducted by teachers who are well trained in the instructional methods shown to be most effective.**
- **Knowledge and dispositional effects seem greatest among students with fewer prior political resources and positive participatory inclinations.**

These conclusions point to the potential of civic education interventions as an important tool for effecting change in students’ democratic orientations. But it is also the case that this potential is difficult to realize, given the many impediments to effective program design and implementation. This section of the primer includes an overview of the evidence on classroom-based civics instruction; the following section discusses issues related to program design, implementation, and evaluation.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?**

The first rigorous empirical examinations of the effects of civic education instruction occurred in the U.S. in the 1960s. These studies found minimal impact on American students, especially in comparison with other sources of political socialization, such as family and friendship groups. This pessimistic conclusion colored a decade or more of social science civic education research. Beginning in the late 1990s, however, a more positive and more nuanced view began to emerge, following seminal studies in the U.S. by Niemi and Junn and cross-nationally by Torney-Purta et al. Though limited in the outcomes they were able to examine, both showed overall modest but significant effects of civics instruction primarily on factual political knowledge, with the Torney-Purta volume also finding less powerful but detectable cross-national impact on indicators of student civic competence and skills.

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9A Google Scholar search conducted on March 7, 2022 for work with the phrase “civic education” in the title, for example, yielded 6,550 results.
11Torney-Purta et al., *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen.* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2001).
LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> What set of interventions in classroom-based civic education are most effective in facilitating the development of students’ democratic orientations? Why?
> What are strategies to leverage non-traditional partners and programs to enhance classroom-based civic education programming?
> What are impediments to effective program design and implementation? What are strategies to mitigate these impediments?
> What are the constraints and opportunities of digitalizing classroom-based civic education programs?
> Are there opportunities to engage with other programs already in place that may not be traditional civic education? How can these be identified?

These findings have been confirmed and extended in much subsequent work, first with surveys and other observational research designs, and more recently in a wave of rigorous randomized controlled trial (RCT) experiments in the U.S. and elsewhere. The general pattern of effects now seems relatively clear:

> Knowledge effects: Civics instruction has consistently positive effects on students’ basic knowledge of democratic institutions and processes in the U.S. and other democracies ranging from western Europe to South Africa, with some studies showing the effects enduring well past the period of exposure.

> Civic skills effects: There are weaker but detectable overall impacts on indicators of cognitive and psychological engagement with democratic politics, such as political interest, political efficacy, and the development of civic skills.

> Disposition effects: It is substantially more difficult to effect change in democratic values such as political tolerance, support for civil liberties, and political and social trust. An example, a recent IE conducted on the USAID Georgia Momavlis Taoba program that randomly assigned different kinds of civic education interventions to different 9th- and 10th-grade classrooms, found that the “programming did not have any effects on students’ civic, democratic, and prosocial attitudes.”

> Behavioral effects: Civic education’s effects on students’ political participation and future participatory orientations are not consistently assessed and appear more inconsistent. A review of the literature showed minimal effects on this dimension of citizenship, though some studies pointed to positive findings. The aforementioned USAID Georgia IE showed positive effects of the programs’ various intervention arms on current participation in school-based politics and political discussions, but it proved difficult to disentangle these outcomes from exposure to the interventions themselves, which, in many cases, exposed students to those kinds of school political activities. There were no impacts of the intervention arms on dispositions toward future political participation.

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17Green et al., “Does knowledge of constitutional principles increase support for civil liberties? Results from a randomized field experiment.” Journal of Politics 73, no. 2 (2011): 463–476; Finkel and Ernst, “Civic Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa.”
There is less evidence on the direct incorporation of digitalization elements into classroom-based civic education; however, one exception is a recent 2020 study conducted by Benjamin Bowyer and Joseph Kahne that focuses on the digitalization of civic education. The evidence from this study shows that:

1. Teaching about sharing perspectives online has a positive relationship with online political activity.
2. Learning to evaluate online content is negatively related to online engagement but positively related to offline engagement, and
3. Teaching about offline civic engagement is positively related to offline civic engagement and online political activity.

**IMPACTS FOR WHOM AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?**

The findings summarized above represent general patterns found in the literature; that is, findings across all subjects or respondents in given studies, findings across different kinds of interventions within studies, and findings across different political and social contexts. Once these factors are disaggregated, it is clear that civic education under certain conditions and for certain kinds of respondents has a more powerful and more consistent impact on a range of democratic attitudes, values, and participatory dispositions.

> **Type of instruction:** Perhaps the most important conditioning factor is the type of instruction; that is, the degree to which the learning environment provides opportunities for open discussion of political and citizenship issues and the degree to which the instruction contains active participatory, interactive components such as role-playing, simulations, games, or opportunities for online blogging or other activities. This finding has held up in cross-national studies and studies in the U.S., Mexico, South Africa, India, and other countries. When civic education is conducted in a participatory, engaging, and interactive fashion, the effects on political orientations can be substantial, even on values such as political tolerance that are generally more impervious to change.

> **Students’ interactive involvement.** This finding extends to the digital realm as well. In a series of recent studies, researchers have seen some impact of online participatory opportunities, such as creating and sharing digital media, on future online political behaviors. Similarly, when students create blogs and other digital content in civics classes, this impacts future behavior orientations—an effect that persisted for some months after the intervention. Clearly, pedagogical approaches emphasizing active student involvement in both the online and offline environments matter.

> **Quality of instruction:** In addition to the kind of instruction, the quality of instruction matters as well. That is, civic education taught by well-trained teachers who understand and can engage students with class content has been found to have consistently stronger impacts on student attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. This points to the importance of teacher training programs in delivering quality civic education, with a wealth of studies showing first the effects of well-designed training programs on teacher attitudes and competencies and then downstream effects on the students in those teachers’ classrooms.

> **Soft skills:** Aside from the specific environment—pedagogical approaches and teacher quality—where education is formally delivered, supportive learning environments that encourage social or “soft” skills can also produce effects on citizenship outcomes. In an important recent U.S. study, Holbein shows that educational interventions designed to provide social and emotional skills among children in interaction with their parents and peers—via activities such as

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22Bowyer and Kahne “The Digital Dimensions.”
role-playing, joint reading, and games—can have powerful effects on voter turnout and political engagement later in life. In this way, the development of civic orientations need not take place solely within the civic education classroom; it can also occur in cross-curricular activities within supportive learning contexts.

> Greater gains among traditionally marginalized groups: In terms of differential effects across individuals, the bulk of the evidence on classroom-based civics instruction points to a compensation effect of these programs in narrowing pre-existing inequalities in democratic orientations across socio-economic and other social divisions. Campbell observes that this effect was seen as far back as the original Langton and Jennings study, where the impacts of classroom civics exposure on African Americans were larger than for the overall sample. Studies show similar differential effects related to individuals with lower socioeconomic status and greater impact among girls in some contexts as well.

This brief review of the evidence suggests that classroom-based civic education has the potential to achieve its intended goals of developing students’ democratic knowledge, values, and participatory orientations. But because substantial effects are observed mainly when teacher quality is high and when active, participatory pedagogical methods are employed, the overall effect of civic education in contexts where teachers lack relevant training and mainly employ lecture-based instruction is substantially muted. Other structural impediments (e.g., low student attendance) also exist in many developing contexts and are exacerbated even further in post-conflict settings and countries with more intense ethnoreligious cleavages and accompanying political polarization.

2.2 WHAT DO WE DO: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

The most widespread application of civic education is in formal school education: in-classroom training focused on general principles. It tends to have a dual emphasis on both educational reform and the promotion of democratic values and behaviors. There are a wide variety of approaches to building impactful civic education programs at the classroom level. The key question is how to design high-quality civic education programs that are relevant and can impact the community in which it takes place. Numerous civic education program frameworks exist and identifying the appropriate one will depend on the democracy problem being addressed, which will then determine the design approach.

**BOX 10: DESIGN APPROACHES**

When designing a classroom-based program, several factors must be taken into consideration by donors and implementers:

> Analyze the context of the community to best determine the need, focus, and goals for the program.

> Conduct an analysis of the community to clarify the purpose of the program.

> Determine the vision for the program within the specific context of the location—what is the focus, at whom is the program aimed, and what are the goals?

> Identify program objectives/outcomes, focusing on outlining the key KSDA that are the purpose of the program.

> Build the program based on proven practices and key elements of designing a classroom-based program.

  - Curriculum
  - Instructional practices
  - Assessment

> Implement the program focusing on these components.

  - Professional development
  - Partnerships—identify key stakeholders/partners for success
  - Program evaluations and IEs

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26Campbell, “What Social Scientists Have Learned.”


Key components when designing and implementing classroom-based programs are a) design elements (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and b) implementation elements (professional development, assessment, partnerships, and program evaluations and IEs). As discussed below, both of these need to be developed and adapted for the context. See the Civic Education Assessment Tool (CEAT) in Annex A for a tool to carry out contextual assessments to plan for civic education programming.

CURRICULUM

A rich civics-based curriculum intends to create civic literacy, foster civility, promote understanding and appreciation of democratic institutions and processes, and enhance a sense of political efficacy. The curriculum should be built on the goals, objectives, context, and KSDA identified. The curriculum can be either chosen from pre-created materials contextualized to address local needs or developed from scratch. One example is the Project Citizen curriculum, highlighted in Box 11, from the Center for Civic Education. It focuses on teaching students about the concept of public policy and how to address it in their community. Many countries have adapted the Project Citizen curriculum into their language and to their context.

A classroom-based curriculum must be based on research about effective approaches to creating an environment for civil discourse and culturally responsive teaching and should be designed to engage all learners to build civic knowledge as they prepare to uphold the values of society now and into the future. Prior to building or choosing a classroom-based curriculum, one should focus on understanding the local context and consider instructional goals, existing school culture, and students’ needs in order to select or adapt a model as necessary.

A classroom-based curriculum should also include exposure to online civic education. A 2021 study identified that exposure to online components of civic education can have a positive effect on respondents’ democratic support, political efficacy, and intentions to register in upcoming national elections. The data in this report and others demonstrate the need to build hybrid civic education programs that include positive aspects of offline and online programs to better prepare for digital citizenship, online participation, and engagement.

**BOX 11: PROJECT CITIZEN**

US-based Project Citizen provides a practical first-hand approach to learning about governmental systems and how to monitor and influence them. The curriculum focuses on asking students to work together to research their community to discover problems and then identify solutions in the form of policy that requires government involvement. Students also have the opportunity to display their research and policy suggestions to their classroom and/or community through showcases. The Project Citizen curriculum has been adjusted and adopted in many countries across the globe.

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INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES (PEDAGOGY AND APPLIED LEARNING)

Researchers in civic learning have reviewed a wide range of approaches and the evidence surrounding their effectiveness. Experts identified a menu of six specific approaches that, if implemented well, have been demonstrated to advance civic learning. These range from teaching young people about civics to creating learning opportunities for practicing civic behaviors. Classroom instruction, including discussing current events and developing media literacy skills, is needed for developing civic knowledge and skills, whether it is delivered as a stand-alone course or as lessons integrated into other subjects.

As shown in section 2.1, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that participatory teaching methods are critical to the success of civic education programs. Role-plays, dramatizations, small group exercises, and group discussions are far more effective tools for imparting knowledge about democratic practices and values than more passive methods such as lectures or the distribution of materials.

In a range of focus group discussions, trainers and participants stated categorically that “lectures do not work” and that emphasis should be placed on helping participants find their own way toward the skills and behaviors that will enhance their role as democratic citizens.

1 CLASSEm INSTRUCTION
Curricula built on strategies that allow students to investigate the complexities of a governmental system can equip them far more effectively to participate in that system than those that require little more from students than simply digesting key historical facts, dates, and events. While lecture still has its place in a teacher’s repertoire, lackluster lectures and PowerPoint presentations that drone on can be like anesthesia for students in that they are numbed to the key ideas. Most students today are fairly tech-savvy and can use digital media, community, Internet research, large- and small-group presentations, and personal interviews to meet curricular objectives. Since technology is part of their everyday culture, students likely would benefit from frequent opportunities to stretch their technical abilities to more than just social networking. The Education Commission of the States’ Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning contains useful guidance for teachers developing civic education curricula.

2 OPEN CLASSROOMS AND DISCUSSIONS OF CURRENT/ CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
A classroom environment that supports the open discussion of political and social issues has been demonstrated to enhance the positive effects of civic education. Through deliberative interactions with their peers and teachers, students can glean knowledge about the political process, engage in careful reasoning about policy issues, and practice skills in debate and argumentation. These conversations are also likely to foster increased motivation to follow politics and find out more about important issues.

Civic learning curricula often fail to include controversial issues. Diversity in thought can help students appreciate others’ perspectives and understand the value of living in a place where differing views are embraced. Additionally, addressing difficult issues can help demystify conflicting beliefs and help students to approach those issues with greater objectivity. Students engaged in healthy civic discourse have opportunities to practice researching current issues in their local communities, the country, and the world to come up with feasible solutions. Some controversial issues that may be discussed as part of a civic education curriculum are environmental policies, ecology, the extent of poverty, communal violence, population growth, refugees, trade, and debt.

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SIMULATION OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES
Mock trials and elections are traditional, popular, and effective programs for many high school students, and they provide many benefits: increased civic knowledge, teamwork, analytical thinking, public speaking skills, and more. Aside from these established simulations, technology can and does play a meaningful role in the classroom. Students can simulate a professional work environment by trading emails, planning meetings, and conducting research. This work can also include offering students practical experiences as part of the educational program, including internships, volunteer experiences, or other on-site observational experiences (i.e., observing how elections are set up and run).

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE
Student government, including student councils and youth advisory boards, offers venues that simulate democratic processes. Students today can participate in school governance in a variety of contexts: student councils, youth advisory boards, department committees, etc. Many students have good ideas on how to improve their schools and will take action when allowed to make a change that is important to them. Schools should allow students to practice civic skills within the relatively controlled environment of the classroom and within school walls where they can learn from challenges and triumphs, responses, and failures—all the varied realities of the democratic process. Once empowered, students can affect real and meaningful change while learning and experiencing the process to enact these new policies.

DIGITAL APPROACHES
Mediating technologies to classroom-based programming, whether digital or analog, cut across instructional approaches, subject matter selection, program design, funding design, and assessment methods. The key understandings of learning that arise out of the study of effective approaches are also relevant to the use of digital technologies. This is true because digital technologies augment and assist classroom learning and thus have similar constraints and opportunities.

There is a growing field of literature that explores whether the claims and aspirations of different digital technologies used in classroom settings do in fact lead to better learning outcomes. Recent studies look at the variance in information retention based on the technology employed (books versus digital devices\textsuperscript{35}). Such results, to the extent they are conclusive, are also relevant for civic education in classrooms. However, while some studies indicate that the introduction of digital technologies worsens results,\textsuperscript{36} there is not yet a conclusive recommendation for or against the introduction of technology for learning.\textsuperscript{37}

Outcomes may vary depending on whether there is an emphasis on the use of digital technologies for active learning, including writing, taking notes, annotating, employing critical thinking, and using participatory practices rather than simply scanning or watching.

The edge in information retention that printed paper has in some studies over digital devices or the watching of instructional videos also needs to be weighed against potential advantages in access to learning materials, the granularity of feedback loops for learning, and the reality that knowledge of how to use digital platforms is quickly becoming the primary vehicle for information acquisition, learning, and creation in all fields. It is also worth noting that digital reading platforms continue to evolve, with a new generation of devices that mimic paper to a remarkable degree; their use may result in different outcomes.

The key takeaway, as is repeated throughout this primer, is to avoid the mindset that introducing digital technologies into a learning environment is necessarily simple or that it will be a solution to the challenges of learning.

\textsuperscript{35}Papia Bawa. “Retention in Online Courses.” SAGE Open 6, no. 1 (2016).
When building civic education programs today, it is critical to think about it from a hybrid perspective—a blended approach between offline and online learning strategies and curricula, integrating technological approaches when natural and connected to how participants engage in real-world civics.

**ONLINE CIVIC EDUCATION DELIVERY**

Delivery of instructional materials through online teaching platforms can help to improve the scale, efficiency, and consistency of courses to relevant populations. Online information delivery also allows for the potential for the fine-grained analysis of student participation and the integration of reading, critical thinking, workbooks, and testing. There are many free and proprietary platforms available in larger world languages. Using widespread text- and video-sharing platforms for documents and instructional videos may also be helpful in some contexts.

In addition to platform choice, class content is also increasingly available, including both proprietary curricula and open educational resources. This diverse and often rich information space offers opportunities both to find relevant curricula and to design and distribute new curricula appropriate to the specific needs of civic education programs. Platforms such as the Peer to Peer University (P2PU) offer tools and resources for groups to set up their own online courses and share them with communities.

These platforms and approaches are aids to instruction. Quality teaching, student participation, and well-designed curricula are still required, and student privacy and safety needs when using digital platforms should always be taken into consideration.

**DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The range of platforms available for civic discourse includes everything from sophisticated polling and deliberation spaces and civic tech applications such as participatory budgeting platforms to tools that seek to mimic Socratic dialogue, to wikis for the creation of knowledge or the documenting of dominant opinions, to commercial social media platforms content moderation rules and national regulations that set the bounds of the permissible, and to open forums with few boundaries.
Rather than seeking to establish norms for online expression, a helpful approach is to work with students to understand the huge variety of mediated spaces available for discourse and ask them to state their aims in the context of civics when considering where and how to engage. This approach asks students to consider how engaging in any particular forum can result in an outcome in the context of civics: what is the purpose of a given act of expression, activism, or advocacy and how can that act be a manifestation of productive citizenship?

An example of this approach is the Civic Investigate, Deliberate, Express, Advocate project of the U.S.-based Emerson College’s Engagement Lab, which helps students to make their own decisions about technology choices and includes a “toolkit [that] incorporates freely accessible digital tools to illustrate learning goals [to] move learners from digital literacy to digital expression.”

The Engagement Lab built a four-part methodology for young people to “critique and create media in digital culture.” Under each of the four key headings, students are offered a range of tools and set of protocols for designing, building, and critiquing projects.

INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM LITERACY (MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY)

Information ecosystem literacy traditionally focuses on the critical reading skills of news media and is closely aligned with the concept of civic reasoning. Digital literacy focuses on the functioning and production skills necessary to participate in online platforms, from posting to blogs and social media sites to producing audio and video. These skills are part of a larger literacy that can be called information ecosystem literacy, which helps students to understand the medium of information transmission, the messages being sent on those media, and the often complex interactions between them. It also encompasses the technological, regulatory, and economic underpinnings of contemporary media. These foundations help students to understand the significant, seemingly abstract forces that govern what they can see in mediated spaces, how they are allowed to participate, and where and how they have the agency to determine these questions for themselves. A key lesson in the teaching of how mediated spaces are developed and function is that they are neither static nor foreordained. Instead, the shape of the spaces that one uses to conduct civics is itself a key area of contestation and, in turn, influences who can participate in public life and how.

In the growing field of media and information literacy, organizations such as the Media and Information Literacy Expert Network, supported by DW Akademie; the Center for Media and Information Literacy at the U.S.-based Klein College of Media and Communication, Temple University; or UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy network offer a range of approaches and pedagogies.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER PREPARATION

High-quality professional development (the education of teachers both before and during their careers) is a central component of improving education for students. Noted education scholar Thomas Guskey defines professional development as “systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students.” Just as excellent civic learning is interactive and involves students in discussion and collaboration, the best professional development is not a matter of transmitting facts and concepts to prospective or actual teachers, but rather of encouraging them to learn through study, reflection, and experience. Well-trained teachers are indispensable to making classroom-based civic education programs an integral part of every student’s experience. As such, a high-quality professional development program in civics must focus on engaging teachers in these practices to help build a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills they need to incorporate these practices in the classroom. Training teachers in both content and skills—through pre-service, in-service, and other programming—is required to ensure that civics instruction is both consistent and of high quality. Only effective teacher professional development can cultivate effective civic instruction, guaranteeing that a solid grounding in civics is a reality for every child and not dependent on variables specific to a given teacher, school, or community.

Professional development programs in civics should be grounded in what has been shown to impact teachers’ knowledge, skills, and practices.

These aspects of professional development, highlighted in Box 12, have been proven to improve teaching and should be adopted by civic learning professional development programs nationwide. Yet, they do not occur in a vacuum, and programs should take into account the wide variety of contexts that shape teaching and learning, including local policies, curriculum, and community values. Sustained, high-quality professional development, as defined in this section, is critical to ensuring that teachers are prepared to incorporate the promising practices consistently in all classrooms.39

An analysis of research on current professional development practices demonstrates the necessary components required for professional development to be effective:

> **Content-focused:** Teachers’ skills and understandings are directly related to the degree that professional development experiences focus on subject matter content. When teachers have a deep knowledge of content, they are more comfortable and likely to engage students in discussions and inquiry.

> **Active:** Research suggests effective professional development should engage participants with the content and practices in order to help them understand how to incorporate these components into their own instruction: “Active learning encourages teachers to become engaged in meaningful discussion, planning, and practice as part of the professional development activity.”

> **Ongoing:** Various studies suggest that effective professional development needs to include continuous follow-up and support that allow for more substantive engagement with the subject matter, more opportunities for active learning, and the development of coherent connections to teachers’ daily work.

> **Connected to curriculum and standards:** Professional development should be aligned with national, provincial, and local standards and connected to what teachers do with students in the classroom. This requires professional development programs to include time for teachers to think through the context of their communities and schools.

> **Collaboration:** Allowing teachers to build collaborative relationships around common content, skills, and issues of implementation can strongly impact the implementation of best practices in a classroom: “Professional development activities that include collective participation—that is, the participation of teachers from the same department, subject, or grade—are more likely to afford opportunities for active learning and are more likely to be coherent with teachers’ other experiences.”

TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

There are many benefits to utilizing the expertise and experience of diverse partners in developing plans for classroom-based civic education programs. There is tremendous potential to forge and strengthen critical partnerships while at the same time developing a strategic, innovative, and context-specific civic education curriculum in ways that benefit all students. It is particularly valuable to effectively engage stakeholders because:

- Stakeholder engagement will lead to the development of programs that are fully informed by the ideas, insights, and perspectives of those active on the ground in diverse capacities.
- Stakeholder engagement will lead to civic education programs that can garner public support and political will to implement the plans with success.
- Stakeholder ownership and buy-in are needed to overcome the considerable financial and political challenges that may be associated with building high-quality civic education programs—challenges that require widespread support and advocacy.
- Stakeholder engagement will bring together leaders from all levels of the school system as well as the involvement of parents, civil rights, health and welfare, legal, and other institutions—each of whom will likely be involved in implementing the programs and strategies developed.

EDUCATION MINISTRIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

It is essential to work with education ministries and local governments when designing and implementing a school-based civic education program. Connecting with education ministries can help to better understand the context and policy environment and can open up doors to changing policies that can impact and/or support classroom-based civic education programs. The same is true for local governments; it is important to understand and involve local governments when opportunities arise so they can be supportive and inclusive in policy-making that supports civic education programming.

Findings also show that civic education had the greatest impact on participants when programs brought individuals directly into contact with local authorities or individuals engaged in local problem-solving activities. This can be accomplished by working directly or in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs). This approach involves more than simply using the types of participatory methods—it involves building opportunities for direct political engagement into the program.

Local governmental organizations can also be good partners for either funding or identifying funding sources. They can help identify what is happening and what types of programs are being supported in the local context. Working with local governmental organizations can help program developers identify points of entry for practical student engagement activities with local government.
2 TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS
Teacher organizations are also key to building effective school-based civic education programs. They can help to recruit educators to participate in the programs, they can help to understand local policies and contexts that will impact program implementation, and they can support the implementation and expansion of the program. Teacher organizations can also help with the design and delivery of professional development and can help to figure out ways to incorporate professional development into existing structures.

3 PARENTS’ ASSOCIATIONS
Children benefit when empowered parents actively participate in the design and implementation of school-based civics education programs. One clear finding from the analysis of school-based programs is that the broader school environment and family beliefs and practices are powerful influences on the democratic orientations of children and young adults.40 Unless civic education programs take account of these forces, they are likely to overwhelm any new messages that are taught. For example, since families play a critical role in either reinforcing or canceling out democratic lessons, if parents are included in civic education programs, the chance of achieving a significant and lasting impact on students is likely to grow. Programs that took a more holistic approach to civic education and sought to include parents were more successful and effective.

4 OTHER DONORS
Investing in youth civic engagement can be a particularly effective strategy. Investments in youth yield positive returns over a longer period and on a more consistent basis because young people master the tools of effective democratic practice earlier and can deploy these tools over a longer lifespan. Some of the community organizations that would be interested in and impacted by the development of civic education can be good options for funders. An option in this area is to focus not only on funders that fund civic education programs but also on connections to other funders who fund other programs where there might be natural connections to incorporating civic education (i.e., environmental or health care programs).

40 Campbell, “What is education’s impact on civic and social engagement?”
CRAFTING ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT LEARNING

This section focuses on formative and summative student assessments in terms of KSDA growth and program evaluation to determine impact. When designing student assessments for school-based civic education programs, the central component should be civic outcomes (KSDA):

> The knowledge component addresses civic life, politics, and government; the foundations of political systems; the principles of democracy; and the roles of citizens.

> The intellectual and participatory skills component comprises skills that enable citizens to monitor and influence public and civic life by working with others, clearly articulating ideas and interests, building coalitions, seeking consensus, negotiating compromises, and managing conflict.

> The civic dispositions/attitudes component consists of the character traits and attitudes that preserve and improve a democratic society (e.g., being an independent member of society; assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen; respecting individual worth and human dignity; and participating in civic affairs).

1 STUDENT ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

There are many types of assessments: “summative” assessments assess students after learning and “formative” assessments assess students along the learning continuum. The key to assessing student learning is to connect it back to the goals and outcomes of the program. Assessments can be more traditional like multiple-choice tests and short-answer/essay tests or alternatives like performance tasks and portfolios. Research shows that these sorts of alternative assessments hold benefits for students that more traditional assessments do not. Three specific ways to assess student development—capstones, civic reasoning, and writing and developing arguments—are the most promising and impactful approaches.

2 CAPSTONE PROJECTS

The term “capstone project” is commonly used for a project that provides opportunities for students to synthesize and apply the knowledge and experiences gained from their entire learning experience. Capstone projects focus on a major project and utilize to the fullest the research and communication skills previously learned. They should be relevant to students and the community, clearly aligning with the goals of the civic education program. Capstone projects in civic education provide students with the opportunity to work with real-world, open-ended, interdisciplinary challenges proposed after researching issues in their communities.

3 CIVIC ONLINE REASONING

The health of a democracy depends on people’s abilities to access reliable information. Civic online reasoning focuses on building students’ abilities to effectively search for, evaluate, and verify social and political information online. A focus on civic online reasoning can help students learn questions and strategies for evaluating online information. As highlighted in Box 13, Stanford has developed a site with tools and resources focusing on civic online reasoning.

BOX 13: STANFORD CIVIC ONLINE REASONING CURRICULUM

A curriculum to help students learn strategies, like lateral reading, needed for civic engagement in a digital age. The curriculum provides free, classroom-ready lessons and assessments that engage students in evaluating sources that range from Instagram posts to corporate-funded websites masquerading as independent think tanks.

4 CIVIC WRITING AND DEVELOPING LOGICAL/CRITICAL ARGUMENTS

Civic reasoning and discourse refer to inquiry and conversation in response to the question, “What should we do?” This question is meant to convey that civic activity is inherently agentic, collaborative, and embedded within a community. Crafting critical arguments and engaging in civic writing involves the process ”by which students use knowledge and skills to understand and participate in forms of community life.”

The Civically Engaged Writing Analysis Continuum is a rubric for assessing youth writing about civic issues intended for a public audience. The rubric defines four attributes: employs a public voice, advocates civic engagement or action, argues a position based on reasoning and evidence, and employs a structure to support a position. Each attribute can be scored on a four-point scale.

The rubric grows out of a development process focused on identifying and articulating how civically engaged writing both builds on and differs from academic writing. Thus, it addresses the challenge of how to choose evidence and frame arguments for an intended audience with integrity, elegance, and a sense of possibilities for engagement and action. In short, to develop a public voice and to advocate for civic engagement or action.

Engaging youth in civic writing represents a way to support them in developing valuable academic skills (research, use of evidence, development of reasoning, and writing) as well as crucial civic skills (engaging in dialogue across differences and understanding multiple perspectives). Both writing and argument development call for considering and engaging with multiple perspectives and alternate positions. Through civic writing, youth not only deepen their knowledge about civic issues but also enter into a public conversation about questions that matter to them. They learn how to make thoughtful choices about language, evidence, and reasoning to achieve their purposes and reach their chosen audiences. The National Writing Project, highlighted in Box 14 above, has useful tools to help define and implement civic writing activities, including an outline of the attributes of civic writing.

Many of these types of student assessments focus on measuring the knowledge and skill outcomes of civic education. Measuring the attitudes and behaviors is just as important. The use of surveys is a common way to measure growth in attitudes and behaviors. Two useful tools to identify key measures for attitudes and behaviors are Measuring Civic Readiness from the U.S.-based Institute of Education Sciences and the Assessment Framework from the International Civic and Citizenship Study at the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
**PACT’S ENHANCE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS AND GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY’S CIVIC EDUCATION WORK IN UKRAINE**

**DESCRIPTION OF WORK:** For the 2021–2022 school year, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) implemented the pilot of a new mandatory civic education course for fifth and sixth graders called “Culture of Good Neighborhood.” The course—the curricula of which integrated social and civic education competencies in the service of promoting tolerance, democratic values, and critical thinking—was initially developed as a primary school elective class. It endeavored to guarantee continuity of civic education and engagement pedagogical principles enmeshed in the “Culture of Good Neighborhood” curricula taught in grades one through six, and thus reinforced and strengthened the impact of the content.

As part of ensuring students learned and experienced the “Culture of Good Neighborhood” in meaningful and transformative ways, teachers themselves needed to undergo special training. Professionals involved with the pilot received instruction on the program and its curricula through Ukraine’s state system of postgraduate studies for teachers. Prior to the program’s inception, Pact’s Enhance Non-Governmental Actors and Grassroots Engagement encouraged additional teacher learning in July and August of 2021 as it assisted the MOES in organizing and implementing offline training of 43 educators and trainers from the “oblast in-service teacher-training centers” in preparation for the pilot. The same group of educators reconvened in September in an online workshop during which they mastered digital tools that facilitated instruction of “Culture of Good Neighborhood” online. In so doing, these teachers became well prepared to administer the course both in person and, should the need arise, online, if schools were to go virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic at that time. They additionally received methodological materials, educational webinars every two months, and mentorship. This further supported and built the capacity of educators to teach civics.

Similarly, throughout the life of the Enhance Non-Governmental Actors and Grassroots Engagement program, Pact, local partners, and education experts collaborated with the MOES on designing, piloting, and ultimately introducing a new online mandatory civic education course for Ukrainian tenth graders using www.citizen.in.ua.
RESULTS: 1,692 fifth and sixth graders were taught by 43 specially trained teachers in 63 classes. The tenth grade online civics course served 7,700 pupils during the 2020–2021 school year alone, while the previous three years saw a total of 17,750 students and 2,800 teachers using www.citizen.in.ua. Additionally, when civic literacy tests were administered to 239 tenth graders from 15 schools across 12 oblasts who were enrolled in the online class, the results showed that students’ knowledge demonstrated marked improvement. At the beginning of the course, only 55 percent of students could pass a civics test; by the end, over 83 percent of test-takers passed the same test (with 22 percent providing correct answers to all exam questions)!

COVID-19 CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS: Pact is creating an online version of the course for fifth and sixth graders, which will expand national access and guarantee opportunities for learning if schools close. As for the tenth grade civics class, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, both students and teachers across Ukraine had experience using the web-based course such that they continued easily accessing and engaging with its critical educational material, even when in-person instruction was suspended.
3
OUTSIDE-THE-CLASSROOM
AND UNIVERSITY
PROGRAMMING
3.1 WHAT DO WE KNOW: EVIDENCE REVIEW

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?
As discussed in section 1 of the primer, civic education among school-age children does not take place exclusively in the classroom. Especially at the secondary school and post-secondary levels, there are multiple other activities where students may learn about democratic political processes and in many cases apply that knowledge through participation in their school or local communities. One prominent form of outside-the-classroom civic education is “service-learning” where students, as part of their school curricula, engage with local officials, community organizations, or political groups in addressing local problems or political issues. Other common forms of outside-the-classroom civic education include participation in extracurricular activities such as student government or participation in youth leadership or advocacy programs. The latter type of activity is also common among university students and may take the form of “democracy camps” where students engage in a variety of activities, such as political debates and mock elections, over time.

It is a common intervention in USAID programming, as highlighted in the 2021 Youth Civic Education, Engagement, and Leadership Development report, with programs including Up to Youth in Kosovo and the Youthlead set of projects in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. These programs are designed for students to develop the skills and orientations to become future political leaders or community advocates themselves. This kind of program is at times also targeted toward marginalized or vulnerable groups or subpopulations to develop future leadership and voice capabilities for those communities (see Case Study 3, the Manos Visibles-implemented program for marginalized Afro-Descendant youth in Colombia).

As is the case with classroom-based civic education, there are thousands of studies examining these programs and their effects, making it difficult to generalize about the impact of these activities across different populations and political contexts. It might be presumed that these kinds of programs would have the potential for significant impact, given that their structure contains many of the features—i.e., active, participatory methodologies where students “learn by doing”—that have been shown in the classroom context to produce the greatest effects. At the same time, estimating the impact of these kinds of programs is more challenging than in the classroom case, as it is difficult to randomly assign individuals to “treatment” and “control” groups and track outcomes before and after program participation. Participation in these programs is typically “self-selected,” which makes it difficult to disentangle program effects from pre-existing democratic attitudes or participatory dispositions.

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46A Google Scholar search conducted on March 8, 2022 for work with the phrase “service learning” in the title yielded 27,700 results.
LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> How do we clarify the purpose for outside-the-classroom and university civic education programming?

> What set of interventions in outside-the-classroom and university civic education programming are most effective? Why? How do we choose interventions that connect to the purpose for the program?

> What are impediments to effective program design and implementation? What are strategies to mitigate these impediments?

> What are the constraints and opportunities of digitalizing outside-the-classroom and university civic education programs?

> Are there opportunities to integrate and include marginalized communities in the development and implementation of outside-the-classroom and university civic education programs?

> Effects of service-learning. Evidence on the impact of service-learning programs points generally to modest increases in political efficacy and awareness and stronger impacts on intentions to vote and other behavioral outcomes. Pasek et al., for example, studied the effect of the Student Voices program in the U.S. city of Philadelphia on a sample of 487 students. Student Voices was a civic education program that fostered discussion of civic issues but also contained a “service-learning” requirement for students to email candidates and public officials as well as discuss important topics on various forums online. Surveys from program participants and a matched control group one year after the program showed that participants in Student Voices were more likely to pay attention to politics and learn about candidates and feel like they could have a say in politics; it also reported that they were likely to vote. Similarly, Reimers et al., in one of the few experimental studies in the field, also found that students randomly assigned to a “participatory learning” community-based project connected to an eighth grade civics class in Mexico led to positive relationship impacts on several democratic attitudes and positive, though weaker, effects on future behavioral intentions. Similar experimental evidence is provided by Markus, wherein University of Michigan students in the U.S. were assigned to a community service section in an American politics class for which they did service in homeless shelters and women’s crisis centers or tutored high-risk students, showing substantially higher levels of intentions to serve others and work for social justice, and higher levels of political efficacy and tolerance than students randomly assigned to traditional discussion sections. Other confirmatory experimental evidence on the impact of service-learning programs can be found from Switzer et al. and Scales et al.

> Effects of extracurricular activities. Research into the effects of student participation in outside-the-classroom extracurricular activities such as student government, clubs, and debating societies has not been as extensive as is the case of service-learning. It is also more difficult to rule out self-selection biases in estimating the impact of these kinds of activities. Nevertheless, there is evidence that student involvement in extracurricular activities can be a significant source of civic learning and the development of participatory democratic orientations. Perhaps the most influential work in this area is by McFarland and Thomas, who used national surveys from 1988–2000 of over 10,000 students across the U.S. to demonstrate that membership in school service and academic clubs had some of the strongest impacts among a variety of independent variables on subsequent adult political participation. Interestingly, the clubs need not be explicitly political or civic in nature; similar effects

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47Pasek et al., “Schools as Incubators.”
48Reimers, Ortega, and Cardenas. “Empowering Teaching for Participatory Citizenship.”
were observed for participation in sports, art, and academic clubs. Keating and Janmaat report similar findings on school activities in a longitudinal study conducted in the United Kingdom. An interesting approach to controlling selection biases can be found in a study of Swedish citizens conducted by Lundin et al. The authors demonstrate that students who were barely elected to student unions at universities are about 34 percent more likely to run for public office than students who barely lost student union elections. By comparing only students who barely won to those who barely lost, Lundin et al. are able to control, to a considerable extent, selection effects—i.e., the fact that all people in their study chose to run for student union elections and thereby are more inclined to be activists in the first place. Therefore, in this context, there is strong evidence that participation in collegiate associations can increase the likelihood of running for public office—a very costly form of political engagement.

> Effects of leadership programs and youth advocacy groups. There are also positive findings regarding the effects of outside-the-classroom youth leadership and advocacy groups. Terriquez, in a well-known study, examined a sample of 410 alumni of nonprofit youth organizing groups in California. These groups typically recruit from urban, low-income, and racially diverse populations and focus on solving problems in those communities. By comparing participants in these youth organizing groups to the population at large, as well as a selected sample of former student government leaders, Terriquez shows that youth advocacy group participants were far more likely to volunteer, protest, and be registered to vote. Terriquez argues that these groups build civic capacity through opportunities to engage with public audiences and work collaboratively, and by providing hands-on participation in community

55Ibid.
problem-solving. There is some supportive experimental evidence about the effects of leadership training as well. Wong et al. randomly assigned students from the same secondary grades in Hong Kong to a control condition or a treatment condition consisting of 20 hours of leadership training and participation in volunteer services. This program showed positive though not statistically significant effects overall on student self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, there were effects on both of these orientations among women when analyzed separately. Females in the sample started with lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, indicating that leadership training may work best on those who have the most room for growth and may be most effective if it were to be targeted at marginalized or low-efficacy participants. This may be contradictory to conventional practice, given that the overwhelming majority of such programs are voluntary and hence attract those most inclined to take the training in the first place. Nevertheless, the findings in this area provide supportive evidence that youth advocacy, leadership, and empowerment interventions common to USAID programming can have important civic learning and participatory impacts (see case study #3 below on the Manos Visibles-implemented program for marginalized Afro-descendant youth in Colombia).

**BOX 15: INCREASING ACCESS FOR WOMEN THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS**

**Aswat**, which means “voices” in Arabic, strives to be an uncensored online space for activists and reformers from throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Iran. Aswat includes online e-learning modules in multiple languages on building the leadership skills of young women and on women and public communication so that women can access these training materials.

**IMPACTS FOR WHOM AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?**

The finding that outside-the-classroom civics-related programs may exert an impact on those in greatest “need”—that is, those with lower levels of pre-existing civic competence and participatory dispositions—echoes that of the classroom-based literature. Other findings regarding the conditions under which outside-the-classroom activities have the most powerful impacts also parallel the conclusions reached earlier. That is, the activities should:

- Be of longer duration.
- Engage participants in meaningful and personally relevant activities.
- Engage participants where possible with local elected officials or bureaucrats to promote “learning by doing” policy-relevant actions.
- Involve teachers (in the case of service-learning) who are well trained and likely to make use of supportive teaching strategies.

*Taken together, the results from both classroom and outside-the-classroom civic education interventions reinforce the notion that well-designed and well-implemented programs can have substantial positive impacts on a host of outcomes relevant to democratic citizenship.*

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3.2 WHAT DO WE DO: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Outside-the-classroom and post-secondary civic education programs have some similarities in structure, purpose, and process. The focus of these efforts is on experience and application. They can complement a classroom-based program, but they can also stand alone to support the development of civic KSDA in the local community and usually focus on the 16–25 year old demographic. Numerous types of civic education are delivered through informal education and post-secondary programming.59

> General civic knowledge: Out-of-school training intended to transfer basic knowledge, skills, and values.
> Issue-based or rights knowledge: Training/education on specific political issues or rights questions.
> Voter education: Education on the “whys and hows” of voting, generally with an emphasis on the importance of participation and respect for the democratic process.
> Civil society creation/mobilization: Education on the skills and knowledge needed to generate citizen participation through CSOs (e.g., community organizations, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], education institutions, faith-based groups); contains a strong element of support for civil society.
> Community/group problem-solving: Education concerning the skills and knowledge needed to address particular issues or problems, often focused on gaining government attention.

Key components in designing an effective outside-of-the-classroom program are understanding the context of the program, identifying clear goals grounded in the research around civic education, analyzing the local context to determine needs, and identifying the key strategies that can help the community reach those goals. The most important components for implementing outside-of-the-classroom programs are communication, partnerships, and program evaluation.

DESIGN APPROACHES

The first steps in designing outside-the-classroom and university programming are identifying the context and needs for the program and clarifying the goals for the program. These are similar to what was discussed in section 2 for designing classroom-based programming. Two common purposes for these programs are developing political awareness and leadership development. Another common element and focus for these programs is making civic learning and democracy engagement committed to equity and serving underserved populations.

The next step is to identify the strategies and instructional approaches that best meet the objectives and goals of the program. As seen in the evidence review, some common practices demonstrate the success that exists across outside-the-classroom and university programs—strategies that can be used in these environments are service-learning, extracurricular programming, and leadership development. The design of civic education programming outside of the school environment involves making choices about how and when to use digital technologies to build the kind of citizens participants should hopefully become. Citizenship itself is not an unchanging set of activities and attitudes,60 and civic education must evolve to suit the needs of citizens and the social, political, and communication worlds they inhabit. It seems clear that many opportunities for meaningful civic learning exist in online environments using technologies that are familiar and appealing to digital natives, a term coined to refer to people born after 1980 and coming of age with interactive, convergent digital

When building a hybrid approach to civic education, it is critical to ground it in context and goals and then build in natural opportunities to engage in civic life online, reflecting on what kinds of engagement experiences are available. Digital media and web networks offer great potential for reinvigorating participation. The goal is to break down arbitrary distinctions between private and public as well as commercial and civic so that the best features of different online and offline environments enhance the potential of learning to participate effectively in politics.

**BOX 17: DEMOCRACY: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

Based on the International Foundation for Electoral Systems’ Global Civic Education Methodology for Higher Education Institutions, “Democracy: from Theory to Practice” is a semester-long, university-level civic education course in Ukraine. The course was introduced in Ukraine in 2018, and today is on offer at 46 universities in 20 regions, with nearly 10,000 alumni who have already completed the program. It is designed to deepen skills and knowledge by not only teaching students about democratic citizenship in the digital age, but also helping them experience it in the classroom through student-centered, interactive teaching methodology.

**INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES**

**1 SERVICE-LEARNING**

As seen in the evidence review, there are two decades of research on the impact of service-learning. Service-learning is an experiential approach that engages students holistically in their learning, which allows them to identify and address issues in their school and community that really matter to them. It is critical to ensure there is a clear connection between civic education outcomes identified and service to the community by working with students to find a service project that will help them meet those objectives. One of service-learning’s greatest benefits is that it is a malleable approach that can be adapted to fit a variety of age levels, learning settings, curricular needs, and time frames and it allows students to co-create their learning experiences.

According to Ash and Clayton, three primary learning goals drive the instructional design of both the service experience and critical reflection process: academic enhancement, personal growth, and civic learning. Designing high-impact service-learning programs requires a focus on real-world application combined with reflection on experience.

**2 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Most extracurricular activities take place outside traditional classroom settings and allow students to study in an environment where they can apply what they learn in class to real-life contexts, using their knowledge and skills in meaningful civic-rich experiences and scenarios. Participation in extracurricular activities gives many young people a sense of self-efficacy and a feeling that they are part of something important. Students who have a strong sense of self and what they have to offer are more

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64 George Kuh. High-Impact Educational Practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008).
likely to find positive ways to contribute to their communities and society. In many countries, young people today have access to a vast array of extracurricular activities, depending on their areas of interest. Programs like yearbook clubs, school newspapers, and blog columns engage students in reading, writing, and general communication skills development. Vocational clubs can also offer students the chance to work with their peers and community partners in addressing local community needs and aspirations.

Research stresses that students should choose extracurricular activities based on their genuine interests; activities should be structured, organized, scheduled regularly, and led by an adult; activities should require effort on the part of the student.65 Extracurricular learning settings are conducive to helping students develop a clear sense of how they fit into the larger community and how they can contribute, whether it be in a school group, community club, or a blend of the two.

3 LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Contemporary trends in leadership education emphasize paradigms of learning and educational practices associated with developing responsible citizens, furthering higher education’s civic mission. Yet, few introductory leadership courses include an explicit civic component.66 Leadership programs with a civic purpose can be a catalyst to explore and engage the learning nexus of social challenges, leadership, and civic engagement. Many leadership programs emphasize relational, socially responsible, adaptive leadership;67 such programs have the potential to lead the way in fulfilling the civic purposes of education. Crislip and O’Malley define civic leadership as leadership “for the common good.” They suggest everyone share in both the problems and opportunities of civic life; therefore, everyone has a responsibility to mobilize and energize others to make progress on civic challenges.

4 POLITICAL AWARENESS, VOICE, AND INTEGRATION OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Political awareness and integration of marginalized communities are important aspects when building civic education programming both inside and outside the classroom and university civic education programs. In general, those that have higher socioeconomic status usually start at higher levels in terms of political participation and knowledge; they also tend to engage in civic education activities more frequently due to their prior store of personal and political resources. Focusing on including marginalized communities in the planning and implementation of civic education programs should be a high priority for those designing and implementing civic education programming.

To be most effective, civic education programs should be designed around themes that are immediately relevant to people’s daily lives. This recommendation is consistent with a large body of literature on political participation: people act on specific problems or events that are immediately important to them. Therefore, in designing civic education projects, program designers should begin with the assumption that the target audience will act in its own self-interest and then work democracy and governance lessons into programs that address those interests.68


IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of these programs should include frequent connections of the project to the goals and outcomes determined at the beginning of the process. Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee found that instructors who frequently connected the project to clear goals facilitated a learning relationship whereby the experience enhanced academic understanding that in turn enhanced the service experience. Throughout the implementation of the project, students should reflect on the project and academic learning to assess their learning. This ensures that participation in the program is impacting academic learning and enhancing social learning and civic outcomes.

DIGITAL APPROACHES

While service-learning, student government, youth leadership and advocacy programs, and other forms of extracurricular activities often require direct, person-to-person engagement, many aspects of these types of projects can be mediated or augmented by technology.

Mediation and augmentation can be additive to existing programs, such as building online spaces for people working collaboratively to share ideas, catalog results, and manage information. As with other types of digital engagement, there are many ways that such additions can be constructed, from informal chat groups and document-sharing to highly rigorous and well-organized customized spaces for projects to build relevant small data or large data sets.

Digital approaches can also expand the scope of such projects (e.g., creating social networks of people with common interests from different institutions, life experiences, or countries for comparison and mutual learning, or finding and adopting the experience of others to local contexts based on those networks). Such networks may be useful for donors, implementers, teachers, and students.

Such programs may also be designed and run entirely through mediating platforms. There is an increasingly long history of such projects, from the wave of online spaces that civic institutions created specifically for the early virtual universe Second Life to civic engagement and advocacy opportunities managed through online chat spaces and group video, to virtual world hangouts (such as Gather Town), to projects that use existing video games for civic learning (such as Minecraft—see Build the Vote—or Fortnite) or even create new games for the purpose. There are also numerous efforts to create virtual reality games to support civic education, and there will undoubtedly be similar projects in next-generation integrations of social media platforms with virtual worlds.

With any of these potential engagements, the same cautions apply. The use of technology does not substitute intentional project design, well-constructed materials, attention to participant selection, goal creation, and the creation of appropriate feedback loops. Projects augmented or mediated, however, when carefully designed, can introduce elements of scale, diversity, play, experience, and serendipity not possible with projects based exclusively in real-world spaces.

An example of this approach is the use of Media Cloud, a set of tools that helps users to perform advanced searches into large datasets of media stories and identify common keywords, phrases, and other associations, thus building a careful understanding of the effects of the news media on information spaces.

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71Ibid.
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE: YOUTH PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN SERBIA

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: USAID/Serbia’s Government Accountability Initiative (GAI) began implementing the student participatory budgeting activity as a pilot in 2019 in the northern city of Sombor. With the assistance and advocacy of GAI, Sombor’s 2020 budget planning process gave special consideration to engaging and empowering the city’s youth to identify projects directly impacting their education. GAI and Sombor City Administration subsequently worked with student parliaments across five local high schools using an outreach campaign. They ultimately engaged 2,700 students—or 80 percent of Sombor’s high school students—to come together to propose and vote upon practical projects that would have tangible impacts on their education. The winning proposal was for the purchase of air conditioners for the town’s high school.

In subsequent years, the activity expanded. For the 2021 budget cycle, approximately 15,000 children from 27 high schools in the cities of Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Novi Pazar, and Kragujevac selected projects aimed at improving overall teaching and learning environments. Over two months, the students identified and proposed initiatives, organized the voting, and chose projects for which the four local governments consequently allocated a total of RSD ~$145,000.

By Year 3, the youth program was such a success that GAI expanded eligibility to elementary and high school children in eight municipalities. The four cities that participated during Year 2 were newly joined by four more municipalities: Belgrade City Municipality of Stari Grad, Dimitrovgrad, Raška, and Mionica. About 23,000 kids from 40 schools took part; furthermore, of those schools, eight were elementary schools comprised of 2,000 elementary-age kids. For the year 2022, local governments allocated more than USD $216,000 to financing projects chosen by Serbian students.
RESULTS: Over the three years during which the program ran, more than 42,000 kids engaged in local budgeting processes resulting in more than USD $404,000 allocated to student-proposed projects. As a means of ensuring the sustainability of the children’s efforts, GAI collaborated with local governments to review student (and municipal) processes, identify weaknesses, draft internal documents for local governments to formalize the students’ processes, and propose improved methods of service delivery.

CHALLENGES: At the programming’s outset, GAI determined that in Sombor—one of the first locales to partner with GAI—“like in...many other local self-governments in Serbia, the public expresses little interest to get involved in decision-making.” To combat “local community apathy,” GAI developed a “public-engagement action plan” endeavoring to bring “discussion to the people, organizing events and public consultations on the draft budget.” Both city administration and GAI liaised with local high school student parlaments to encourage youth buy-in and participation. Community engagement was complemented by a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign with tailored messaging and activities: for instance, posters, radio jingles, and billboards were created in a variety of languages, thereby inviting the entire multiethnic city to participate in decision-making. Youth involvement was fostered further with slogans, posters, and even ballots designed by student parlaments. Finally, GAI facilitated Sombor’s rollout of community consultation events and helped organize ballot voting in schools. GAI’s targeted and persistent efforts to facilitate community engagement and exchange raised their activities’ profiles while generating interest and excitement, thereby helping to offset apathy.

COVID-19 ADAPTATION: When COVID-19 required schools to move online, student parliament representatives took the lead in promoting the local budget planning process and organized voting through various channels (either in person or online using Google Classroom, Viber, etc.). The student organizers ultimately managed to present selected projects to the local government in the agreed timeframe. Such youth-led innovative adaptations of the budgeting activity evinced the program’s importance to all involved and were an excellent way for communities to engage when COVID-19 dictated isolation.
4 INFORMAL ADULT PROGRAMMING
WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?
Civic education is not only targeted toward youth, either in or outside the classroom—there is an extensive array of programming conducted by USAID and many other international donors that is targeted toward ordinary citizens of all ages.

As noted in section 1, these programs are intended to foster supportive democratic attitudes, values, and behaviors among adults, especially in emerging democratic contexts where sources of socialization processes supporting democratic culture—such as classroom-based civic education—have not taken place and where most citizens have experienced only autocratic rule.

Donors and implementers have conducted a wide range of such programs over the past several decades, from voter mobilization to programs that provide instruction about the social and political rights of women to neighborhood problem-solving programs that bring individuals in contact with local authorities to promote local collective action, to programs combating election violence and vote-buying, and to programs promoting tolerance and the peaceful resolution of political disputes. They vary considerably in terms of intensity or dosage, from social and behavioral change messaging (e.g., providing information to voters through mass media) on one extreme to intensive formal education programs that look like youth classroom-based education on the other.

Evaluations of the effectiveness of adult civic education are not nearly as prevalent as in the youth-based civic education academic and policy literature. The field emerged only in the late 1990s, with studies conducted by Bratton et al.74 in Zambia and an evaluation of a series of USAID-sponsored adult programs in the Dominican Republic, Poland, and South Africa led by Finkel and colleagues, and summarized in several USAID and academic publications.75 USAID continued to play a leading role in subsequent evaluations of the Uraia (citizenship) programs related to constitutional change in Kenya in 2001–2003 and the follow-up civic education campaign related to the contested election of 2009.76 These evaluations were observational, using retrospective or longitudinal survey designs, and hence fell short of RCTs for making inferences about program effectiveness. Over the past decade, however, experimental work sponsored by USAID and other donors has increased exponentially, as have the outcomes that have been considered in the program evaluations. Studies have examined not only the impacts on citizen competence and democratic values such as political tolerance but also accountability-related outcomes such as performance voting (as opposed to clientelistic voting) and outcomes related to electoral integrity and the peaceful resolution of political conflicts. There is also a massive experimental literature on voter mobilization, both in advanced and emerging democracies, exploring how interventions of various kinds can promote voter registration, turnout, and in some cases, other forms of political participation.

As in the youth-based civic education literature, generalizations are difficult about the effects of the disparate interventions that have been examined. Nevertheless, key findings have emerged that are consistent across both the observational and experimental literature. Much work suggests positive impacts of adult civic education interventions on democratic dispositions and behaviors, some quite large in magnitude and longer than seen in youth-based evaluations. Importantly, though, this literature also points to the possibility of negative impacts on some outcomes and the overriding impact of pedagogical and program design factors on the magnitude and significance of the impacts on program participants. These positive findings are discussed in this section; the subsequent section discusses some of the conditional and contextual factors that may lead to negative impacts of adult civic education programs.

LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> How do we clarify the purpose for informal adult civic education programming?
> What set of interventions in informal adult civic education programming are most effective? Why?
> How do we choose interventions that connect to the purpose for the program?
> How do we build informal adult civic education programs to maximize the potential for the impact on the desired citizenship outcomes?
> What are the barriers to developing informal adult civic education programs? What are strategies to mitigate the barriers?
> What are the constraints and opportunities of digitalizing informal adult civic education programs?
> Are there opportunities to integrate and include marginalized communities in the development and implementation of informal adult programs?
> Are there opportunities to engage with other programs already in place that may not be traditional informal adult civic education? How can these be identified?
> Where does the work of adult informal civic education programming usually take place? Are there non-traditional formats to take advantage of when designing civic education programs?
> What are strategies to leverage non-traditional partners and programs to enhance informal adult civic education programming?

The most important positive findings from the adult literature are:

> **Political participation:** The consistent and relatively large effect of civic education exposure on local-level political participation. This was especially so in programs such as Grupo Acción por la Democracia in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1990s, which brought individuals into contact with local government officials in order to address community problems. The finding dovetails nicely with the evidence shown above in section 3 regarding youth advocacy programs, which also have “hands-on” components in collaboration with local officials. Increased political participation and participatory inclinations have been found in numerous other adult program evaluations ranging from town hall meetings on democracy and security issues in Liberia to a Pakistani women’s voter mobilization program.

BOX 19: CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT ON WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In many emerging democracies, women are less likely to vote than men and, when they do vote, are likely to follow the wishes of male household and clan heads. A study in Pakistan assessed the impact of a civic education campaign on female turnout, candidate choice, and party vote shares. Compared to women in control clusters, both targeted and untargeted women in treated clusters were 11 percentage points more likely to vote and were also more likely to exercise independence in candidate choice, while data from polling stations suggests that treating 10 women increased female turnout by about seven votes.

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> **Engagement in the political system:** The often powerful effect of adult civic education on citizens’ knowledge about democratic political processes and perceptions of their own competence to engage the political system (“political efficacy”). In the USAID-sponsored Uraia evaluations in Kenya mentioned above, for example, some 60 percent of individuals who attended civic education activities increased to some extent their general political knowledge compared with just over 30 percent of control group individuals who registered positive change.81 In nearly every country in the series of USAID-sponsored evaluations, civic education programs fostered an increased sense of “internal political efficacy,” or a belief in the individual’s abilities to influence the political system. In the 2002–2003 Kenya study, for example, the treatment group showed nearly double the probability of increasing political efficacy over time than the control group.

> **Political tolerance:** The detectable, though more limited, effects of adult civic education on indicators of democratic values such as political tolerance. As might be expected, it proves more difficult to change deep-seated values such as tolerance and effect change in orientations toward political opponents and rival ethnic groups. Yet even on these kinds of orientations, adult civic education can exert some impact. Finkel and Smith82 found supportive evidence regarding political tolerance in the 2002–2003 Kenya study, Collier and Vincente83 found significant positive effects on attitudes against electoral violence in Nigeria, and Paluck and Green84 (highlighted in Box 20) and Blattman et al.85 found increased support for the peaceful resolution of ethnic and land conflicts in Rwanda and Liberia, respectively.

> **Voter turnout:** The positive effect of civic education information campaigns on the prevalence of performance-oriented voting, which is casting votes based on the performance of incumbents in office as opposed to ethnic or clientelistic grounds. Adult programs have been found, for example, to lead Malian voters to hold elites accountable to a greater extent for office-based performance,86 to lead to fewer instances of vote-buying in Sierra Leone,87 and to lead voters to withdraw support from incumbents who have engaged in significant amounts of corruption while in office.88

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81Finkel, “The Impact of the Kenya National Civic Education Programme.”
82Finkel and Smith, “Civic Education, Political Discussion, and the Social Transmission of Democratic Knowledge and Values.”
In addition to these core results on the effects of adult civic education, several more tentative findings of note have emerged, primarily from the aforementioned USAID evaluations in Kenya, for example:

> **Spillover impact**: Significant “spillover” effects in the Kenya 2002–2003 study, whereby effects on participation, knowledge, and even political tolerance were registered for non-participants (that is, individuals who did not attend workshops themselves) via post-workshop discussions with participants in their families or social networks. This finding shows the potential of amplifying the effects of interventions that go well beyond the relatively small number of individuals directly exposed to the civic education content.

> **Participation at the local level**: Significant longer-term effects of adult civic education exposure in the 2008–2009 Kenya study. In that study, all post-civic education surveys were conducted at least 15 months after the Uraia activities ended, making it possible to compare program participants with non-participants over the longer term. The findings showed that individuals who were exposed to civic education workshops were significantly more participatory at the local level, more knowledgeable about politics, more politically efficacious, more aware of how to defend their rights, and more informed about constitutional issues and the desirability of public involvement in the constitutional review process than were “matched” control group individuals.

**IMPACTS FOR WHOM AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?**

> **Political context**: Perhaps the most important qualification to the mainly positive findings in this section concerns the political context in which adult civic education takes place. Studies have found that civic education exposure may lead in particular to lower levels of political-institutional trust, satisfaction with democracy, and democratic political processes; in some instances, lower levels of political participation are found as well.

Finkel and Lim (2021) suggest that adult civic education follows what they call a “supply and demand” model of effects: while adult civic education is designed to promote positive support for democracy and democratic norms and values—or the “demand” for democratic governance—it may also highlight discrepancies between democratic ideals and ongoing democratic practices and hence generate negative perceptions of the regime’s “supply” of democratic outcomes such as transparent, effective, and impartial governance.

In many emerging democracies and electoral autocracies, the objective supply of democracy is indeed deficient. In these cases, there may be lower levels of support for poorly performing institutions, incumbents, and the political regime itself. Such findings have been reported as far back as the first USAID evaluations in the Dominican Republic and South Africa, where adult civic education led to declines in institutional trust in the former context and increases in trust in the latter, reflecting the different democratizing political contexts in which the programs took place. Similar findings are reported in Moehler’s89 account of constitution-building civic education in Uganda, in decreased levels of political engagement in a participatory budgeting program in Peru, and in the aforementioned studies showing increased accountability in Sierra Leone and Mexico. In some contexts, as individuals learn about the problems and possible dysfunctions in ongoing political institutions, their support for those institutions may then decline. Of course, this finding, while showing negative directional effects of civic education, may still be viewed as normatively positive, as individuals who are more critical of poorly

In sum, there is considerable evidence, from both observational and experimental studies, that adult civic education programs can be an important source of political knowledge, political empowerment, inclination to participate in democratic politics, and tendency to hold political elites accountable via performance-oriented voting.

The effects, moreover, are sometimes seen to spill over to non-participants and, at least in one study, to be relatively long-lasting. Effects on democratic values such as political tolerance and rejection of political violence are also detectable but of significantly smaller magnitude.

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Civil society members participate in a workshop in March 2022 on theoretical and conceptual frameworks for public debate and civic-political participation as part of USAID Morocco’s Inclusive Civic Education Citizen Lab project. 

Photo: USAID/Bureau for the Middle East

functioning institutions and processes may catalyze future positive changes in democratic politics.

As with classroom-based education, several similar important conditional effects emerge from adult civic education evaluations:

> **Frequency of attendance:** As in the student-based literature, features of the program design are of critical importance in producing desired effects. The frequency of attendance at civic education activities is the most important determinant of individual change. Individuals who attend only one or two events often showed little change in democratic orientations, whereas there were relatively large gains—even on deep-seated democratic values such as political tolerance—from multiple workshop exposures.90

> **Active and participatory methods:** Civic education activities that incorporate more active, participatory teaching methods as opposed to lecture-based instruction are significantly more effective in stimulating democratic change.

> **High-quality instructors:** Civic education activities with instructors that were perceived to be of higher quality also led to a greater impact among those trained in each of the USAID evaluations. Quality organization and competent facilitators matter greatly in determining the magnitude of civic education’s impact.91

These findings give pause to an unequivocally positive conclusion regarding the impact of adult civic education interventions. They point, moreover, to the critical ways that program effects may be influenced by the political context, the design and pedagogical content of the programs, the quality of the program facilitators, and the kinds of individuals that are most likely to be affected.

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**BOX 21: KEY STEPS FOR EVALUATIONS INCLUDE:**

> Conducting a needs assessment for determining the topics or content areas on which to focus civic education.

> Engaging relevant agency cross-sectoral divisions, CSOs, other international donors, and/or academic and research partners.

> Arriving at the form, delivery mechanisms, and facilitator training components of the intervention. This may include a focus on strengthening media and information literacy. The EU at the United Nations shares some illustrations of how CSOs can contribute to preventing or tackling disinformation and misinformation, both online and offline, that may be useful in building adult civic education programming.

> Developing indicators for assessing program outcomes and conducting relevant IEs for assessing program effects.

These steps are not strictly sequential. The design and delivery of the intervention, for example, should be informed at the outset by the need for IEs of program effects. This will affect the design, roll-out, and other aspects of the interventions.

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90Finkel, “Can Democracy Be Taught?”

PARTNERSHIPS

Adult civic education programs are typically implemented in partnership with local or transnational civil society and non-profit organizations with both the capacity and the ties to particular communities that allow for the effective delivery of program content. The availability and capabilities of such organizations will of course vary greatly depending on the particular context, and identifying appropriate implementing partners should be a high priority for ensuring program success. Two examples of these kinds of organizations have already been highlighted in the case studies from earlier sections of the primer:

> **Pact** is an international non-profit organization that implemented the Promoting Civic Education and Engagement in Ukraine program in partnership with local academic experts and local CSOs; the program consisted of the classroom and teacher training elements highlighted in case study 1 (see section 2) as well as youth community action and adult digital media components relating to corruption awareness.

> **Manos Visibles** is an international non-profit promoting inclusive development in Colombia that implemented the Desarrollo Autónomo Liderazgo Efectivo (DALE; translation: Autonomous Development of Effective Leadership) youth leadership program in Colombia, also in collaboration with local CSOs.

These organizations, as well as counterparts in the U.S. and elsewhere (for example, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab) can provide capacity for the development of program content and facilitator training materials and assist in conducting baseline surveys and in developing designs and data collection strategies for evaluating program impact. They can also engage academic partners with expertise in particular areas of civic education content, program design, and delivery.

Other notable partnerships exist for successful collaborations in adult civic education initiatives, among them:

> **Partnering with other international donors:**

    Partnerships are critical in order to maximize the resources available for program development, implementation, and evaluation. For example, the two Kenya Uraia evaluations in 2002–2003 and 2009 conducted by USAID and discussed in section 4.1 were collaborations with multiple European and North American donors (the “Like-Minded Donors” group).

> **Partnering with local elected officials:**

    Working with local officials to provide access to, and interactions with, government operations is a key component for effective adult civic education programs. For example, the Civic Forum program highlighted at the beginning of this primer works with local officials to engage groups formed through the program to work on community problem-solving activities. The strong impacts shown in this section for “hands-on, learning-by-doing” adult civic education programs speak to the importance of this kind of partnership.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

Numerous approaches are available for the delivery of adult civic education content, each with certain advantages and drawbacks in terms of their ability to reach, engage, and affect program participants. These approaches include:

> **Interactions between groups of program participants and local elected officials:** This approach to adult civic education is similar to that employed in many youth advocacy or leadership programs, where selected individuals and groups of individuals work on political issues or problems of community relevance and collaborate with local officials in formulating solutions. Examples include NDI's Civic Forum programs used in some 40 countries worldwide and the USAID-sponsored Grupo Acción por la Democracia program in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1990s, where groups of individuals were brought together with local government authorities in a series of issue forums discussing problems and solutions in policy areas such as justice, health, and education.92

> **Community and town hall meetings:** This is perhaps the most common mode of adult civic education content delivery, utilized in nearly all the USAID programs that were the subject of the IEs discussed in section 4.1. For example, in the Voter Opinion and Involvement Through Civic Education program designed to raise awareness, knowledge, and empowerment regarding decentralization and

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92 Finkel, “Can Democracy Be Taught?”
the democratic process in the Democratic Republic of Congo, facilitators presented content via 13 images ("Boîte à Images") explaining decentralization and democracy in two- to three-hour-long village workshops attended by upwards of 100 individuals. However, research strongly suggests that civic education programs involving “one-off” workshops or community events are less effective, which should be factored into programming decisions.93

> **Face-to-face interactions:** In this approach, individuals or individual households may be selected for the program based on (ideally, random) assignment within neighborhoods or villages; trained canvassers then provide the desired content directly to those individuals. This approach has been utilized extensively in, among other areas, voter mobilization such as the World Bank-sponsored program among Pakistani women.94

> **Distribution of content:** This approach has been utilized in many election-related civic education programs; for example, in an ActionAid International Nigeria program designed to counter attitudes and behavioral dispositions toward election violence in the 2007 Nigerian national elections and in an Innovations for Poverty Action program in Mexico that provided information about the misuse of public funds in Mexican municipalities in advance of mayoral elections in 2009 in order to promote greater political accountability and performance-oriented voting.95 In both cases, flyers containing information related to program content were distributed to thousands of households in (randomly) selected municipalities.

> **Mass media programming:** Utilizing mass media communication outlets such as radio or television or conveying information in artistic forms such as plays or puppet shows are common means of adult civic education content delivery. For example, the World Bank’s *Africa Good Governance Programme on the Radio Waves* from the mid-2000s was a distance-learning program related to transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment that was transmitted via satellite radio to municipalities in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The use of radio technology was also combined with the group workshop approach in Paluck and Green’s evaluation of a Dutch NGO-sponsored program designed to promote ethnic tolerance in the wake of the Rwandan genocide96 (referenced above in Box 20).

> **Digital technologies:** The subsequent section discusses the growing prevalence and potential of digital civic education programming; highlighted here are just a few examples.

These modes of adult civic education content delivery have respective advantages and drawbacks. One important difference between the modes is in the number of individuals that can typically be reached, with Internet and media interventions having vastly larger potential reach than the more limited group-based modalities. At the same time, the information in mass media and Internet programs is typically received more passively and in isolation from others, while the workshop and local official programs can involve more intensive discussions and participatory features along with social processes that can amplify the civic education messages that are received. It is also the case that many adult civic education programs delivered via workshop and group-based methods are “one-off” events, which can limit their effectiveness, while Internet and media interventions have at least the potential for multiple exposures, though little is known yet about the impact of those forms of civic education delivery. Further, teacher and facilitator training and development of program curricula are of critical importance in the workshop and group-based approaches, while information campaigns relying on printed matter delivered face-to-face or via mass media and Internet modalities require engaging and, if possible, interactive elements but with fewer facilitator training components.

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93Ibid.
94Giné and Mansuri, “Together We Will.”
95Collier and Vicente, “Votes and Violence”; Chong et al., “Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope?”
96Paluck, Levy, and Green, “Deference, Dissent, and Dispute Resolution.”
BOX 22

In general, programs should be considered along the dimensions shown in section 4.1 to maximize the potential for impact on the desired citizenship outcomes:

> More frequent exposure to information.
> Information delivered via interactive and participatory methodologies.
> Information delivered by high-quality, well-trained facilitators.
> Potential for social interactions leading to “spillover” effects.
> Information targeted toward individuals or groups in the greatest “need,” with fewer pre-existing participatory resources and facing more obstacles to engaging the political process.

DIGITAL APPROACHES

Informal adult education conducted through digital technologies to support civic participation has a history as long as the use of such technologies. Internet chat relays, email lists and groups, group texts, MOOCs, and online games all feature experiments in civics education and practice. There continues to be robust experimentation in the space, as described by Schreier in Games for Civics or Udemonia, a game designed to promote civic engagement, and as augmenting and mediating technologies evolve, efforts to build civic spaces to educate citizens in civic practices should continue.

Examples such as the hacktivist spaces of Arab technologists who worked together for years prior to the Arab Uprisings, often with minimal or no funding assistance, demonstrate the power of peer learning and exchange in the service of civic goals. Here, the key learning is that the very existence of open technologies to support networked societies that allow users to configure and build the spaces they need may be the most fundamentally important kind of engagement.

BOX 23

OurCity is the product of a partnership between NetHope, USAID, E-Line Media, Arizona State University’s Center for Games and Impact, and local Jordanian companies and NGOs. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme has also provided funding to support the game in Jordan.

“OurCity includes ‘real world’ activities for players, such as volunteer opportunities, and multiple in-game civic engagement features. The goal is to help young people develop the civic knowledge, awareness, and motivation they need to become engaged citizens who work together to make communities stronger, healthier, and better able to meet the needs of the people who live in them,” said NetHope Program Manager Sherry Youssef. “In this beta period, we are seeking feedback about the civic engagement features and anything else to help us make sure we balance entertainment value with serious civic education learning.”

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Peer learning projects for civics also have more structured manifestations, especially in open educational resources projects such as P2PU. In this and similar projects—whether on customized platforms, wikis, or through the use of standard commercial software applications—communities design and share curricula, run courses, and share knowledge. These programs range from the highly informal to training workshops or formal classes offered by accredited institutions such as Duke University’s Civic Engagement in American Democracy on Coursera or Stanford’s Civic Online Reasoning, highlighted in Box 24.

**BOX 24: “SORTING TRUTH FROM FICTION”: CIVIC ONLINE REASONING**

This online course, “Sorting Truth from Fiction,” focuses on helping educators learn teaching practices that help students become savvy consumers of digital information. This course was built with educators from around the world and faculty from MIT and Stanford University, focusing on helping educators learn quick and effective practices for evaluating online information. These practices have been distilled from observations with professional fact-checkers from the nation’s most prestigious media outlets from across the political spectrum. The course engages educators with a combination of readings, classroom practice lessons, and assignments, to learn how to teach the critical thinking skills needed for making wise judgments about web sources.

MOOCs occupy a notable role in this space. Educational courses, both for credit and simply for knowledge, have been exceedingly popular over the past decade. Whether MOOCs are effective tools for civic education, however, depends on similar factors for other approaches to learning: quality of instruction, degree of and processes for engagement and participation, selection of students, and participant access to high-quality Internet services.

Examples of MOOC platforms include Coursera and edX, university-funded MOOCs such as HarvardX, government-supported efforts such as European Citizen Action Service courses in digital citizenship and participation funded by the EU, the European Trade Union Committee for Education’s Citizenship and Human Rights Education for Change, or the University of Birmingham’s Transforming Citizen Participation.

Also, there are key lessons for donors about timelines, expectations of outcomes, and funding levels for technology-related projects. The overarching message for donors is that choosing a technology platform creates a path dependency for the success or failure of a project. Investments in technology, or in learning how to use a specific platform, are zero-sum, non-fungible expenses. Donor-driven projects are often responsive to budgetary or institutional timelines, rather than project-based timelines, which in practice results in late starts, rushed beginnings, and late deliverables. And yet, rushed decision-making and failure to properly assess technology skills and preferences when choosing platforms and approaches can be fatal for projects, and there are no second chances. Moreover, funder constraints that interfere with or restrict project course correction or adaptation that comes with learning can be damaging or fatal.

Donors, therefore, need to have a thorough understanding of the field, including implementation processes and timelines, if they are considering funding in this area. They should properly invest in up-front research into platform selection, organizational skills, access to technology providers, user interest, surveying, and connecting with partners and stakeholders. They should also identify and suggest threshold points in project design before resources are irrevocably committed to specific project pathways.
In 2020 alone, USAID empowered more than 5,000 youth to participate in civic activities ranging from local responses to COVID-19 to peacebuilding initiatives to efforts to counter disinformation. Photo: USAID/Georgia

Further, the findings on conditional effects in other studies in related fields can be transposed to digital contexts. There is a burgeoning field of analysis of the effectiveness of digital interventions. Some general principles from this field include:

- Partial, infrequent, or distracted participation is less likely to lead to learning, and therefore less likely to lead to change. Digital equivalents of “one-off” engagements are most likely useful only for awareness.

- Pedagogy in the use of technologies that has been demonstrated to be effective in other educational contexts applies here as well, both in translating best practices from unmediated to mediated environments and in creating attentive, participatory learning environments.

- In mediated contexts, quality of production and presentation does matter; however, there are no unified standards and expectations of media quality. It is important to establish a baseline of expectations and media consumption habits when assessing baseline standards of quality for effective pedagogy.

- In addition, designing mediated experiences includes factors that may not be present in unmediated contexts.

- Establish a baseline of access to technology, with questions such as ownership of smartphones, tablets, or computers; shared use in families; restricted access through institutions such as schools and libraries; or commercial access such as Internet cafes and shared phones/kiosks.

- Confirm fluency in the use of available tech and include education in its use if necessary.

- Understand available methods of distribution, whether cell networks, wired or wireless Internet, or manual distribution through external drives and other portables.

- Consider the cost of participation, including connectivity and targeted applications, cost of electricity, bandwidth, and likelihood of technical disruptions due to power outages and weak network signals.

Finally, implementers and funders need to know how information ecosystems work so that they can design projects that take advantage of the strengths and affordances of digital technologies and avoid common failures and assumptions.
CASE STUDY

MANOS VISIBLES: DALE EQUIDAD (EQUALITY) IN COLOMBIA

**SCOPE:** Civic education and leadership development, targeted toward marginalized communities.

**AREA:** DALE focuses on working with youth from the Colombian Pacific and urban centers with significant ethnic populations.

**TARGET:** Afro-Colombian and Indigenous young adults, ages 18–32, who actively participate in racial and gender justice movements or belong to community organizations promoting social change.

**DESCRIPTION OF WORK:** DALE Equidad is a leadership development program for marginalized youth who are passionate about helping others, promoting progressive social development, and working with and for their communities. It aims to strengthen personal and collective knowledge on issues activists and organizations may face as they strive to precipitate social change by covering topics ranging from the practical (project development, cultural management, entrepreneurship, and peace building) to more epistemic (law, economics, and cultural identity). Bringing the young changemakers together in Bogotá, Medellín, and Cartagena affords participants the chance to establish connections with individuals hailing from disparate cities and territories across the nation who might not have otherwise met. Passionate instructors use their own frames of knowledge to foster young leaders’ ideas into contextually effective projects. The young leaders’ programs that emerge from DALE Equidad are not only sound ventures: they are legitimate projects that seek to slake the thirst of young Colombians eager for actionable peace agendas as well as anti-racist, anti-sexist programming with genuine potential to change the hearts and minds of individuals and communities alike.

To achieve participants’ goals, DALE Equidad has four program modules. The first, “Conscientious Leadership,” centers on building individual and group capacities while students personally reflect on the role and impact of effective leaders. “Leadership in Action” offers practical tools that teach students how to exercise transformative leadership; these newfound skills are subsequently complemented and put to the test by student work on initiatives geared toward promoting racial and gender equity. Pupils focus their efforts in “Leadership in Projection” on developing social programs and learning about social entrepreneurship and advocacy leadership in ways that further enhance their leadership capabilities. Finally, the fourth module, “Collective Leadership,” centers on the conceptualization and practice of activities that let participants develop implementation plans for the initiatives they have built throughout the programs to be later carried out through collective impact agendas.
RESULTS: Over the eight years in which Manos Visibles has implemented DALE, the program has produced more than 470 youth leaders (of whom 63 percent were female), led to the creation of 170 affiliated organizations, and mapped over 400 community organizations across the country. Additionally, many participants have gone on to prominently serve other nonprofit organizations, and many other young leaders found employment in the public sector or in politics. With DALE alumni regularly moving onto these types of opportunities, the program’s civic education and leadership development directive continues to successfully prepare and inspire cohorts year after year.

COVID-19 CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS: When the 2020 DALE cohort was formed, it was with the intent of providing participants with in-person leadership training and instruction on citizenship and civic competencies. Upon its launch in mid-2020, the activities became part of a five-month virtual learning and training program. To combat technological challenges, DALE’s organization, Manos Visibles, held live virtual lessons and ensured all were recorded so those participants unable to attend live sessions due to connectivity issues could later access the material. With the help of USAID, Manos Visibles further enabled the material’s accessibility by distributing SIM cards with data plans to program participants as another means of ensuring access to lessons. Despite connectivity issues, program organizers and participants took advantage of the virtual modality in an innovative way by bringing in global experts to continue teaching about and building upon the basic tenets of DALE—only this time, harnessing the expertise of the wider world. Though the shift to virtual programming was difficult, DALE Equidad made the situation work by using the connectedness of the Internet to further develop the leadership skills and knowledge of program participants.
5 ASSESSMENTS, MONITORING, EVALUATING, AND LEARNING
5.1 CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

As noted on the left, while there is a good body of evidence on what works and when civic education works, such programming needs to be highly adapted for the local context. As such, activity designers will need to understand context-specific civic education challenges and opportunities, consider needs, and explore feasibility. The CEAT steps 1–3 in Annex A, developed as part of this primer, offer several questions to guide activity designers in this process. For example, in considering a school-based civics education program, activity designers will need to consider feasibility questions such as a) do school team members have time to attend professional development? b) Can teachers implement the curriculum during their classes as prescribed? c) Does the model for implementing the curriculum enable teachers to further integrate civics education into instruction?

5.2 METRICS TO MONITOR AND ADAPT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

It is critical to continuously monitor and evaluate program implementation and adapt the implementation approach. These measures may include whether or not teachers or facilitators were trained and what they learned if they were, whether implementers are delivering the curriculum/program as intended, whether the school/organization is allotting the required time and resources, and whether people are showing up/ completing the program. This work also includes collecting feedback from participants and using this information to identify and address weaknesses, adapt, and improve the program. One example to help with usability is to engage teachers in a collaborate, learn, and adapt methodological approach during implementation. Programs should use a wide range of collaborate, learn, and adapt tools to engage with stakeholders throughout implementation. This can help offer data on the content of the program, the key implementation supports needed, and the issues that may arise during the implementation of the program.

5.3 FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Formative evaluations of program implementation dig deeper than monitoring indicators and explore if the program is making progress toward goals and outcomes while the program is being implemented. Formative evaluations of program implementation review the work as it is taking place rather than after. For example, if monitoring indicators of an adult-based civics education program indicate that update and retention among targeted beneficiaries is low, a formative evaluation might examine targeting and retention efforts and explore why individuals are or are not participating and remaining in the program.

LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> What is the purpose of designing an IE of a civic education program?
> What are strategies to design an IE of a civic education program?
> What types of formative assessments of programs are most effective to check if progress toward goals and outcomes is being achieved while the program is being implemented?
> What are key measures to study the feasibility of civic education programming?
> What are key measures to study the usability of civic education programming?
> What are ways to measure the overall impact of the civic education program on teachers?
> What are ways to measure the overall impact of the civic education program on students?
> What are constraints and opportunities to digitalizing IEs of civic education programming?
5.4 MEASURING OUTCOMES

It is critical as part of program design that outcomes are clearly established and measured over time as a part of monitoring and evaluation.

> **Teacher/facilitator outcomes:** A teacher/facilitator survey could measure KSDA behavior among this group. For example, do teachers/facilitators have a sense of self-efficacy in integrating civics education into their instruction? The survey could include measures from existing instruments (the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and the Teaching for Informed Civic Engagement Efficacy Belief Inventory) that have demonstrated good internal reliability.

> **Student/participant outcomes:** Section 2 provides a detailed discussion of different tools and approaches to measuring student/participant KSDA outcomes. Fortunately, civic education monitoring and evaluation can draw on the many measures developed in decades of survey research conducted by political and other social scientists on democratic citizenship. Indeed, it is recommended to draw on these measures explicitly, as the results can then be compared as appropriate to local or national survey findings as a further tool for assessing program effects. Referring to the civic education theory of change in section 1.4, each of the orientations listed in the figure have indicators readily available in the published academic literature and, in many cases, in the codebooks for the various regional survey Barometers and the World Values Surveys mentioned and linked earlier in this section. These include survey measures for political knowledge, awareness of democratic rights and responsibilities, corruption awareness, political efficacy and empowerment, and other measures of civic competence as well as measures of democratic values such as tolerance, support for democratic institutions and processes, rejection of vote-buying and electoral violence, and an extensive array of indicators for assessing voter registration, turnout, incumbent support, and participation in multiple other forms of political behavior such as protest, community, and voluntary association activities, political protest, and forms of online political action. For specific measures on these dimensions of democratic citizenship, see, among other sources, Finkel and Lim, Collier and Vincente, Verba, Schlozman and Brady, and Gibson et al.

5.5 EVALUATING IMPACT

It is also important to design interventions that include an evaluation component that attempts to assess program impact. One option to begin to examine the impact of the program on civic outcomes is to conduct pre- and post-tests measuring KSDAs prior to the intervention (baseline) and after the intervention (endline). While this provides a change in measured outcomes, it will not show whether the change is due to the intervention or some other factors. In addition, many measures also confront challenges like social desirability bias, such that a participant in a civic education program might report desired civic participation because she feels it is expected of her rather than because she actually participates.

As such, a USAID IE must include a comparison of the effects of the program on areas or individuals subjected to the program information or activities relative to similar areas or individuals who were not targeted in the intervention. The latter group of areas or individuals serve as the “counterfactual” group to those who were targeted in the intervention, and comparisons between targeted and counterfactual groups provide evidence of how the program affected outcomes (in the participating group) compared to what the outcomes would have been in the absence of the program (in the counterfactual group).


98 Finkel and Lim, “The Supply and Demand Model of Civic Education.”

99 Collier and Vincente, “Votes and Violence.”


101 Gibson et al., “Democratic Values.”
For classroom-based interventions, it is often possible to randomly assign some schools or classrooms to receive the civics intervention and others to receive the course at a later date. Provided a good randomization process and an adequate number of schools or classrooms, the only difference between the average youth in the treatment and the average youth in the control should be the civics education, producing a strong estimate of the counterfactual. While civic education implementers do not want to deny students potential programmatic benefits, the programs rarely have the funding or capacity to reach all potential targeted beneficiaries at the same time, raising the desirability of randomization and what is called an RCT.

While RCTs have also been done with adult civic education,\(^2\) for example, by randomizing communities, this can be more complicated. Fortunately, there are also several quasi-experimental IE designs available. Individuals targeted for treatment may be surveyed before and after program participation and their responses compared with non-participants who match program participants in many ways and are deemed to be a reasonable comparison. For example, provided a treatment in a set of communities, a comparison group could be derived from other similar communities. Randomly selected individuals in both treatment and comparison communities could be surveyed pre- and post-treatment and responses compared to assess the effect of the program at the village or community levels.

The challenge with these quasi-experimental IEs is that the estimation of the effects of the program may be confounded with the factors that led individuals or areas to be treated in the first place. For example, individuals most likely to change in their citizenship orientations may be those most likely to attend workshops or volunteer to be included in local government-citizen group interactions. These possible confounds are difficult to overcome, though statistical methods exist for approximating program impact, especially when additional observations can be made aside from the simple pre- and post-intervention surveys (see Finkel & Smith\(^3\) for a panel study application in connection with the Kenya Uraia evaluations).

Regardless of the evaluation approach, it is essential that evaluation planning be done at the activity design stage. As the discussion in this section should have made clear, the best evaluation designs are those in which careful attention is paid before the program is initiated to which areas and which individuals will be subjected to the program interventions. This requires a good deal of forethought and planning, usually in collaboration with local NGOs, survey companies, and academic partners in arriving at the appropriate selection of treatment and control areas or individuals, the appropriate method for observing desired outcomes before and after the treatments take place, and the appropriate rollout sequence for the program over time. It also requires that sufficient resources are allocated for evaluation purposes at the funding stage of the program, as credible IEs take a good deal of time, effort, and money.

\(^2\) Giné and Mansuri, “Together We Will.”
\(^3\) Finkel and Smith, “Civic Education, Political Discussion, and the Social Transmission of Democratic Knowledge and Values.”
SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT
USAID needs to engage new areas of focus in civic education research and practice, especially new digital opportunities and ways for civic education to be used to counter threats to contemporary democratic processes. Below are a few specific areas where new or increased engagement by USAID may lead to the design and implementation of future civic education programs of impact.

**Designing online and offline interventions.** It is important to begin by investigating the ways citizens access and use digital spaces in different political contexts. To do this successfully, it is critical to uncover patterns of Internet penetration and specific ways children, young adults, and the population at large engage the online world. **This kind of information is essential for designing online programs that have the greatest potential to reach and engage their target audiences.**

**Incorporating new engaging platforms for digital learning.** As noted in section 4.2, the digital learning space has expanded considerably over the past decades to include a range of open online educational resources that may be adopted (or adapted) for civic education purposes. These include peer learning projects such as P2PU and other collaborative platforms for sharing knowledge within and across social networks, and they include structured online courses through MOOC platforms such as Coursera and edX. **This represents a prime opportunity for USAID to expand its knowledge base and resources for future civic education programming** with a focus on determining the effectiveness of these platforms as it relates to ensuring the programs maintain the participatory aspect required for high-quality civic education.

**Exploiting social media to expand the reach and delivery of online civic education.** Recent academic work has outlined ways of recruiting individuals into online civic education interventions via advertising on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (e.g., Finkel et al., forthcoming); **these methods can yield many thousands of participants at a very low cost and in a relatively short period.** Trade-offs exist; for example, in the potentially unrepresentative nature of individuals with Internet and social media access in a given context and in the relatively short online interventions that might be necessary to maintain participant interest. **But these methods hold the promise of delivering civic education on a scale that has not yet been possible.**

Additionally, USAID should increase its focus on several areas where civic education content may help to counter contemporary challenges and threats to democratic governance.

**Countering populist nationalism and extreme polarization.** In the academic realm, some recent work has appeared with a renewed emphasis on interventions designed to promote political tolerance and the deliberative aspects of democratic politics, such as an openness to compromise, “see the other side,” and question one’s own assumptions and viewpoints in the hopes that these values will serve as a bulwark against populist and other anti-democratic movements.104 Online tools for understanding and mitigating political polarization have also been developed (e.g., Turkey’s “turkuazlab” associated with Istanbul Bilgi University) and can serve as models for future work in these fields.

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104Alexander Wuttke, and Florian Foos. “Making the Case for Democracy.”
LEARNING QUESTIONS:

> What are key strategies to investigate the ways citizens access and use digital spaces in different contexts?
> What are effective interventions to incorporate new platforms for digital learning into civic education programming?
> How do we exploit social media to expand the reach and delivery of online civic education?
> What do we need to know and understand in terms of countering populist nationalism and extreme polarization that may impact the development of civic education programming?
> How do we build strong programs that focus on making the case for democracy?
> How do we use civic education programming to promote global citizenship?

Making the case for democracy. The contemporary challenges to democracy, though, include the erosion of confidence in democracy itself as a form of government, with large numbers of youth in the U.S. and other democracies questioning whether it is “essential to live in a country governed by democratic rule.”

This gives increased urgency to the development of interventions designed to contrast democracy with alternative forms of government. Yet, it is challenging to know what specific arguments in favor of democracy will resonate most strongly with what populations under what conditions. Some academic work noted above is attempting to make headway in this direction in adult civic education; further work is needed to craft effective interventions both for adults and in school-based civic education.

Identifying questions for future research. As mentioned earlier, civic education in the digital age is still an emerging space in terms of research. While the effects of technological change on democratic practices are undeniable, the exact nature of those effects remains contested both in everyday understanding and in academic and expert literature. It would be very beneficial to the field of civic education for USAID to continuously review the evaluations of these programs and identify ways to gather enough evidence to claim settled knowledge.

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Zainab, 18, was displaced from Anbar Province, Iraq, and now lives in Harsham camp for Internally Displaced Persons in Erbil.

Photo: Jim Huylebroek for Creative Associates International

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: CIVIC EDUCATION ASSESSMENT TOOL (CEAT)
The purpose of the CEAT is to help USAID's strategic planners and program designers assess and build civic education programs. The tool should be used in conjunction with the Civil Society Assessment Tool and/or the Media for Democracy Assessment Tool when looking to understand, for example, the role civil society and media can play in informing/educating citizens about the roles and responsibilities of both the government and citizens. The CEAT identifies the primary steps and actions that are critical when assessing and/or designing a civic education program. The “questions to ask” are there to support the analysis and development of high-quality civic education programs. USAID staff and stakeholders should focus on the steps and actions to build civic education programs that best meet the needs of the local context in which they are working. The CEAT can be used as a diagnostic tool to help USAID staff and stakeholders determine where investments in civic education will lead to achievable results and have the most impact. This CEAT highlights the importance of understanding the country's context—including emerging trends from a digital perspective—and its challenges. An analysis of potential new emerging and cross-cutting trends sets the stage for an in-depth examination of where digital technologies can enhance or hamper the development and implementation of civic education programming. Key considerations such as mission and vision, program design, and evaluation all guide the prioritization of analysis and recommendations to determine how USAID can best support civic education programming. Trends to consider when conducting the CEAT include challenges arising from politically restrictive environments, resurgent authoritarian influences from countries such as China and Russia, the changing role of emerging technology, increasing engagement by marginalized groups, and a global rise in mass social movements.
## THE CIVIC EDUCATION ASSESSMENT TOOL: GUIDING QUESTIONS

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<th>STEP</th>
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<th>QUESTIONS TO ASK</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1—Conduct a Needs Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Define civic education.</td>
<td>&gt; How does the entity you are working with define civic education?</td>
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| | Identify knowledge and beliefs—understand the knowledge bases that inform civic education and the beliefs operating in the context of the community. | > What are the primary civic education issues affecting the country?  
> What work is being/has been done in other sectors (i.e., media, labor, human) around civic education issues?  
> Other possible questions to inform the development of civic education programming:  
> What are the primary civic education issues affecting the country?  
> What work is being/has been done in other sectors (i.e., media, labor, human) around civic education issues?  
> Other possible questions to inform the development of civic education programming:  
> Are there patterns of inclusion/exclusion within state and society in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, geography, religion, age, ability, and others?  
> How are power and wealth distributed within society?  
> How do formal rules and informal norms or understandings interact to drive behaviors?  
> To what extent do state and society actors operate within both formal and informal “rules of the game”?  
> Are there deeply ingrained class structures, such as caste systems?  
> What is the distribution of power, access, and influence among different groups in both the state and society (e.g., religious, ethnic, regional, racial, gender)?  
> What is the nature and quality of competition for political power and relations between and among political actors?  
> How do different levels of government encourage and support political participation? |

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</table>
| Analyze context—understand the unique features of the local context and use that information to inform the design. This also includes identifying what is needed most in the local site and what resources and conditions may support or threaten. | > Are there previous or existing civic education programs? Are there evaluations or relevant lessons learned?  
> What is successful or unsuccessful about the program(s)?  
> What are the broader policy goals and expected outcomes relevant to civic education programming?  
> Are there formal written rules governing civic education programming? To what extent are such rules respected or consistently applied?  
> Who are the marginalized communities? (See the definition in Section 1)  
> How are current programs addressing issues of the local marginalized communities? (See sample questions to better understand the role of women and girls in NDI’s training program guide to increasing women’s political participation)  
> Other possible questions to inform the development of civic education programming:  
  > What is the current role and influence of USAID?  
  > What is the historical evolution of civic education programs and their relationships with the state and the general public?  
  > What is the reach, authority, and legitimacy of the state in the development of civic education programs?  
  > Do the laws mandate prior approval from government officials for activities focusing on civic education? |  

Questions to better understand the digital literacy context:  
> To what extent is social media available and to whom?  
> Which age groups or segments of society use social media (e.g., aggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, others)?  
> What types of technologies (mobile phones, social platforms) are most commonly used and for what purposes?  
> How media literate is the population? Do they understand how social media can be used to manipulate and mislead?  
> Do the partners have the technical capacity and means to use social platforms to improve their effectiveness, expand their outreach, and enhance communications?  
> To what extent is the government using digital technology for current civic education activities? To what extent does the government have the capacity to block or filter certain content on the Internet?
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| Understand critical issues—identify the issues that may influence the success and impact of civic education and clarify how certain conditions should be addressed to better ensure success. | > Are there other policies or strategies that need to be taken into consideration?  
> Is the space for civic education opening or closing? Why?  
> Who are the main leaders both for and against civic education in the state (e.g., reformers, elected politicians, political parties in Parliament) and in society (e.g., women, youth, business) that are emerging?  
> How do the current political dynamics shape opportunities and challenges that impact civic education programs?  
> How media literate is civil society in the host country? | Other possible questions to inform the development of civic education programming:  
> What is the evolution of state/state-society relations and underlying factors (including political settlements, power structures, ideas, and values) that have shaped the country or a given sector over time?  
> How do the current political dynamics shape opportunities and challenges?  
> Are there patterns of inclusion/exclusion within the state and society in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, geography, religion, age, ability, and others?  
> What kind of influence might different international factors and actors have to contribute toward (or undermine) sector reform and why?  
> What is the nature and quality of competition among social actors? Are there power struggles between political and social actors? Among social actors?  
> What is the nature of social networks and their influence? Are there ideological, religious, and cultural forces at the country, sector, or program levels?  
> What may be some unintended consequences of change processes?  
> What is the extent of social media manipulation? |
**Step 2—Develop a Mission and Vision for the Work**

Once you have assessed the current landscape and determined the need for a civic education program, you should develop a mission/vision, plan, structure, and objectives for the program. Creating a clear mission and vision will provide structure and direction for the program.

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<th><strong>Actions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Questions to Ask</strong></th>
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| **Review data from the assessment.** | Craft a mission/vision for the program. | > What are the strengths of the system around civic education?  
> What are the weaknesses of the system around civic education?  
> On what opportunities can a civic education program be built?  
> What are the external challenges to building a civic education program?  
> What are the biggest needs a civic education program can address? |
| **Craft a mission/vision for the program.** | > What is the purpose of the civic education program?  
Is the goal to guide the development of civic education programs, or is the mission seeking a more general assessment of civic education as part of a broader overview of development options?  
> Are there specific problems or issues the civic education program needs to address?  
> What are the broader goals and expected outcomes relevant to the civic education program (e.g., geopolitical or economic interests in the country/region)? |
| **Determine goals for the program.** | > What changes in KSDA are expected as a result of the civic education program?  
> What changes are expected in the short term (6–12 months)?  
> What changes are expected in the medium term (12–24 months)?  
> What changes are expected in the long term (3–5 years)? |
**Step 3—Design the Program**

Once the mission and vision have been clarified, the next step is to create a clear programmatic framework and objectives based on the mission and vision identified. This work includes multiple steps.

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<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ground/connect to mission/vision.</td>
<td>&gt; What can we learn from programs to identify elements of a civic education program that will help meet our vision/mission and outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the key KSDA:</td>
<td>&gt; What civic knowledge is essential to address our mission/vision and objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Civic knowledge—understand the government structure, government process, relevant civic knowledge, and concepts.</td>
<td>&gt; What skills are essential to address our mission/vision and objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Civic skills—competencies in the use of one’s voice, including writing, speaking and listening, research investigation, and critical thinking as well as competencies in the use of the practices of democracy and digital literacy.</td>
<td>&gt; What dispositions are essential to address our mission/vision and objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Civic dispositions—attitudes important in a democracy, such as a sense of civic duty, sense of efficacy, concern for the welfare of others, and commitment to trustworthiness and bridge-building.</td>
<td>&gt; What attitudes are essential to address our mission/vision and objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Civic behaviors—access to networks, opportunities to participate, and other forms of social capital that promote civic agency.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>ACTIONS</td>
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<td>Develop criteria for a high-quality civic education program.</td>
<td>In reviewing other programs, what are the qualities of an effective civic education program?</td>
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<td>Evaluate other programs.</td>
<td>The following questions are a sample set to help guide the evaluation of other programs:</td>
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<td>&gt; Are the materials at the appropriate level for the program goals?</td>
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<td>&gt; Are the KSDA all present in a way that promotes depth of learning?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials support engagement with the KSDA?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials align with best practices in civic education?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials build instructors' understanding of the “why and how” of the material?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials provide explanations of the instructional approaches used and why these approaches are effective?</td>
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<td>&gt; Are the materials user-friendly for instructors and participants?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials encompass a system of assessments and provide guidance and support to help instructors collect, interpret, and act on data about participant progress toward the goals?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials embed formative and summative assessments throughout to evaluate participant learning?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials provide teachers with tools to customize learning experiences in connection with students’ homes and communities?</td>
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<td>Choose from the following based on your program goals:</td>
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<td>&gt; Are the materials organized in a way that provides consistent opportunities for inquiry?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials engage students in communicating their conclusions?</td>
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<td>&gt; Do the materials provide opportunities for participants to delve into issues they care about and/or work to solve complex problems?</td>
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| Build the program. | - Is there an outside program and/or are there outside resources that best meet our current needs for a program?  
- What are local context elements that need to be included in this program? And should those pages be included in the TOC?  
- What partners can help to build and support the program?  
- How can the program be designed to be inclusive of marginalized communities?  
- What is the plan for implementing the program (including funding, communication, professional development, etc.)?  
- How will the program address and/or include digital literacy?  
- How is the program dependent on building relationships with stakeholder? |   |
| Plan for program evaluations and IE. | - What data is needed on the outputs of the program, particularly as they relate to the initial objectives? How will the outputs be evaluated?  
- What data is needed from stakeholders in the program? How will stakeholder views be evaluated?  
- What data is needed on the impact of inputs (i.e., resources) on the program? How will the inputs be evaluated?  
- What data is needed on program activities? How will the program activities be evaluated? |   |
| Plan for IE. | - What IE design would be most appropriate for assessing the effects of the program?  
Other possible questions to inform the development of civic education programming:  
- Can the program treatment be randomized across individuals, classrooms, communities, or other units?  
- Have appropriate indicators of impact related to KSDA been identified and included in the impact design?  
- Does the evaluation include a control and randomized group (individuals, communities, classrooms, and/or schools) that does not receive the program treatment and whose changes over time can be compared to the changes in the individuals, communities, classrooms, or schools that receive treatment in order to estimate impact?  
- Has a comparable control group been identified?  
- Can pre-tests or surveys be included for both the control and treatment groups?  
- How can follow-up observations be included for both the control and treatment groups after the program is completed? |   |
### Step 4—Prepare to Monitor Implementation

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<th>STEP</th>
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<th>QUESTIONS TO ASK</th>
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<td>Support implementation of the program.</td>
<td>Develop opportunities to check in throughout the implementation process to determine the strengths and gaps as it is being implemented.</td>
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It is important to ask the following questions while supporting the implementation of the program:

- What are the strengths of the program?
- What are the weaknesses of the program?
- How well is the program addressing the mission/vision and objectives?

Monitoring indicators might cover:

- Were teachers/facilitators trained and do they demonstrate the KSDAs to impart program content?
- Is the curriculum/program being implemented as intended and at the dosage intended?
- Are targeted individuals participating/completing the program and at what rate?
- Are beneficiaries satisfied with the intervention and what suggestions do they have for improvement?
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<td><strong>Step 5—Prepare to Evaluate</strong></td>
<td>In addition to measuring educational outcomes, you should determine how well you are meeting the particular needs of participants. One way to do this is to employ evaluations at the end of each program component. This will help determine what your program is doing right, as well as areas for possible improvement. You should provide a way for participants to provide feedback on the program and evaluate the program and volunteers anonymously. There are also online evaluation tools to gather the evaluation data you seek. Evaluation data will not only help you refine and enhance your program but also allow students to gain a sense of ownership and agency in their educational efforts.</td>
<td>Develop tools to evaluate each portion of the program and conduct program and impact evaluations. Use decisions made in step 3 to inform the development of tools to evaluate each element of the program. Evaluation planning should be part of the design process.  &gt; How can we know if the intervention is achieving its outcomes?  &gt; What are possible evaluation design options?  &gt; How will evaluation findings be used?</td>
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<td><strong>STEP</strong></td>
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| **Step 6—Reflect** | Program development is not a linear process; rather, it is a revolving and continual effort of development, evaluation, and enhancement. While the bulk of your work will be completed during the initial program development phase, successful programs continually assess what works for them and change what does not. Ongoing efforts will help your program continue to grow and evolve to serve ever-changing demographics and community needs. After each class cycle, review the objectives you set when designing the program and see how much progress you have made. Examine multiple performance indicators such as staff performance, educational gains, volunteer and student attendance, and overall retention. Remember, it is not enough to collect evaluation data. Be sure to use that information to celebrate successes and make necessary changes to ensure you continue to provide high-quality civic education. | > Review the data from the evaluation.  
> Based on the evaluation data, what are the strengths of the program?  
> Based on the evaluation data, what are the weaknesses of the program?  
> How well is the program addressing the mission/vision and objectives?  
> Have there been any changes in the broader policy goals and expected outcomes relevant to civic education programming?  
> How do the current political dynamics shape opportunities and challenges that impact civic education programs?  
> Have there been any changes in formal written rules governing civic education programming?  
> Is the space for civic education opening or closing? Why? Who are the main leaders both for and against civic education in the state (e.g., reformers, elected politicians, political parties in Parliament) and in society (e.g., women, youth, business) that are emerging?  
> To what extent is the government using digital technology for current civic education activities? How can these technologies be beneficial to civic education programming?  
> Based on the evaluation data and the context review, what changes and adjustments need to be made to ensure the program meets the mission/vision and objectives?  
> What can we learn from other programs that may help fill the gaps?  
> How do we communicate the changes to funders, instructors, and other stakeholders? |
APPENDIX B: REFERENCES, READINGS, AND RESOURCES


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CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE


RESOURCES, ORGANIZATIONS

**GENERAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO PLAN PROGRAMMING**

**DEMED: Democracy Under Threat and How Education Can Save It**

**Forms of Government**


**Poverty Action Lab**

**Turkauzlab**

**USAID DRG Data Portraits**

**Yale Institute for Social and Policy Studies**

**Institute H21**

**Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning**

**IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 Assessment Framework**

**Measuring Civic Readiness**

**Media Cloud**

**Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting?**

**Armenia Civics for Engagement Activity: Evidence Review**

**Increasing Women’s Political Participation Through Effective Training Programs (NDI)**

**Crip the Vote**
K-12

Children Discovering Justice
Generation Citizen
EU CONVINCE
International Society for Technology and Education
Project Citizen curriculum
Facing History and Ourselves—Fostering Civil Discourse
Peer 2 Peer University
Civic Investigate, Deliberate, Express, Advocate project of the U.S.-based Emerson College's Engagement Lab
Media and Information Literacy Expert Network
UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy network
Stanford Civic Online Reasoning Curriculum
The Civically Engaged Writing Analysis Continuum (CEWAC)
National Writing Project
www.citizen.in.ua
Street Law
Teaching Civics

UNIVERSITY AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

EU CONVINCE
Rule of Law Education Curriculum
International Society for Technology and Education—Digital Citizenship
Democracy: From Theory to Practice

ADULT

Pact
Manos Visibles
Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
NDI's Civic Forum programs
Grupo Acción por la Democracia program
Voter Opinion and Involvement Through Civic Education program
ActionAid International Nigeria program
Africa Good Governance Programme on the Radio Waves
Games for Civics
Udemonia
Civic Engagement in American Democracy (on Coursera)
Civic Online Reasoning (Stanford)
Digital citizenship and participation (European Union)
Citizenship and Human Rights Education for Change (European Trade Union Committee for Education)
Transforming Citizen Participation (University of Birmingham)