



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

HIGHER EDUCATION STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS
FOR USAID WASHINGTON AND MISSIONS



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This toolkit was overseen, directed, and managed by Samantha Alvis, Higher Education Senior Advisor in the Center for Education, and supported by Morgan McMaster, Program Assistant.

COVER PAGE PHOTO CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

TOP LEFT: Accra, Ghana (2015). More than 150 young leaders from 21 West African countries gathered to share their expertise and engage on issues they have defined as critical for the future of Africa. In support of President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), USAID and IREX organized the First Annual West Africa Regional Conference for Mandela Washington Fellowship ([Photo Credit: IREX](#)).

TOP RIGHT: Lahore, Pakistan (2018). USAID celebrated its continued support to Pakistan’s mango sector by organizing a “Mangolicious Culinary Competition” in partnership with the College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM). The U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Agricultural Market Development promotes the export of Pakistani mangoes to international markets ([Photo Credit: USAID Pakistan](#)).

BOTTOM LEFT: Bangkok, Thailand (2014). Female scientists work in USAID Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research Science project on “Biodiversity and conservation in the Lower Mekong: Empowering female herpetologists through capacity building and regional networking” at Kasetsart University’s lab in Thailand ([Photo Credit: Richard Nyberg/USAID](#)).

BOTTOM RIGHT: Managua, Nicaragua (2017). USAID-funded project Aprendo y Emprendo provides support and scholarships to Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University, which offers a two-year intensive course in agriculture, and to technical training institutions like Fundacion Victoria. The students featured in the photo are Aprendo y Emprendo scholarship awardees enrolled in the industrial engineering for food processing program at Fundacion Victoria ([Photo Credit: TVET-SAY](#)).

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ACRONYMS

HCI	Host Country Institution
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IP	Implementing Partner
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersexual
LPA	Legislative and Public Affairs
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
USG	U.S. Government

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Capacity²	The ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.
Capacity development support²	Capacity development support for individuals in a higher education context is NOT a single event such as a training or a workshop. It is sustained and may comprise a range of activities, interventions, processes, and approaches that may include, but are not limited to, professional development, training, coaching, technical assistance, etc.
Higher education¹	Higher education includes what is commonly understood as academic education, but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. Depending on the program, work in higher education can be viewed as: a target for capacity development support, a stakeholder in local systems, an implementing partner, and/or a key actor in achieving sector-specific objectives (e.g., addressing the global shortage of healthcare workers or improving teacher training).
Higher education institution¹ (HEI)	An organization that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. This may include public or private universities, colleges, community colleges, academically affiliated research institutes, and post-secondary training institutes, including teacher training institutes.
Host country institution²	USAID partner country institutions receiving capacity development support.
Scholarship recipients²	Those who have received a scholarship or other financial assistance to attend a higher education institution in their country or another country.
Individuals affiliated with higher education institutions³	Administrators, faculty, staff, researchers, or postdoctoral scholars with a formal connection to one or more higher education institutions. This does NOT include undergraduate or graduate students who receive capacity development as a component of academic training.

¹ USAID, “PIRS ES.2-1 HEI Capacity Development,” USAID, October 2020. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/PIRS%20ES.2-1%20HEI%20Capacity%20Development.pdf>

² USAID, “PIRS ES.2-2 Scholarships,” USAID, October 2020. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/PIRS%20ES.2-2%20Scholarships.pdf>

³ USAID, “PIRS ES.2-52 HE Individual Capacity Building,” USAID, October 2020. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/PIRS%20ES.2-52%20HE%20Individual%20Capacity%20Building.pdf>

Term	Definition
Marginalized groups ⁴	People who are typically denied access to legal protection or social and economic participation (i.e., police protection, political participation, access to healthcare, education, employment). These include, but are not limited to, women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTI people, displaced persons, migrants, indigenous individuals and communities, youth and the elderly, religious minorities, ethnic minorities, people in lower castes, and people of diverse economic classes and political opinions.
U.S. Government (USG) scholarships and financial assistance ³	USG-funded, full or partial financial aid provided for a student to further their education (financial assistance, waivers, or other support for experiential opportunities such as research assistantships, internships, apprenticeships, etc.)

⁴ USAID, “Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations,” USAID, July 2018. https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/additional_help_for_ads_201_inclusive_development_180726_final_r.pdf

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

AUDIENCE(S)

This toolkit is intended for use by USAID/Washington and Mission staff and implementing partners across technical sectors who are working through or with higher education to advance development outcomes globally. USAID users who are unable to locate internal documents that are not linked in this toolkit should contact helearning@usaid.gov.

SCOPE

This toolkit summarizes a large body of storytelling and communications assets into a condensed, accessible resource that is customized around higher education themes and topics. In the interest of brevity, the toolkit does not cover all aspects of storytelling, and it should be noted that specific language or interview topics should be reviewed for region or context appropriateness.

TOOLKIT STRUCTURE

ORDER OF RESOURCES

To allow for tailored higher education storytelling, toolkit users are encouraged to read through both Part 1 and Part 2 to better understand USAID higher education priorities and to review various storytelling strategies, respectively. Accordingly, the toolkit is organized into six stand-alone parts to enable readers to consult each individually, based on their particular needs.

PART 1: AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION AND STORYTELLING FORMAT SELECTION	PART 2: STORYTELLING STRATEGIES	PART 3: INTERVIEW STRATEGIES	PART 4: VISUAL STORYTELLING STRATEGIES	PART 5: VIDEO STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES	PART 6: USING SOCIAL MEDIA: STORY PROMOTING STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES
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The blue text in the gray box located at the right side of each page, pictured above, functions as tabs. Users of the toolkit are encouraged to use these tabs to “jump” and navigate between the parts of the toolkit.

The black arrow () functions as a back button. Users can click on the black arrow to return directly to the last page visited. This might be especially useful when using internal hyperlinks (see below).

Red hyperlinked text [like this](#) is an internal hyperlink. Internal hyperlinks allow users to jump within the various sections of the toolkit.

Blue hyperlinked text [like this](#) is an external hyperlink. External hyperlinks allow users to navigate resources outside of the toolkit. **Note: Internet access is required when using external hyperlinks.**

INTRODUCTION

Through the development of relevant curricula, evidence-building research, and increased community engagement, faculty, staff, and students contribute to strengthening all sectors of the economy—from agriculture to energy, from business services to technology, from health to engineering. Higher education creates pathways to better health, economic growth, a sustainable environment, and peaceful, democratic societies.⁵

PURPOSE

USAID's Higher Education Storytelling Toolkit is designed to support USAID staff and implementing partners across technical sectors to tell the story of higher education's role in advancing development. The toolkit provides higher-education specific recommendations and guidance around storytelling structure, interview strategies, photography and video guidelines, social media tips, and additional communications resources. A focus on more compelling and strategic storytelling will amplify USAID's work in and with higher education, increase engagement with global audiences, and elevate the programming of USAID implementing partners.

USAID'S COMMITMENT TO HIGHER EDUCATION

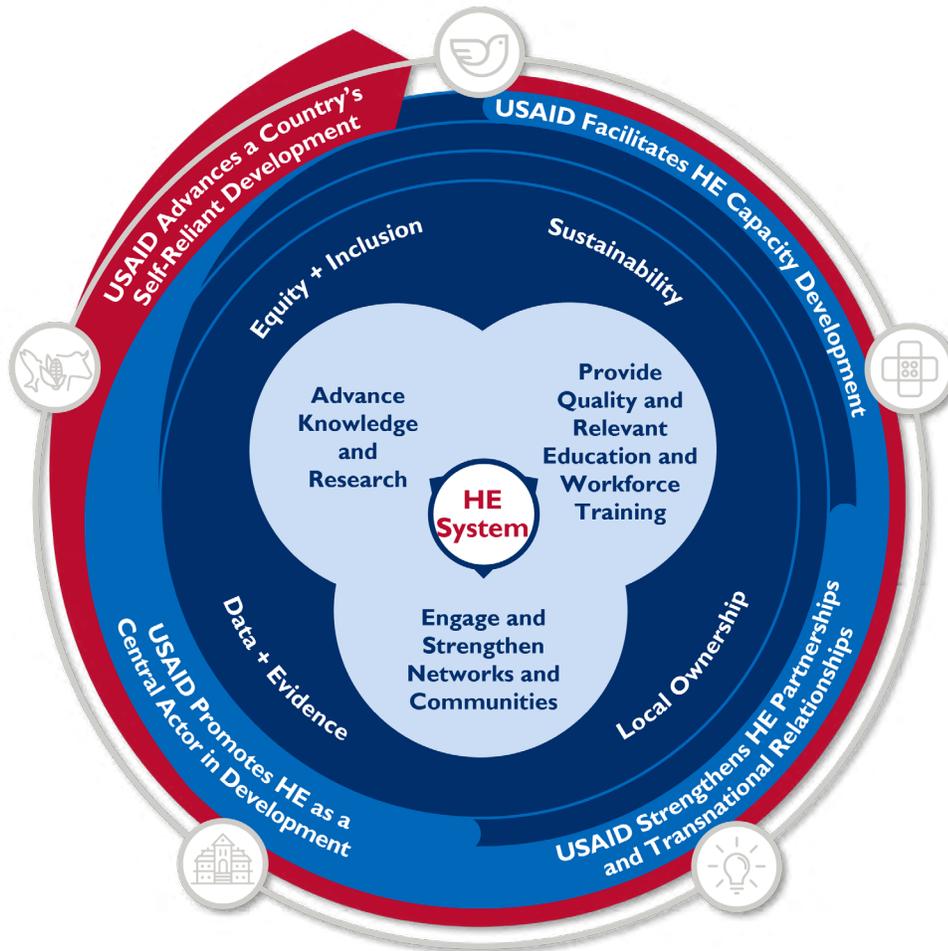
This toolkit is designed to align with USAID's [Higher Education Program Framework](#) (Figure 1),⁶ which identifies functions, outcomes, and guiding principles in driving and sustaining a country's local development. To capture this vision for its higher education programming, the Framework depicts USAID's common, sector-inclusive understanding of a higher education system and its core functions, commitment to key higher education outcomes, and guiding principles to help achieve these outcomes.

As outlined in the 2018 [USAID Education Policy](#), higher education is a priority area, as is early learning, youth workforce development, and education in crisis and conflict. USAID higher education's collaborative efforts from USAID Missions, USAID/Washington, implementing partners, the private sector, and other stakeholders, work in tandem to carry out evidence-based programming.

⁵ USAID, "The What, Why, and How of USAID Higher Education Programs," USAID, September 2016. <https://www.edu-links.org/learning/what-why-and-how-usaid-higher-education-programs>

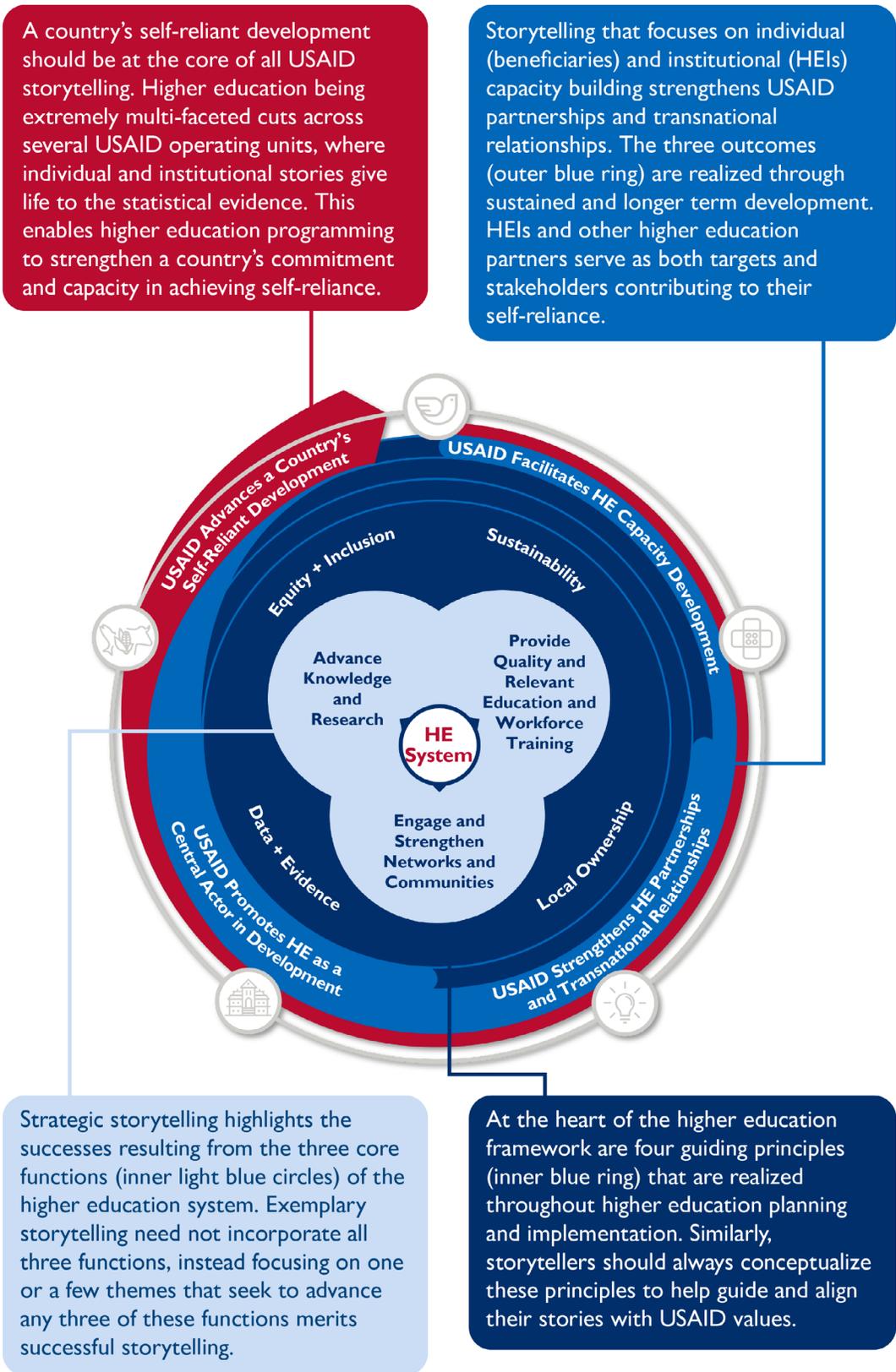
⁶ USAID, "Higher Education Program Framework," USAID, October 2020. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Higher%20Education%20Program%20Framework%20June%202021.pdf>

Figure I. USAID Higher Education Program Framework



USAID’s investment in higher education is realized through its **three core functions** (light blue circles), directed by **four guiding principles** (dark blue ring), which all together result in **three key outcomes** (blue outer ring). Collectively, this framework envisages how higher education advances a country’s self-reliant development (red outer ring).

Figure 2. Storytelling in Higher Education Framework



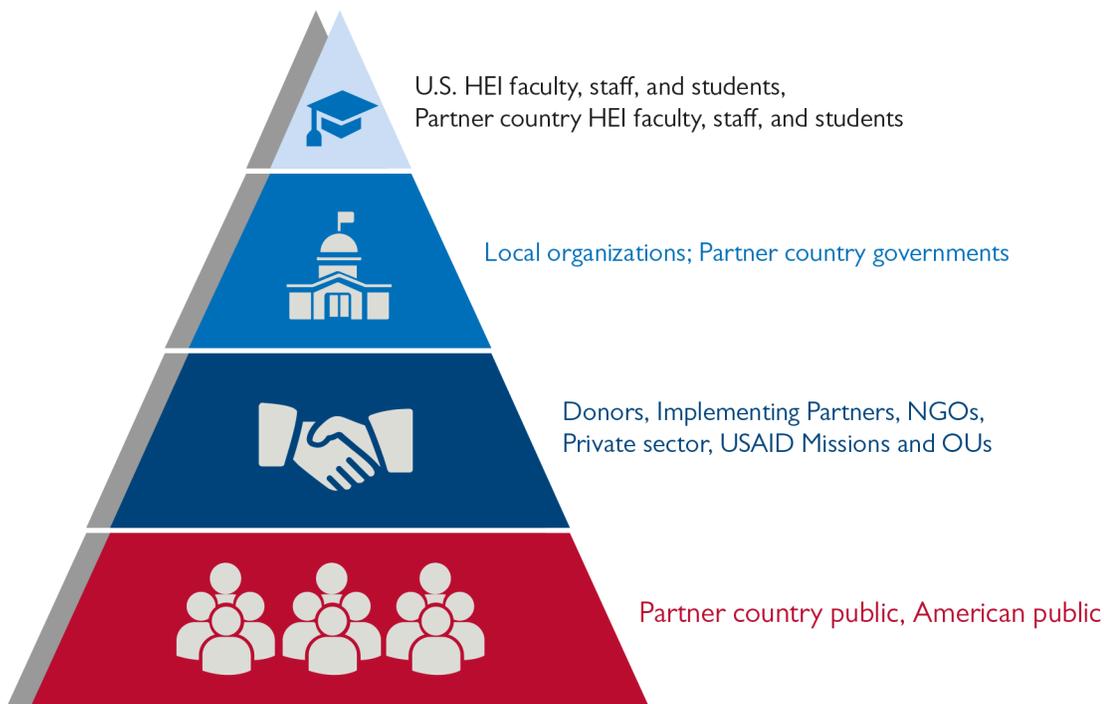
PART I: AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION AND STORYTELLING FORMAT SELECTION

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

Q. Who is the success story’s intended audience?

A. In order to determine how the success story will be created and what content will be included, it is important to identify who the intended audience is. The intended audience could include anyone who may have an interest in viewing the success story, from a potential partner to a community member, to a future scholarship applicant. Potential targeted internal and external audiences are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Potential Audiences



Audience selection may include one or more intended audiences. Understanding each audience’s needs, interests, and concerns can help with developing and shaping a strategic higher education success story.

Creating a story for a specific audience will improve the story in terms of personalization and readership connection. Answering the question, “For whom will the story be written, photographed, or videoed?” can provide direction to crafting the success story.

Questions to consider when developing a story with an intended audience in mind include:

- What is important to the intended audience? What does the audience care about?
- What story outcomes or achievements would be meaningful to the audience?
- In what capacity will the higher education success story be used?

CREATING A DISTRIBUTION PLAN

Upon evaluating the potential target audience, [consider where the success story will be published](#) and **who** will be exposed to each storytelling platform; this is to ensure that intended audience(s) are able to view and engage with the story. While posting the success story on the Bureau's or Mission's website and sharing it to Facebook and Twitter may be viable for local scope, it may also be relevant to consider the benefits of sharing the story on diverse platforms to appeal to a more global audience.

Storytelling platforms to consider:

- Websites or blogs
- Social media channels for in-country audiences or global audiences
- News releases
- Conferences or forums
- Newsletters or listservs
- Email for internal or external audiences

STORYTELLING FORMATS

Q. How should the success story be formatted?

A. After selecting the target audience(s), the success story's format structure can be determined. While the same story can be written in multiple ways across platforms, a story shared on Facebook will likely be written differently than one prepared for a platform such as Medium. There are also opportunities for visual storytelling through photos and videos.

Some main forms of storytelling include:

- [Written](#)
- [Visual/photo essay](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Social media](#)

WRITTEN STORYTELLING: SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE FORMAT

This section defines examples of higher education storytelling forms, whether short, medium, or long form.

SHORT-FORM STORYTELLING: TELLING COMPELLING STORIES IN TWO OR THREE PARAGRAPHS

Often, short and compelling stories can be published on social media in two or three paragraphs to generate public interest and gain audience engagement. For example, USAID/Egypt shares short-form success stories from their [U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative](#). Each week, incorporating the hashtag #SuperScholarSunday, a scholar's successes are highlighted through posts on USAID/Egypt's Facebook page. Consistent, engaging storytelling humanizes the work USAID does, as shown in the example of Asmaa ([Annex G](#)), a USAID scholarship recipient studying business administration. Learn more about social media storytelling in [Part 6](#) of this toolkit.

MEDIUM-FORM: SHARING NARRATIVE SUCCESS STORIES

Medium-length stories (typically one page) provide powerful and engaging content to capture the audience. Find more information on narrative success storytelling in [Part 2](#). Often, this storytelling format uses photos, videos, data, and anecdotes to portray successes and showcase program accomplishments. Medium-form stories are often shared through USAID, Embassy, or partner newsletters, blogs, websites, or news platforms.

Below are some examples of medium form stories:

- [Notre Dame innovates at home and abroad to further Paraguayan program despite pandemic restrictions](#)
- [Scholarships Help Afghan Women Pursue Higher Education](#)
- [Fourteen USAID Lincoln Scholars Depart for United States for Master's Degree Programs](#)

LONG-FORM STORYTELLING: CREATING STORIES FOR IMPACT

Long-form storytelling typically refers to stories that are 1,200+ words and present a more in-depth, complex subject. These stories focus on creating a compelling narrative that provides the reader with a thorough and multi-faceted look at a particular topic. In addition to the narrative, long-form storytelling is often accompanied by multimedia such as photos, videos, and visuals that are designed to create a connection between the reader and the object of the story or enhance the understanding of the subject matter presented.

Below is an example of a long-form story:

- [Rethinking how innovation creates development impact](#)

USAID STORYTELLING PLATFORMS: MEDIUM, EXPOSURE, STORYTELLING HUB, AND EDUCATIONLINKS

Within USAID, the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs’ (LPA) media team offers three storytelling platforms where you can submit a story: [Medium](#), [Exposure](#), and [USAID Storytelling Hub](#). In addition, stories can be shared through the [EducationLinks](#) (or Edu-Links) learning blog. While these platforms may require a lengthier review process, the opportunity to reach a global audience and produce a shareable, polished story is significant.

Medium, Exposure, and the Storytelling Hub have story, photo, formatting, and submission guidelines with specific timeline expectations (see [Guidelines for Submitting Stories to USAID’s Storytelling Platforms](#)).

Platform	Description ⁷	Example
Medium	External blogging platform . This is the right platform for a 600- to 800-word success story with two to three photos. It is possible to embed multimedia, polls, interactive maps/graphics, YouTube videos, tweets, and Instagram posts. Topics should illustrate USAID’s work of a significant scope and reach, and highlight how individuals’ lives have been transformed as a result.	USAID/Burma: With \$22, Bright Students from Burma Shine and Innovate
Exposure	External online storytelling and photo blogging platform heavily focused on photos that USAID uses to post the most compelling photo essays. This is the right platform if there are between 12-20 complementing professional high-quality photos that tell a story showing the human impact of USAID’s work.	USAID/Kosovo: Setting a High Bar
Storytelling Hub	USAID’s multimedia platform . This is the right platform if there is a human-interest video accompanied with professional photos. Stories should align with USAID’s priorities [see USAID’s Message Manual] and be produced in close coordination with LPA. An LPA producer will serve as project lead and field producer, working with Bureau/ Mission communicators to research and identify a story “hero,” potential sites to visit, and story feasibility.	USAID/Bangladesh: Joynur’s Joy

⁷ Guidelines for Submitting Stories to USAID’s Storytelling Platforms: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1XbFr7e9DxUp8V7DCFOcRiuRkbWLPo_e6

Platform	Description ⁷	Example
Education Links (EduLinks)	USAID’s learning blog platform : This is the right platform to share knowledge to create and implement successful education and skill development programs. ⁸ Story submissions include guidance, learning summaries, evidence trends, and country reflections from USAID and country partners.	USAID/Morocco: Career Center Preparing Young People for Job Market

Note: Success stories published on Exposure and Medium are written for a **global audience**. These stories are only published in English, and preference is for contributors to use Chicago Manual Writing Style.⁹

LEVERAGE MULTIPLE PLATFORMS: USING A SUCCESS STORY TO ENGAGE MULTIPLE AUDIENCES

Sharing content across multiple platforms allows for the opportunity to reach diverse audiences. By incorporating different photos, quotes, or story details, the same success story can be tailored for the intended audience’s interests and shared across multiple platforms, as shown in USAID/Vietnam’s storytelling example below.

Considerations for tailoring the story include thinking about the audience: What is their reading level? In what language or languages should the story be written?



Source: USAID IMPACT-MED

USAID/Vietnam appealed to multiple audiences across storytelling platforms by sharing their story of how USAID assistance improved teaching methods so university students can gain skills that can be utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the examples below, the Mission shared the same success in different ways based upon their audiences on Facebook and USAID’s News and Information blog.

⁸ Edu-Links: <https://www.edu-links.org/about>

⁹ Chicago Manual Style: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmoss_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Audience: USAID/Bureau staff and website visitors	Audience: Facebook followers
Platform: USAID Blog	Platform: USAID/Vietnam Facebook
<p>On September 22, 2020, the story was shared as a USAID/Vietnam success story (Annex H). The 2-3 paragraph story was written in English, and included engaging photos, data, and participant quotes that enhanced the story about how USAID objectives have increased impact in higher education.</p>	<p>On October 23, 2020, USAID/Vietnam shared a similar story but shifted the story’s perspective to that of university professor, Dr. Trâm. In the brief, one-paragraph Facebook post (Annex I), the story appealed to local audiences by being written in Vietnamese, including an action photo of Dr. Trâm teaching, and explaining how partnering with USAID has improved higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

PART 2: STORYTELLING STRATEGIES

This tool consolidates USAID storytelling resources and adapts them to higher education storytelling.

ADAPTING AND CUSTOMIZING STORYTELLING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Q. Why should we prioritize storytelling about higher education?

A. Sharing USAID's higher education stories show the impact of USAID investments in higher education across technical sectors. Additionally, by focusing on a protagonist that has benefitted from or driven USAID programming, we can tell a compelling human story that demystifies development issues and educates the public about the value that USAID provides to beneficiaries and partners.

Storytelling in higher education should be viewed as a journey, where the beneficiary's past experiences inform current and future successes. Identifying noteworthy stories may not always be a clear task, especially if protagonists have long been removed from their higher education experiences.

To help brainstorm potential protagonists or story ideas, ask:

Brainstorming Questions	Point of View
Who were the beneficiaries of scholarships or other higher education initiatives? Where are they now?	Individual
Did a USAID higher education activity support a doctor, engineer, teacher, inventor, public servant, or any other working professional to achieve their professional goals ? If so, how? What challenges did they overcome in that journey?	Individual
Were there beneficiaries who returned to their countries after obtaining a higher education abroad through USAID programming? How are they affecting their country's sustainable local development ?	Individual
How can I tell a story about HEI capacity development through the story of the people?	Individual + Institution
Are there individuals affiliated with USAID HEIs who have a continued relationship with USAID higher education programming? What innovative concepts has the individual implemented, in partnership with the HEI, to improve higher education outcomes in their countries?	Individual + Institution
What role did a higher education institution or individuals from an HEI have in achieving development objectives from different sectors?	Individual + Institution

[BACK](#)

Brainstorming Questions	Point of View
Are there HEIs that have significantly advanced USAID’s higher education programming? How have they affected their local communities by facilitating training, education, or research efforts?	Institution

LET’S GET STARTED!

There is no specific storytelling formula to follow, but there are steps to help develop an engaging and memorable higher education story.¹⁰

1. Identify a person, organization, or institution whose story will be highlighted.

PERSON	ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID beneficiary • Scholarship recipient • USAID staff • Individuals affiliated with HEIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Mission • Implementing partner • U.S. and partner country HEIs • Government partners

2. Select the appropriate audience and story format.

3. Review the higher education themes to tie the story back to USAID activities and priorities.

4. After selecting theme(s), leverage the USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank (below) to help you prepare relevant interview topics and questions.

USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank

Strategic storytelling requires the storyteller to engage more actively with their human subject to capture instances of transformation and success through USAID’s higher education programs and activities. In line with the existing storytelling resources, this tool shares examples of themes, ideas, and questions that can be used while formulating strategic higher education storytelling. This does not serve as an exhaustive list of topics; instead, this tool is to be used as a resource to help customize stories to the USAID higher education context. The examples below all refer to higher education-specific themes and should be interpreted as such ([Annex B](#)).

¹⁰ Sources: PSE Storytelling Checklist; USAID Message Manual; NGO Connect

USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank

Themes and Topics in Higher Education	Questions to Guide the Story
<p>Women’s social and economic empowerment</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Were there cultural challenges? How has the beneficiary’s economic and social trajectory transformed? What USAID higher education initiative/program/activity and/or HEI was involved in their success? Were specific mentors or individuals involved in inspiring and guiding the subject?</p>
<p>Access through scholarship programs</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>What scholarship program aided the subject? Did they feel prepared for higher education? Did a scholarship program help alleviate major obstacles in starting and finishing higher education? Did a scholarship program allow a beneficiary to study outside their home country? Can a scholarship program be traced to a beneficiary’s current professional achievements? Were there ancillary benefits to the scholarship program such as mentorship or volunteer work that affected the beneficiary or their community?</p>
<p>Resiliency, self-determination, and perseverance</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Are there beneficiaries who faced multiple challenges on their path to obtaining higher education? Was their path to higher education non-linear?</p>
<p>Marginalized populations (religious/ ethnic minorities, LGBTI persons, internally displaced persons, etc.)</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>What are the motivations for marginalized students in seeking higher education? What are the norms, stigma, or challenges present in their communities and countries regarding their decision to pursue an education?</p>
<p>STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>How did the beneficiary overcome challenges in their STEM higher education? Are they currently working in the STEM field in their community or country? Is their STEM education positively affecting their community and its development? Is the student a member of a traditionally underrepresented population in a STEM field? How has improved STEM curricula affected development? How has the private sector been engaged in STEM education?</p>
<p>Disability inclusive education</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>How did the activity support a beneficiary with disabilities? What unique challenges did the beneficiary overcome in obtaining their education? Were they able to change or shape any norms for students with disabilities in their community? How did the HEI or organization improve higher education for students with disabilities?</p>

BACK

Themes and Topics in Higher Education	Questions to Guide the Story
Youth workforce development Example	Was the beneficiary a recipient of USAID higher education or youth workforce development programming? Was the beneficiary able to secure meaningful employment as a result of higher education programming and activities? Were private sector initiatives and efforts involved in this success?
Individuals affiliated with HEIs Example	Are there administrators, faculty, staff, researchers, or postdoctoral scholars who have a formal connection with one or more HEIs? Are there compelling stories of mentorship and youth building?
Teacher educators and teacher training Example	How has an HEI transformed its teacher education pedagogy or curriculum? Are there success stories from teacher educators, teachers, and other education specialists who benefited from USAID higher education activities or training? Did the teacher training aid them in their classrooms and student learning outcomes? Have they inspired and/or mentored students? Do they encourage higher education in their professional settings?
Development through agriculture education Example	How have farmers and agriculture specialists, including scientists and technicians, benefited their communities through higher education agriculture training? Were they able to advance or affect agriculture production in their community? Did they receive specialized knowledge and training in the process? How has institutional investment affected food security? Have any new varieties of crops or livestock been developed as a result of the investment?
Private sector engagement Example	How did a private sector entity become engaged in the project or activity? Are there successful market-driven development approaches in HEIs? Are there individuals affiliated with private sector higher education partnerships who have compelling stories? How did private-sector support drive a partnership forward?
Health care training Example	Are there doctors, nurses, and/or other healthcare providers who have benefited from USAID higher education activities and programming? Are there HEIs providing specialized health care training through USAID programs and activities? Is there a USAID higher education activity that has left a lasting impact on a country's health system?

**Research and
innovation**

Example

How have fellowships, scholarships, and other training provided opportunities for beneficiaries to hone their research skills? How are HEIs providing innovative research, and have communities benefited from publications? In what ways are research findings being applied to improve local communities?

5. After interviewing the protagonist, begin to structure the USAID Higher Education story using the guidelines below.

In general, stories of different modes (narrative or visual) and lengths ([short, medium, or long form](#)), should include the elements below. For a full example on how to structure a story, visit [USAID's Success Story Guidelines for USAID Partners](#).

HEADLINE

- A good headline is simple, jargon-free, and impactful, and it should summarize the story using action verbs that bring the story to life.

INTRODUCTION (1 PARAGRAPH)

- Start the story by introducing protagonist, and showcasing the challenge encountered and the context of the USAID Higher Education programming.

BODY (3 PARAGRAPHS)

- Now, describe what actions the protagonist took, and any results or outcomes.
- As participants, beneficiaries or drivers of USAID Higher Education programming: What activities did the protagonist participate in (academic, professional, community service)? What challenges did they overcome? What was learned?

CONCLUSION (1 PARAGRAPH)

- Finally, put the protagonist's story in context by looking at the bigger picture.
- What is the protagonist doing now? How did USAID's Higher Education programming help the protagonist make a difference in their community or home country?

6. Finally, as you develop the story, remember the four key storytelling elements below.

I. HIGHLIGHT A MAIN PROTAGONIST

Identify the protagonist of the story, such as a scholarship recipient, faculty member, researcher, HEI or partner organization.

- Make the protagonist's story relateable by using quotes and visuals.
- USAID Missions or Implementing Partners can also be protagonists.

2. WRITE A CATCHY TITLE AND OPENING

Grab the readers' attention with a compelling opening including a challenge, accomplishment or key piece of the story.

- Introduce the USAID activity, any relevant development issues and the protagonist.
- The goal is for the reader to care about the protagonist and want to learn more.

3. SHOW THE DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

Discuss development issues or USID programming to provide context to the story.

- Avoid technical reporting: only add numerical data if it adds value to the story.
- If highlighting a beneficiary, explain how USAID programming impacted them. And, if highlighting an organization or institution, explain how they impacted others through USAID programming.

4. USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Adapt themes, language and tags based on your intended audience.

- Consider where you are targeting USAID staff, Implementing Partners, HEIs, partner governments, students, or local/global audiences.
- When making final edits, adapt or delete any technical terms, acronyms or jargon.

A FEW FINAL TIPS:

Include details about the protagonist. Ask permission to include the protagonist's name, age and hometown. If the protagonist is an institution or organization, include institutional details.

Try to “show,” not just “tell.” Add personality to your story with quotes and photos.

When possible, complement the story with data. Create graphs or charts that make data easy to grasp.

Credit partners and HEIs. Recognize external contributions to encourage others to share USAID stories.

LET'S READ A USAID HIGHER EDUCATION STORY: THE U.S.-EGYPT HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The U.S.-Egypt HEI, funded by USAID, encourages partnerships between Egyptian and American universities for knowledge transfer, research, and joint degree programs. The initiative also offers a scholarship program for high-achieving Egyptians. The Institute of International Education (IIE) manages the program with Egyptian and U.S. organizations & publishes success stories, like Marwa's [here](#).

USAID-funded HEI STEM scholar, Marwa Mohamed, arrived in the U.S. in August 2015 to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



Despite initial cultural adjustment challenges, Marwa hit the ground running after her arrival at Western Michigan University. Being an international student at a U.S. university was not an easy feat for Marwa. After all, it is challenging enough for native English speakers to adjust to a new environment. But Marwa's cultural adjustment challenges did not get in her way of her academic success. Her passion for research in biomedical sciences was clear. With a consistent 4.0 GPA and membership in the Honors College, her professors noticed her immediately and offered her research opportunities in their labs and teaching assistant positions in their classes. One of her professors nominated Marwa for scholarship and research opportunities and as a result Marwa received two awards. The first was the "Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award" from the College of Arts and Sciences that included a financial scholarship of \$500 and the second award was the "Undergraduate Research Excellence

Award" from the Office of the Vice President for Research that also included a \$500 award.

Marwa donated her financial awards directly to the lab that she is a part of. Furthermore, Marwa's interests in molecular biology offered her the opportunity to co-author a paper on planarian worms and patterns of abnormalities. The paper titled "Surgical Ablation Assay for Studying Eye Regeneration in Planarians" was published on April 14, 2017 in the Journal of Visualized Experiments (JoVE). Marwa was also recently recognized by the Physics Department for her academic work during a ceremony held on April 20, 2017, and was offered a teaching assistant position with her physics professor during the spring 2018 term. Marwa reacted saying, "I was astonished actually, but I accepted to do that as a volunteer as it is a fantastic experience to strengthen my understanding and improve my communication and teaching skills."

Marwa's academic success didn't get in the way of her leadership development and volunteering. Marwa volunteers regularly with the Kalamazoo Club, an after school club for elementary aged children where she helps them with homework and plays with them. During spring break 2017, Marwa went on a trip to Philadelphia for various volunteering opportunities in the city with kids and a homeless shelter. Marwa will continue lab research activities as part of her internship in summer 2017, and will continue to volunteer as her time permits.

NOW, LET'S EVALUATE THE STORY

FIRST, REVIEW THE STORYTELLING STRATEGIES AND FINAL TIPS

After reading the [Storytelling Strategies section](#) and the story of USAID's U.S.-Egypt HEI STEM Scholar Marwa Mohamed, let's consider:

- Does the story follow the four elements of a compelling story by...
 - » Highlighting a main protagonist?
 - » Having a catchy title or opening?
 - » Showing the development journey and discussing USAID higher education programming?
 - » Including context-appropriate language?
- Did the author include...
 - » Personal details of the person, organization, or institution highlighted?
 - » Quotes and photos?
 - » Clear and easy to understand data through visual graphs or charts?
 - » Credit for the support and contributions of HEIs or other partners?

THEN, EVALUATE THE STORY'S FINAL CONTENT

After considering the storytelling strategies and the questions above, create a chart like the one below based on Marwa's story as a checklist to critically evaluate the story content before making final edits:

DOs	DON'Ts
<input type="checkbox"/> Clear HE themes (women's empowerment, STEM, scholarships)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexciting title and hook
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes protagonist name and photo in science lab ties into story well	<input type="checkbox"/> Little mention of protagonist's home country
<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant language (academic focus)	<input type="checkbox"/> No mention of how protagonist will benefit Egypt upon return
<input type="checkbox"/> Mention of U.S. University and professor	

PART 3: INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

Q. I have data that I can use to write stories about USAID’s higher education programming. Why do I need to conduct interviews?

A. Data only tells one part of the story. Interviews can uncover the personal impact of USAID’s programming and help write a story that connects with readers on a human level.

LET’S GET STARTED!

INTERVIEWING TIPS

Tip	Detail
Prepare in advance	Prepare a list of 7-10 questions about the interviewee’s background, involvement in USAID programming, any interesting challenges or memories the interviewee would like to share, and how they’ve leveraged the experience personally or to affect others.
Location, location, location	If the interview is not conducted virtually, attempt to meet at a location that was meaningful to the interviewee’s USAID higher education experience.
Empathize with the interviewee:	Before starting the interview, spend a few minutes discussing the interviewee’s current work or studies, and thank them for sharing their story.
Ask open-ended questions	Avoid “yes” or “no” questions. Instead, for example, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What challenges did the interviewee experience in the journey to higher education?• What was most memorable about the USAID programming they participated in?• What was the biggest lesson they learned because of the USAID programming?
Practice active listening	Do not interrupt the interviewee or guide their answers. Instead, encourage the interviewee to share as much detail as possible, using their own words.
Document the interview	Do not rely on your memory to document the interview. Record the interview (with permission) or take notes of quotes and important details.
Follow-up	After the interview, send a thank you email to the interviewee and follow up if there are any pending questions. Also, request relevant photos to include in the story.

Find sample higher education interview tips and USAID/Egypt’s questionnaire for scholarship recipients featured in the Facebook “Super Scholars Sunday” posts in [Annex A](#) and [Annex C](#).

BACK

PART 4: VISUAL STORYTELLING STRATEGIES

Q. How can photos and data tell the story of USAID’s higher education programming?

A. Leveraging photography, in addition to personal interviews and quantitative data, can help bring USAID’s higher education programming to life and show the story of USAID’s impact. Additionally, photos that capture the impact of USAID’s higher education programming on individual beneficiaries and higher education institutions can better engage stakeholders, donors, and implementing partners.

STORYTELLING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Although photographs can be used to complement stories in a variety of written formats, images with well-written captions can also tell a rich story.

To ensure your USAID higher education storytelling photos can be used, follow these tips ([Annex D](#)):

Tip	Detail
Feature the protagonist.	Include photos of protagonists whose lives have been affected by USAID or individuals/partners/HEIs who are changing lives through USAID programming.
Include the photographer and protagonist’s details.	Include the photographer’s name/organization, and details that personalize the story (names, ages, quotes, and locations).
Give credit.	If the photo was not taken by the USAID Mission or the implementing partner, or the photo appears on a website or belongs to a professional photographer, ensure you have the appropriate rights to publish the photo. Always provide appropriate credit.
Get permission.	Protagonists need to sign a USAID consent form , which should be translated into the local language and approved by the relevant Mission or Embassy. Also, explain to the protagonist how and where their photos will be used.
Use the right photo formats.	Attach only .jpg, .bmp, or .gif files.
Ensure high quality resolutions.	Photos have at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) resolution.

For more comprehensive strategies on the fundamentals of photography and visual storytelling, visit [LPA’s Photo Guide for USAID Implementing Partners](#).

DESIGNING PHOTO STORYTELLING WITH ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND

Visual storytelling can be a powerful tool, but it can also create barriers for the visually impaired. To be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, USAID must develop and use information and communications technology that is accessible to people with disabilities.¹¹

To ensure that photo storytelling is accessible and inclusive, captions are critical.

They:

- Must accompany all visual materials. Captions should be designed to help screen readers (who may not be able to see photos) understand what is taking place.
- Need to be descriptive and detailed. Captions should serve as a substitute of images for the visually impaired; therefore, captions should include the “who, where, when, what, and why” of any photograph to give proper context.
- Should be offered in both the local language and in English. To avoid alienating non-English speakers, always include captions in the local language; this will help increase the reach of the photo story and its dissemination potential on local media platforms.

If you would like to create a narrative based on photos and captions alone, use the guidelines¹² below to get started, and consider submitting to [USAID’s Exposure photoblog](#):

- Include details in the photos that help tell the story. For example, if the story protagonist is participating in USAID-led higher education capacity building, capture the protagonist during a training event or in the classroom. Moreover, include details in each photo that highlight their journey or their current work: capture a photo of them in action at their desk, a wide-angle portrait of them surrounded by items related to their field of study, etc.
- Use photography to create a narrative structure. Like a written story, which has a beginning, a middle, and an end, photos also need a narrative. One idea is to practice chronological narrative structure by capturing photos of the protagonist throughout the day in different locations and times of the day to create a sequence.
- Focus on capturing emotions. To capture protagonists’ emotions, effective photography should include people, faces, and body language. If the protagonist is an institution or organization, it is still important to include photos of partners, staff, or practitioners to help tell the story of the institution or organization’s impact.
- Use the rule of thirds. It is important to create aesthetically composed photographs to engage the viewer. To do this, place the protagonist off-center (if you imagine the photo cut into thirds, your subject could be in the “third” at the right or left of the photo) and choose a background with a neutral color in order to avoid distraction and draw the eye to the protagonist.
- Include compelling captions. If only accompanying the photographs with captions, ensure that they are factually correct, rich in detail, and give the reader new information. Captions should complement, not repeat, the story.

¹¹ USAID: [Section 508 and Accessibility](#)

¹² Source: Digital Photography School “[How to do Storytelling with your Images](#)”

See below for examples of effective photo storytelling and detail-rich captions.



May 12, 2018 - Ramadi, Iraq. An Iraqi woman shows her ink-stained finger after casting her vote in the country's parliamentary elections. Hundreds of thousands of Nineveh voters could be disenfranchised in Iraq's upcoming provincial elections as many have not undergone biometric registration or are unable to return to their constituencies. **Photo Credit: Hadi Mizban/AP¹³**

The example below was highlighted in [USAID's Impact Report for the Higher Education Solutions Network \(HESN\)](#), which was launched in 2012 to change the face of development by tapping into the innovation, passion, and technical expertise found within universities worldwide. The photo **captures the protagonist, depicts action, includes a caption and credit, and uses the rule of thirds.**



In the picture Mona Mijthab (pictured right), Design Facilitator of IDDS Hogares Sostenibles, sits and talks with Marta, a woman she met at the market selling fruits and vegetables. Building local networks and understanding the context is one of the most important parts of the co-creation design process. **Photo Credit: Luis Milian/USAID**

STORYTELLING THROUGH DATA

Another effective way to tell the story of USAID's higher education programming is to leverage the large amounts of data that USAID staff, professionals, practitioners, and partners have collected to create visualizations (See also [Annex E](#)).

¹³ Source: Rudaw.net "[Nineveh's displaced voters set to miss out in provincial election](#)"

DATA VISUALIZATION TIPS

Tip	Detail
Think about the audience.	Ask yourself who the intended audience is and what they know about the topic. Is your data intended for decision makers, partners, beneficiaries, or other stakeholders? The visualization should be adapted to the audience's level of understanding.
Hook your audience with an interesting title.¹⁴	Titles and subtitles are used to entice the audience, as they are what is often read first. Is your title relevant to the subject? Does it fit the story being told? Is the title clear and specific to the reader?
Provide context for the data.	Sometimes it will be necessary to highlight the significance and meaning of the data presented. Consider the audience, their knowledge level, and how the content provided can increase the impact of the infographic.
Find the compelling narrative.	Providing facts or large data sets does not help readers understand the story. Use clear and easy to understand visualizations that help viewers examine relationships or outliers, and include a brief summary to contextualize data findings.
Make visualizations objective.	Data should not be biased and, therefore, if data is used for storytelling purposes, the author should focus on what the data reveals and not try to use the data to advance a particular opinion or point of view.
Do not censor the data.	Be mindful that excluding certain pieces of data may misrepresent what the data "says." Any visualization should be an honest representation of the overall data and not a selective representation of data to support a specific storyline.
Focus on explaining, not decorating.	Concentrate less on how the visualization looks and more on what the visualization communicates to viewers.
Provide a sound conclusion.	Provide outcomes and/or a desired conclusion to the viewer. The desired conclusion may not be explicitly written, as the data should represent the specific storyline and provide the viewer the opportunity to form their own opinions.

¹⁴ <https://www.columnfivemedia.com/crafting-an-infographic-narrative>

VISUALIZATIONS

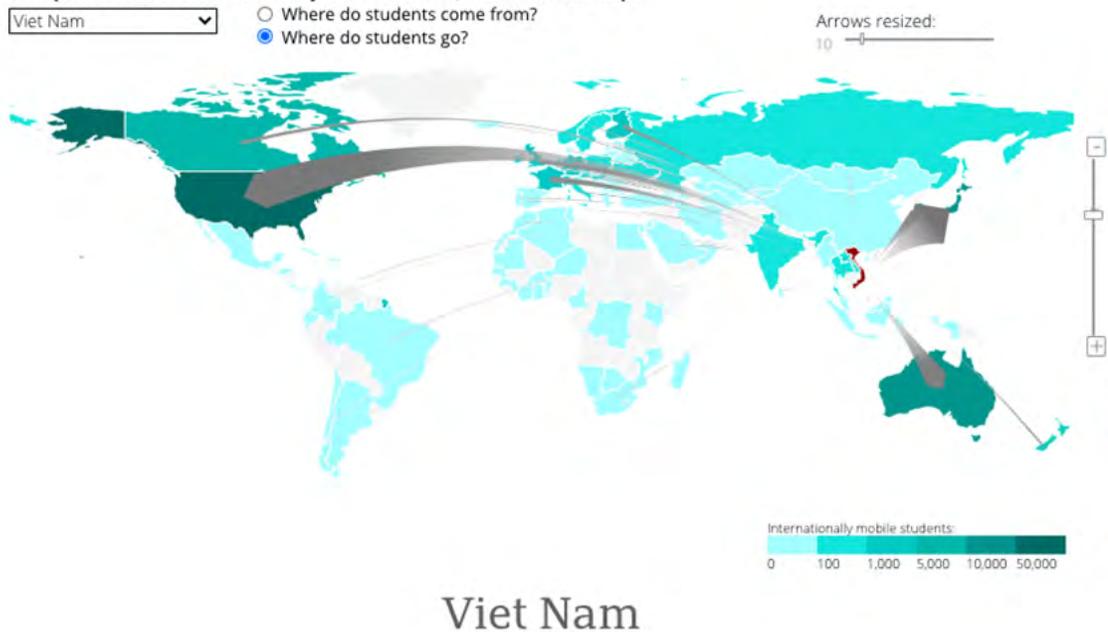
According to a *Harvard Business Review* article,¹⁵ an excellent visualization must express “complex ideas communicated with clarity, precision, and efficiency.”

The visualization below, created by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), showcases data on the global flow of tertiary students from Vietnam. To see UIS’s global data on the shifting demand for higher education, particularly in the developing world, click [here](#).

In order to communicate insights to the viewer, the visualization includes:

- Three text boxes summarizing country of origin, destination country, and key indicators with accompanying figures and percentages
- A color-coded map (colors detailed below the map) based on mobility rates to certain countries
- Arrows exemplifying the magnitude and flow direction of the Vietnamese students

To explore the data select a country from the menu, or click on the map.



Country of origin		Destination country		Key Indicators	
Lao PDR	6,056	Japan	34,276	Students abroad:	
Cambodia	612	United States	25,596	Total number of mobile students abroad	108,527
Korea, Rep.	152	Australia	16,138	(% of total mobile students)	1.9
China	108	Korea, Rep.	7,752	Outbound mobility ratio	3.6
France	36	France	4,093	Gross outbound enrolment ratio	
Myanmar	34	United Kingdom	3,468	Students hosted:	
Mozambique	32	Germany	2,773	Total number of mobile students hosted	7,250
Timor-Leste	28	Canada	2,529	(% of total mobile students)	0.1
Thailand	25	Finland	2,440	Inbound mobility rate	0.4
Nigeria	22	New Zealand	1,359		

Source: [Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students | UNESCO UI](#)

¹⁵ Source: Harvard Business Review “[How to Tell a Story with Data](#)”

INFOGRAPHICS

Infographics are “visual representations of information or data” and include a collection of imagery and minimal text to provide an easy-to-understand overview of a specific topic.¹⁶ The goal of an effective infographic is to communicate information clearly and concisely.

The following infographic showcases an example of effective storytelling as created by USAID’s U.S. Global Development Lab.

In order to communicate insights to the viewer, the infographic includes:

- Different colors (in line with USAID branding) to improve visual appeal
- A map to help viewers visualize the data geographically
- A title (with subtitles) in bold font that reads: “Research and Innovation Fellowship Program”
- Goals and outcomes boxes (styled with the same color) to provide context for the data
- Quantitative data (numbers) highlighted in large, bold font to attract the eye



Source: [Research and Education Innovation Fellowship Program](#)

¹⁶ <https://venngage.com/blog/what-is-an-infographic/>

CHARTS & GRAPHS

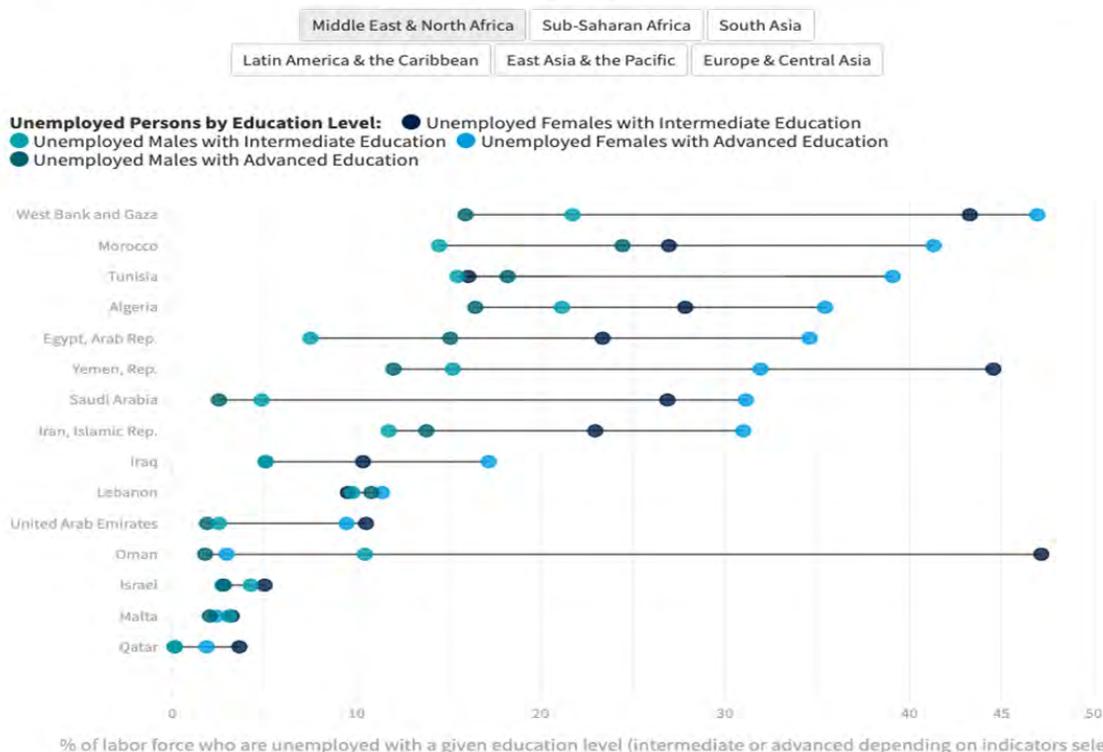
Charts and graphs are “visuals intended to display trends, patterns, and relationships between sets of data” through form, color, and spatial position. Form differentiates data through structure, colors make data points pop, and spatial positioning alters data’s location within the visual to guide the viewer’s eye.¹⁷

The visualization below, based on data from the World Bank Gender Data Portal, shows that females with intermediate or advanced education in the Middle East and North Africa are more likely to be unemployed than males.¹⁸ Explore the full Gender Data Portal [here](#).

In order to communicate insights to the viewer, the chart includes:

- Different colors, clearly explained at the top, to differentiate gender and education level data
- Spatial positioning that allows the viewer to quickly see how a specific group (ex: unemployed females with advanced education) compares to others in the same country and across countries
- Clear horizontal and vertical axes, detailing unemployment percentages and countries evaluated

Share of Labor Force with Intermediate or Advanced Education who are Unemployed



¹⁷ <https://blogs.perficient.com/2020/09/30/visual-storytelling-use-graphs-charts-to-your-advantage/>

¹⁸ https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/opportunity-build-back-better-covid-19-fostering-gender-parity-education-and-skills?cid=ECR_E_NewsletterWeekly_EN_EXT&deliveryName=DM92078

PART 5: VIDEO STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES

Q. How and when can videos be used to illustrate higher education storytelling?

A. In addition to photography and writing, videography can sometimes better illustrate higher education development and showcase success and growth over longer periods of time. Certain higher education activities and narrative stories of individuals and institutions can benefit from videography.

LET'S GET STARTED!

Start by reviewing [LPA's Graphic Standards Manual](#) to see video usage guidelines pertaining to logos and USAID video branding protocol. Additionally, the [USAID Branding Resources](#) page also has a wealth of branding resources for video production. To obtain access to video bumpers, reach out to the relevant USAID point of contact on communications and branding.

EXAMPLES

Visit the [USAID video page](#) for USAID video examples, including news and press release videos, as well as personal and inspirational videos. The scope of this USAID higher education storytelling toolkit focuses on replicating videos of individual and institutional outcomes. [Amani's Big Idea](#) is a good example to consider. Additional examples are also linked in the Video Tips list below.

PLATFORMS TO CONSIDER AND VIDEO PROMOTION

To establish an audience and identify the appropriate platform for video promotion, consult [Part 1](#) and particularly the [Long Form Storytelling](#) sub-section, which includes resources on working with Exposure, Medium, and the Storytelling Hub. For video promotion geared toward USAID social media, consult [Part 6](#).

DESIGNING VIDEO STORYTELLING WITH ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND

Digital storytelling can be a powerful tool, but can also create barriers, particularly for the visual or hearing impaired, and for people with different technological literacy levels or language proficiencies. In accordance with [ADS Section 508](#) guidelines, below are recommendations specific to videography (see also [Annex F](#)):

- All multimedia content containing speech or other audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content must be **close captioned**.
- All training and information video and multimedia content must be **audio described**; this requires adding narration to describe important visual details, including actions, characters, on-screen text, scene changes, and other visual content.
- Display of alternate text or audio must be tailored to be **user-selectable**. That is, there must be the capability to turn the audio description on and off.

VIDEO TIPS

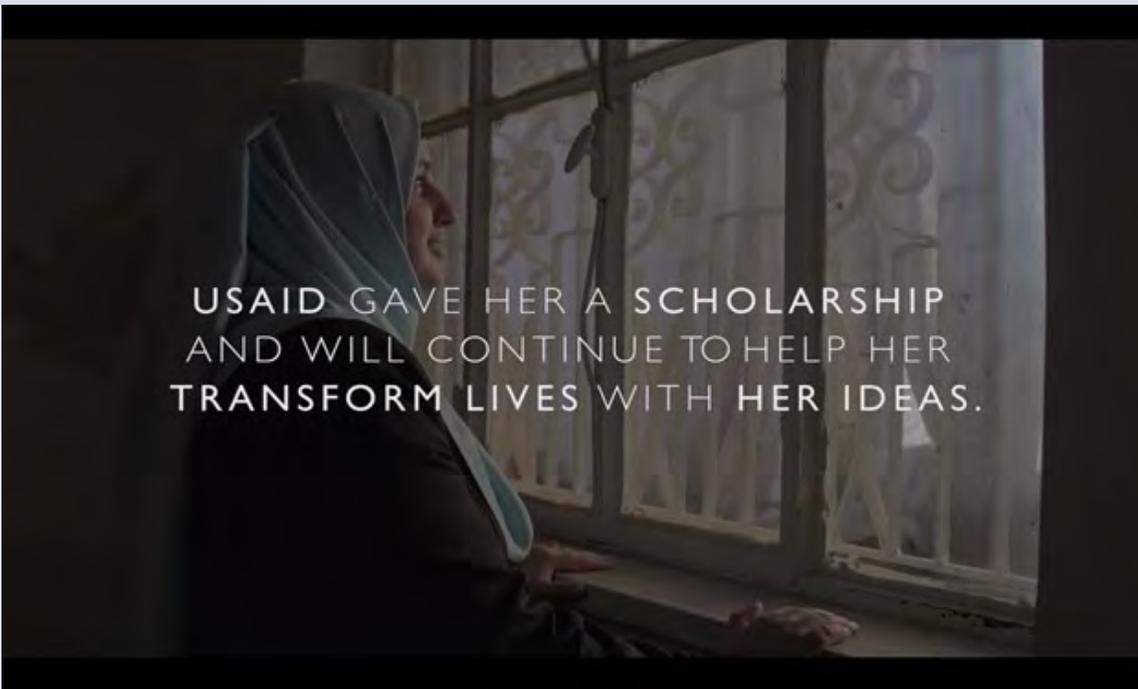
Tip	Detail
<p>Examine the value of the video</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Does the inclusion of this video add value? Is the subject matter detailed enough to garner a video?</p> <p>Higher education video storytelling captures and retells sustained and longer-term instances of intellectual capacity building.</p> <p>Possibilities: A beneficiary of USAID higher education becomes a photographer and sign language interpreter. A USAID-affiliated HEI attended USAID inclusion training to better their institution's efforts in inclusive education and inspire disability inclusive outlets.</p>
<p>Capture and “set up” the characters of the story</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Capture the dignity and grace of the subject. Also, ensure the subject and subject matter is set up by providing a brief background synopsis, before delving into the humanistic quality of the story. Answer the who, what, when, and where in the opening of the video.</p> <p>Higher education beneficiaries come from a multitude of backgrounds, and some may not be easily identifiable if their higher education experiences are far removed. They can be teachers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and farmers but also institutions such as HEIs. Ensure their stories are illustrated in a positive light, and where obstacles are present, highlight instances of resilience and growth.</p> <p>Possibilities: A teacher from Senegal improves reading and basic education outcomes in her classroom after participating in USAID teacher training activities. The video shows the successful results of evidence-based teaching methods led by USAID.</p>

Tip	Detail
<p>Write a compelling script</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>The script of the video can derive from an interview or other personal first-hand experiences. Consult Part 2 of this toolkit and the USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank for ideas to craft a compelling narration that speaks to the humanist quality of the subject and the story.</p> <p>There is a wealth of compelling narrations centered around higher education success stories. USAID higher education videos display challenges met with courage and determination.</p> <p>Possibilities: A video that tells the story of women’s empowerment through the lens of multiple women coming from various academic and professional backgrounds who share common challenges and tell both the individual and institutional stories of USAID activities.</p>
<p>Use settings relevant to the subject of your story</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Although the background and setting of the video might be blurred in order to focus more closely on the subject, there might be frames where the setting brings the story to life further through appropriate backgrounds.</p> <p>HEIs, partner and host universities, training centers, places of employment, and even farmlands can all be locations of higher education learning. By identifying and employing settings that encapsulate higher education learning, and the resulting professional experiences, a video can sometimes provide more substantive storytelling than a still photograph.</p> <p>Possibilities: A gender equality and inclusion advocate in Nepal outlines her successes in involving marginalized communities in their community’s natural disaster relief efforts. By capturing various settings, creative editing, institutions, and even cultural sites, the video provides a holistic overview of USAID capacity building.</p>

NOW, LET'S REVIEW A USAID HIGHER EDUCATION VIDEO

The screenshot frames below, incorporated directly from the video “[Amani's Big Idea](#),” showcase ideal examples of strategic storytelling in higher education where the beneficiary is shown in a dignified light, interacting with their setting, and visual effects focus on certain instances of their story.

The closing of the video displays captioned text highlighting the specific USAID higher education activity that aided the beneficiary, and other closing remarks about the individual and/or HEI.



FIRST, REVIEW THE STORYTELLING STRATEGIES AND FINAL TIPS

After reading the [Storytelling Strategies section](#) and watching the video (linked above) of USAID's scholarship recipient, Amani, consider:

- Does the video follow the four elements of a compelling story by...
 - » Highlighting the main protagonist?
 - » Having a catchy title or opening?
 - » Showing the development journey and discussing USAID higher education programming?
 - » Including context-appropriate language?

[BACK](#)

- Did the videographer include...
 - » Personal details of the person, organization, or institution?
 - » A compelling script?
 - » Clear and easy to understand subject matter and accomplishments of beneficiaries?
 - » Credit for the support and contributions of HEIs or other partners?

THEN, EVALUATE THE STORY'S FINAL CONTENT

After considering the storytelling strategies and the questions above, create a chart (like the one below based on Amani's story) as a checklist to critically evaluate your story's content before making final edits:

DOs	DON'Ts
<input type="checkbox"/> Clear HE themes (women's empowerment, scholarships, disability inclusive education)	<input type="checkbox"/> Uninspiring thumbnail (a close-up of protagonist not engaged in a meaningful activity)
<input type="checkbox"/> Sets up protagonist with a catchy title and introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Script does not include challenges overcome by protagonist
<input type="checkbox"/> Compelling script (humanizes the protagonist's story)	<input type="checkbox"/> No mention of institutions and individuals affiliated with HEIs who have contributed to protagonist's success
<input type="checkbox"/> Mention of host HEI	

PART 6: USING SOCIAL MEDIA: STORY PROMOTING STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES

Q. What is the best way to share success stories on social media?

A. Social media is a powerful tool that can leverage and expand local messaging reach and story distribution. As previously mentioned in [Part I](#), it can be a tool to create and share consistent success stories created just for these platforms, but social media can also be used to leverage stories written on other platforms. In addition, social media can be used to create conversations and reach existing and new audiences with content and messaging.



In addition to sharing the success story on a specific Mission or Bureau's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts, it may be beneficial to promote the story through sharing or reposting specific content to respective social media platforms. One way to do so is by requesting that partners, partner HEIs, USAID communications and media teams, USAID Missions abroad, and/or host embassies share the higher education success story to their respective websites, newsletters, and social media channels; greater audience reach may be achieved, ultimately elevating the message of success.

Interested in posting the success story on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter? This is a great way to showcase the impact made in higher education and elevate the desired message to local audiences. The USAID Social Media Guide [internal resource] is a comprehensive guide created by LPA that outlines best practices, including when and how to post on social media platforms. The guide addresses:

- How to create social media accounts
- Advice regarding when to use social media
- Planning for social media engagement
- Detailed guidelines for optimizing social media posts
- Posting best practices
- Tips for improving audience engagement

The USAID Social Media Guide also offers insights for collaborating with LPA to share the success story and broaden audience scope. By sharing Bureau or Mission social media plans with LPA and Bureau communicators, there are opportunities to coordinate with other Bureaus and amplify social media handles from DC, if appropriate.¹⁹

The USAID Social Media guide complements the [USAID Message Manual](#), which outlines how USAID communicators can explain core messages and mission. Strategic social media approaches should be integrated into communications plans and implemented as a primary way to share key messages, build and engage an audience, and expand distribution of content.

¹⁹ USAID Social Media Guide

Q. How do I create a compelling post on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?

A. First, review the Storytelling and Social Media Strategies:

- [Storytelling Strategies section](#)
- USAID Social Media Guide [internal resource]
- USAID social media resources

Then let's consider:

- Does the story follow the four elements of a compelling story by...
 - » Highlighting a main protagonist?
 - » Having a catchy title or opening?
 - » Showing the development journey and discussing USAID higher education programming?
 - » Including context-appropriate language and avoiding technical jargon?
- Did the author include...
 - » Personal details of the person, organization, or institution?
 - » Credit for the support and contributions of HEIs or other partners?
 - » High quality photo(s), video(s), or a hyperlink to the higher education success story?
 - » Engaging content that encourages the targeted audience to read the linked content, comment, or repost?
 - » Hashtags used to generate additional audience reach and page consistency?

Success stories likely have not been made possible without the help of others. Be sure to:

- Recognize others' input...
 - » Receive final permission to post the success story and give credit to those who supported the success.
 - » Give credit by including the logos of those involved, mentioning them in the story, or tagging them in the social media posts.

EVALUATE THE STORY'S FINAL CONTENT

After considering the storytelling strategies and the questions above, create a chart (see below each social media example for associated charts) as a checklist to critically evaluate the story content before making final edits.

NOW, LET'S EVALUATE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS!

The Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts included below showcase excellent examples of strategic storytelling in higher education. These posts contain elements of a compelling story, and using the strategies above and creating a chart to evaluate the post's content highlights opportunities for creating more effective and engaging posts.

For Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posting best practices, review the USAID Social Media Guide [internal resource].

FACEBOOK

USAID/Philippines [Philippine universities provide expertise needed to address critical public health concerns](#)²⁰



USAID Philippines ✓
May 4, 2020 · 🌐

Fantastic initiative in helping build regional capability for COVID-19 testing from our university partner! University of San Agustin's Center for Chemical Biology and Biotechnology (C2B2) hosted a two-day training for medical technologists in Iloilo City on how to conduct quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR)-based testing for #COVID19. C2B2 Director and genomics expert Dr. Doralyn Dalisay was one of the co-trainers along with personnel from Manila HealthTek, Philippine Genome Center-Visayas, and Philippine Science High School-Western Visayas Campus to establish West Visayas State University Medical Center as the second COVID-19 testing center in the region.

Dr. Doralyn Dalisay, a molecular biology and genomics expert, received a grant from USAID through the STRIDE Program in 2016 to conduct industry-relevant research. With the grant, Dr. Dalisay acquired new instruments and strengthened her laboratory. And, with further funding from the Philippine government to expand the lab (to include the acquisition of a qPCR instrument), C2B2 was established. Today, the C2B2 facility has the capability and infrastructure necessary to perform qPCR analyses and training grounded on demanding molecular biology principles.

USAID support has enabled Philippine universities to provide the expertise needed to address critical public health concerns. #BeatCOVID19

²⁰ USAID/Philippines <https://www.facebook.com/usaid.philippines/posts/3141857129213925>

DOs

- 1-4 paragraphs in length
- Relevant language (academic focus)
- High quality photos and/or videos
- Simplistic jargon, avoids technical language
- Hashtags used to complement the success story
- Provides engaging information, encouraging audience to read content, like, comment, or repost

DON'Ts

- Unexciting title and hook
- Key partners are not tagged

TWITTER²¹



DOs

- 1-4 paragraphs in length
- Relevant language (academic focus)
- High quality photos and/or videos
- Simplistic jargon, avoids technical language
- Hashtags used to complement the success story
- Provides engaging information, encouraging audience to read content, like, comment, or repost

DON'Ts

- Unexciting title and hook
- Hashtags not used

²¹ USAID/Asia <https://twitter.com/USAIDAsia/status/1310913374566395904>

INSTAGRAM²²



DOs

- High quality photos and/or videos shared – central focus of post
- 1-3 paragraphs in length
- Relevant language (academic focus)
- Simplistic jargon, avoids technical language
- Provides engaging information, encouraging audience to read content, like, comment, or repost
- Hashtags used to improve audience reach and page consistency

DON'Ts

- Unexciting title and hook
- Key partners not used

²² USAID/Zambia <https://www.instagram.com/p/CHzT5zorcUv/>

EXECUTING A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY AND STORY PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Q. How do I create a social media strategy that generates consistent content?

A. After writing stories for social media posts, executing a posting strategy is the next step. Considerations for how often to post on various channels will take planning; sharing stories without a specific strategy will not generate desired results.

Will stories be shared once a day, once a week, or a few times a week? A realistic schedule and plan to post stories will make it more feasible to identify and accomplish goals. Creating a calendar and a regular posting schedule outlines what will be shared as well as eliminates questions of when posts will be made and when the audience will most likely pay attention. Also, automating content ensures that social media schedules are consistent and that stories are able to maintain a consistent presence without requiring manual posting. Tools like [Hootsuite](#) can help manage the social media schedule.

USAID/Paraguay incorporated Google Slides [internal resource] into their remote teaming and storytelling strategy for their “Martes de Embajadores” Facebook communication plan. This resulted in posts like [Milagros’ story \(Annex J\)](#), which generated their highest Facebook post engagement from August 2020 to March 2021.



SCHEDULING CONTENT

LPA’s USAID Social Media Guide [internal resource] outlines the importance of independently researching social media use in one’s country or region to determine when social media content will attract the largest audience. For example, the work week in the Middle East is Sunday through Thursday, not Monday through Friday as in the United States. Research may also help with determining how many tweets to post a day and the type of content that is most popular with local audiences (videos, audio podcasts, photos, articles, etc.).

Below are some sources to begin regional social media best practices research:

- All regions: [Social Networking: A Guide to Strengthening Civil Society through Social Media](#) (from USAID *Mostly older data, but still a useful guide*)
- Asia: [Charity Digital Skills Report](#)

CREATING POST CONSISTENCY USING A SIMILAR SUCCESS STORY SUBJECT

Using the USAID/Egypt social media example in [Part 2](#), in preparation for generating content for weekly posts, USAID/Egypt sends its scholars a questionnaire ([Annex K](#)) asking for background information about the scholar in addition to anecdotes about that person's experiences. That information is then used to craft a #SuperScholarSunday Facebook post. The Facebook posts typically include:

- Brief introduction
- 3-4 paragraphs that include quotes from the scholar
- What the scholarship recipient gained and the impact of the scholarship
- Simplistic language, avoiding technical jargon
- Written in Arabic and English, the primary languages of USAID/Egypt's Facebook audience
- Implementing partners are tagged and credited
- Includes high quality photo(s) and/or video(s)

These stories have been consistent through weekly posting and are available through USAID/Egypt's Facebook. USAID/Egypt also promotes the weekly #SuperScholarSunday posts on the Mission's Twitter account to increase exposure and engagement through [cross-platform posting](#), as shown in this USAID/Egypt Twitter [post](#) (See also [Annex G](#)).



Note: Approval from the highlighted scholar is received prior to posting content.

In addition, asking that partners boost success stories on social media can increase exposure and engagement. In the example below, USAID/Egypt's original [Facebook post](#) and [Twitter post](#) about #SuperScholarSunday scholars were promoted on Twitter by [U.S. Embassy Cairo](#) (148,400 followers) and [AMIDEAST](#) (7,600 followers).



UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING WITH TARGET AUDIENCES

The goal of sharing stories on social media is to capture audience attention and motivate them to listen, engage, and share content. It is important to not only share the content but also encourage engagement. Talking to the target audience and not at them invites feedback and encourages them to add a comment or share content with their networks.

Visual imagery can shape a story and create emotional triggers that words cannot convey. Use high-quality photos, graphics, videos, and hashtags.

KEY HIGHER EDUCATION HANDLES AND HASHTAGS

When posting on social media, it is important to include USAID and higher education hashtags and key handles in order to improve audience reach. By consistently including key handles and hashtags in posts, social media followers are able to recognize consistent story posting, which encourages greater audience reach and engagement. In addition, consistently using hashtags and tagging partners makes posts more memorable, which is beneficial for cross-platform posting.²³ The USAID Social Media Guide and Digital Tools List [internal resources] provide additional tools for optimizing the use of hashtags.

Whether incorporating popular hashtags such as #USAIDTransforms or creating an original hashtag specific to a series of success stories such as USAID/Egypt's #SuperScholarSunday hashtag, using these helps to generate more targeted readership. Below are examples of key handles and hashtags to consider incorporating when sharing higher education success stories.

Key Handles	Key Hashtags
USAID: @USAID	#USAID; #USAIDTransforms; #AmericaActs; #DemocracyIs; #SelfReliance; #DevJourney; #EndPoverty; #PowerAfrica; #FeedTheFuture
USAID Center for Education: @USAIDEducation	#USAIDEducation
Partner HEIs and other key partners' handles	Dependent upon partner(s)
USAID Mission and Bureau handles	USAID/Egypt: #SuperScholarSunday

CONSIDER TIMING: INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATION DAYS

Strategic storytelling incorporates an element of appropriate timing within the planning and editing process. Considerations for this should be made depending on where and when the success story will be published, as well as if certain deadlines need to be met. For example, if interested in publishing the success story on Medium and sharing it to local networks by a specific date, you will need to consider the length of time for the editing, publishing, and distribution process. Conversely, if the preference is to disseminate the story quickly or if it is believed that the success story's content would not be a great fit for Medium, it may be better to

²³ Sprout Social: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/create-a-hashtag/>

post the success story on the Bureau, Mission, or implementing partner's website and share via social media channels instead.

An additional opportunity for targeted social media and website posting may be available if the story incorporates an element of awareness in relation to International Commemoration Days. This is especially important if considering submitting the story to EduLinks, Medium, Exposure, or the Storytelling Hub, as this provides an opportunity for the story's message to be amplified on USAID's social media channels on a related commemoration day.



For example, to highlight commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, USAID/Egypt highlighted its [Super Scholars](#), whose community service experiences involved working to end gender-based violence. For ease of obtaining information that can be translated into a Facebook or Twitter post, a questionnaire ([Annex C](#)) is sent to each scholar. The posts use the hashtag [#16days](#).

TRACKING METRICS

Tracking efforts makes it easier to learn which stories successfully engaged audiences and which did not. Metrics can measure:

- Engagement
- Awareness
- Traffic

Engagement can be tracked through various [social media metrics](#). USAID's Social Media Guide [internal resource] provides additional insight to tracking metrics. Tracking performance and demonstrating results highlights the importance of investing the time and resources into social media.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: INTERVIEW TIPS

Tip	Detail
Prepare in advance	Prepare a list of 7-10 questions about the interviewee's background, involvement in USAID programming, any interesting challenges or memories the interviewee would like to share, and how they've leveraged the experience personally or to affect others.
Location, location, location	If the interview is not conducted virtually, attempt to meet at a location that was meaningful to the interviewee's USAID higher education experience.
Empathize with the interviewee:	Before starting the interview, spend a few minutes discussing the interviewee's current work or studies, and thank them for sharing their story.
Ask open-ended questions	Avoid "yes" or "no" questions. Instead, for example, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What challenges did the interviewee experience in the journey to higher education?• What was most memorable about the USAID programming they participated in?• What was the biggest lesson they learned because of the USAID programming?
Practice active listening	Do not interrupt the interviewee or guide their answers. Instead, encourage the interviewee to share as much detail as possible, using their own words.
Document the interview	Do not rely on your memory to document the interview. Record the interview (with permission) or take notes of quotes and important details.
Follow-up	After the interview, send a thank you email to the interviewee and follow up if there are any pending questions. Also, request relevant photos to include in the story.

ANNEX B: USAID HIGHER EDUCATION STORYTELLING INSPIRATION BANK

USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank

Strategic storytelling requires the storyteller to engage more actively with their human subject to capture instances of transformation and success through USAID’s higher education programs and activities. In line with the existing storytelling resources, this tool shares examples of themes, ideas, and questions that can be used while formulating strategic higher education storytelling. This does not serve as an exhaustive list of topics; instead, this tool is to be used as a resource to help customize stories to the USAID higher education context. The examples below all refer to higher education-specific themes and should be interpreted as such.

Themes and Topics in Higher Education	Questions to Guide the Story
<p>Women’s social and economic empowerment</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Were there cultural challenges? How has the beneficiary’s economic and social trajectory transformed? What USAID higher education initiative/program/activity and/or HEI was involved in their success? Were specific mentors or individuals involved in inspiring and guiding the subject?</p>
<p>Access through scholarship programs</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>What scholarship program aided the subject? Did they feel prepared for higher education? Did a scholarship program help alleviate major obstacles in starting and finishing higher education? Did a scholarship program allow a beneficiary to study outside their home country? Can a scholarship program be traced to a beneficiary’s current professional achievements? Were there ancillary benefits to the scholarship program such as mentorship or volunteer work that affected the beneficiary or their community?</p>
<p>Resiliency, self-determination, and perseverance</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Are there beneficiaries who faced multiple challenges on their path to obtaining higher education? Was their path to higher education non-linear?</p>
<p>Marginalized populations (religious/ ethnic minorities, LGBTI persons, internally displaced persons, etc.)</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>What are the motivations for marginalized students in seeking higher education? What are the norms, stigma, or challenges present in their communities and countries regarding their decision to pursue an education?</p>

Themes and Topics in Higher Education	Questions to Guide the Story
<p>STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Example</p>	<p>How did the beneficiary overcome challenges in their STEM higher education? Are they currently working in the STEM field in their community or country? Is their STEM education positively affecting their community and its development? Is the student a member of a traditionally underrepresented population in a STEM field? How has improved STEM curricula affected development? How has the private sector been engaged in STEM education?</p>
<p>Disability inclusive education Example</p>	<p>How did the activity support a beneficiary with disabilities? What unique challenges did the beneficiary overcome in obtaining their education? Were they able to change or shape any norms for students with disabilities in their community? How did the HEI or organization improve higher education for students with disabilities?</p>
<p>Youth workforce development Example</p>	<p>Was the beneficiary a recipient of USAID higher education or youth workforce development programming? Was the beneficiary able to secure meaningful employment as a result of higher education programming and activities? Were private sector initiatives and efforts involved in this success?</p>
<p>Individuals affiliated with HEIs Example</p>	<p>Are there administrators, faculty, staff, researchers, or postdoctoral scholars who have a formal connection with one or more HEIs? Are there compelling stories of mentorship and youth building?</p>
<p>Teacher educators and teacher training Example</p>	<p>How has an HEI transformed its teacher education pedagogy or curriculum? Are there success stories from teacher educators, teachers, and other education specialists who benefited from USAID higher education activities or training? Did the teacher training aid them in their classrooms and student learning outcomes? Have they inspired and/or mentored students? Do they encourage higher education in their professional settings?</p>
<p>Development through agriculture education Example</p>	<p>How have farmers and agriculture specialists, including scientists and technicians, benefited their communities through higher education agriculture training? Were they able to advance or affect agriculture production in their community? Did they receive specialized knowledge and training in the process? How has institutional investment affected food security? Have any new varieties of crops or livestock been developed as a result of the investment?</p>

Themes and Topics in Higher Education	Questions to Guide the Story
<p>Private sector engagement</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>How did a private sector entity become engaged in the project or activity? Are there successful market-driven development approaches in HEIs? Are there individuals affiliated with private sector higher education partnerships who have compelling stories? How did private-sector support drive a partnership forward?</p>
<p>Health care training</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Are there doctors, nurses, and/or other healthcare providers who have benefited from USAID higher education activities and programming? Are there HEIs providing specialized health care training through USAID programs and activities? Is there a USAID higher education activity that has left a lasting impact on a country's health system?</p>
<p>Research and innovation</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>How have fellowships, scholarships, and other training provided opportunities for beneficiaries to hone their research skills? How are HEIs providing innovative research, and have communities benefited from publications? In what ways are research findings being applied to improve local communities?</p>

ANNEX C: USAID/EGYPT: SAMPLE “16 DAYS” OF ACTIVISM SUPER SCHOLAR QUESTIONNAIRE

SUPER SCHOLAR SUNDAY PROFILE: 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

LSP-PUBLIC SCHOLARS

BACKGROUND

- Scholar name:
- What town and governorate are you from?
- University, faculty/program, year of study:

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- What motivated you to choose a community service project working to end gender-based violence?
- What is one thing you learned about yourself or in what way did you grow personally through your community service?
- What was/is the most rewarding part of your community service experience?
- What is one experience from your community service that you will always remember?

THE FUTURE

- In what ways can you see prevention of gender-based violence improving in the future?
- What are your dreams for your own future after you graduate?

ANNEX D: PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Tip	Detail
Feature the protagonist.	Include photos of protagonists whose lives have been affected by USAID or individuals/partners/HEIs who are changing lives through USAID programming.
Include the photographer and protagonist's details.	Include the photographer's name/organization, and details that personalize the story (names, ages, quotes, and locations).
Give credit.	If the photo was not taken by the USAID Mission or the implementing partner, or the photo appears on a website or belongs to a professional photographer, ensure you have the appropriate rights to publish the photo. Always provide appropriate credit.
Get permission.	Protagonists need to sign a USAID consent form , which should be translated into the local language and approved by the relevant Mission or Embassy. Also, explain to the protagonist how and where their photos will be used.
Use the right photo formats.	Attach only .jpg, .bmp, or .gif files.
Ensure high quality resolutions.	Photos have at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) resolution.

Visit [LPA's Photo Guide for USAID Implementing Partners](#) for comprehensive photography strategies.

ACCESSIBILITY AND SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Visual storytelling can be a powerful tool, but it can also create barriers for the visually impaired. To be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, USAID must develop and use information and communications technology that is accessible to people with disabilities.²⁴

To ensure that photo storytelling is accessible and inclusive, captions are critical. They:

- Must accompany all visual materials. Captions should be designed to help screen readers (who may not be able to see photos) understand what is taking place.
- Need to be descriptive and detailed. Captions should serve as a substitute of images for the visually impaired; therefore, captions should include the “who, where, when, what and why.”
- Should be offered in both the local language and in English. Include captions in the local language to increase the reach of the photo story and its dissemination potential on local media.

²⁴ USAID: [Section 508 and Accessibility](#)

ANNEX E: STORYTELLING/DATA VISUALIZATION TIPS

Tip	Detail
Think about the audience.	Ask yourself who the intended audience is and what they know about the topic. Is your data intended for decision makers, partners, beneficiaries, or other stakeholders? The visualization should be adapted to the audience's level of understanding.
Hook your audience with an interesting title.²⁵	Titles and subtitles are used to entice the audience, as they are what is often read first. Is your title relevant to the subject? Does it fit the story being told? Is the title clear and specific to the reader?
Provide context for the data.	Sometimes it will be necessary to highlight the significance and meaning of the data presented. Consider the audience, their knowledge level, and how the content provided can increase the impact of the infographic.
Find the compelling narrative.	Providing facts or large data sets does not help readers understand the story. Use clear and easy to understand visualizations that help viewers examine relationships or outliers, and include a brief summary to contextualize data findings.
Make visualizations objective.	Data should not be biased and, therefore, if data is used for storytelling purposes, the author should focus on what the data reveals and not try to use the data to advance a particular opinion or point of view.
Do not censor the data.	Be mindful that excluding certain pieces of data may misrepresent what the data "says." Any visualization should be an honest representation of the overall data and not a selective representation of data to support a specific storyline.
Focus on explaining, not decorating.	Concentrate less on how the visualization looks and more on what the visualization communicates to viewers.
Provide a sound conclusion.	Provide outcomes and/or a desired conclusion to the viewer. The desired conclusion may not be explicitly written, as the data should represent the specific storyline and provide the viewer the opportunity to form their own opinions.

²⁵ <https://www.columnfivemedia.com/crafting-an-infographic-narrative>

ANNEX F: VIDEO TIPS

Tip	Detail
<p>Examine the value of the video</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Does the inclusion of this video add value? Is the subject matter detailed enough to garner a video?</p> <p>Higher education video storytelling captures and retells sustained and longer-term instances of intellectual capacity building.</p> <p>Possibilities: A beneficiary of USAID higher education becomes a photographer and sign language interpreter. A USAID-affiliated HEI attended USAID inclusion training to better their institution's efforts in inclusive education and inspire disability inclusive outlets.</p>
<p>Capture and “set up” the characters of the story</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Capture the dignity and grace of the subject. Also, ensure the subject and subject matter is set up by providing a brief background synopsis, before delving into the humanistic quality of the story. Answer the who, what, when, and where in the opening of the video.</p> <p>Higher education beneficiaries come from a multitude of backgrounds, and some may not be easily identifiable if their higher education experiences are far removed. They can be teachers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and farmers but also institutions such as HEIs. Ensure their stories are illustrated in a positive light, and where obstacles are present, highlight instances of resilience and growth.</p> <p>Possibilities: A teacher from Senegal improves reading and basic education outcomes in her classroom after participating in USAID teacher training activities. The video shows the successful results of evidence-based teaching methods led by USAID.</p>

Tip	Detail
<p>Write a compelling script</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>The script of the video can derive from an interview or other personal first-hand experiences. Consult Part 2 of this toolkit and the USAID Higher Education Storytelling Inspiration Bank for ideas to craft a compelling narration that speaks to the humanist quality of the subject and the story.</p> <p>There is a wealth of compelling narrations centered around higher education success stories. USAID higher education videos display challenges met with courage and determination.</p> <p>Possibilities: A video that tells the story of women’s empowerment through the lens of multiple women coming from various academic and professional backgrounds who share common challenges and tell both the individual and institutional stories of USAID activities.</p>
<p>Use settings relevant to the subject of your story</p> <p>Example</p>	<p>Although the background and setting of the video might be blurred in order to focus more closely on the subject, there might be frames where the setting brings the story to life further through appropriate backgrounds.</p> <p>HEIs, partner and host universities, training centers, places of employment, and even farmlands can all be locations of higher education learning. By identifying and employing settings that encapsulate higher education learning, and the resulting professional experiences, a video can sometimes provide more substantive storytelling than a still photograph.</p> <p>Possibilities: A gender equality and inclusion advocate in Nepal outlines her successes in involving marginalized communities in their community’s natural disaster relief efforts. By capturing various settings, creative editing, institutions, and even cultural sites, the video provides a holistic overview of USAID capacity building.</p>

ANNEX G: USAID/EGYPT FACEBOOK POST HIGHLIGHTING A SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

USAID/Egypt
December 6 at 9:58 AM · ٥

إله يوم الأحد ... يوم الدارس المتميز! خلال الـ 16 يوم لمناهضة العنف ضد المرأة، تسلط الوكالة الأمريكية للتنمية الدولية الضوء على دارسينا المتميزين ممن يستثمرون مواهبهم في خدمات التصدي للعنف ضد النساء والفتيات. نعرض اليوم قصة أسماء من محافظة الشرقية. وهي تدرس من أجل الحصول على درجة علمية في الأعمال التجارية من خلال البرنامج المشترك الذي أسسته جامعة عين شمس بالتعاون مع كلية Ocean County وجامعة Kean ، وكلاهما في ولاية نيوجيرسي بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. ولقد تخرجت أسماء بالفعل من الصف الدراسي بكلية Ocean County من هذا البرنامج بمجموع تراكمي 3.75.

شاركت أسماء في مناهضة العنف ضد النساء والفتيات عندما تطوعت للمساعدة في التنظيم والمشاركة في مؤتمر Women2Women الذي تم عقده في القاهرة برعاية مشتركة من السفارة الأمريكية. تقول أسماء: "تعاني العديد من الفتيات والنساء المعصيات من العنف كل يوم. من الصعب عليهن التحدث عن أشكال العنف تلك. يُعد مبدأ تعزيز المساواة بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة داعم أساسي في تعزيز حقوق المرأة. سمعت العديد من القيات النسائية المعصية يسردن قصصهن - لقد تعلمت الكثير منهن. لقد ساعدتني التجربة على فهم أن المرأة يمكن أن تكون رائدة في أي مجال. لقد ساعدتني التجربة في أن أصبح قائدة!"

"الثقة بالنفس، والطموح، والمبادرة، والمثابرة، والإبداع، والرغبة المتأصلة في العمل تجعل النساء أمهات وقائدات في آن واحد ويصبحن قادرات على تعليم الأطفال ونشأتهم حتى يصبحوا شباب ونشائات. دور المرأة مؤثر بشكل لا يوصف!"

"أنا أؤمن بمقولة [هنري ديفيد ثورو] بأن النجاح عادة ما يأتي لمن يتأهبون بالبحث عنه. حلمي هو أن أكون قائدة ناجحة، وأن يكون لدي مشروعي الخاص الذي يدعم المرأة المعصية ويكون مرتبط بالسوق العالمية."

"يوجد في مصر العديد من القوانين التي تخبرم العنف ضد النساء والفتيات، ولكن هناك حاجة إلى المزيد من التركيز على تثقيف الفتيات للتعرف على حقوقهن. أطلع إلى المستقبل حيث يمكن للنساء والفتيات معرفة حقوقهن، حيث لا يستطيع أحد أن يوقف أحلامهم!"

ونحن أيضاً يا أسماء نشاركك هذه الرؤية للمستقبل، وأمل ألا يمنعك أي شيء من تحقيق تلك الرؤية!

إذا كنتي ضحية لجريمة ما، فأنت لديك حقوق ، وهناك العديد من الخدمات التي يمكنك الوصول إليها. اتصلي بـ مكتب شكاوى المجلس القومي للمرأة على رقم 01007525600 أو الخط الساخن 15115 للحصول على المساعدة. اني لست وحدك.

It is Super Scholar Sunday! During the 16 Days of Activism, USAID is highlighting our scholars who are applying their talents to prevent and end violence against women and girls. Asmaa, from Sharkia, is today's featured scholar. She is working toward a business degree in the joint program Ain Shams established with Ocean County College and Kean University, both in New Jersey, USA. She already graduated from the Ocean County portion of this program with a GPA of 3.75!

Asmaa got involved with preventing violence against women and girls when she volunteered to help organize, and then participated in, the 2019 Women2Women conference in Cairo co-sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. "Many Egyptian girls and women suffer violence every day. It is hard for them to talk about it. Promoting gender equality and empowering women plays a fundamental role in promoting women's rights. Egyptian women leaders told their stories -- I learned a lot from them. The experience helped me understand that a woman can be a leader in any field. It helped me to become a leader!"

"Self-confidence, ambition, initiative, perseverance, creativity, and the inherent desire to work make women both the mothers and leaders who can educate children, making them young men and women. The role of women is incredibly influential!"

"I believe in the saying [by Henry David Thoreau] 'success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.' My dream is to be a successful leader, to have my own company that supports Egyptian women and is tied into the global marketplace."

"Egypt has many laws to prevent violence against women and girls, but more education is needed for girls to become knowledgeable of their rights. I see a future where girls and women exercise their rights, and no one can stop their dreams!"

We share that vision of the future as well, Asmaa, and hope nothing stops you from making it happen!

If you are a victim of crime, you have rights, and there are many services you can access. Call the National Council for Women's Complaints Office at 01007525600 or hotline at 15115 for help. You are not alone.

#SuperScholarSunday #16Days #OrangeTheWorld
AMIDEAST.Egypt
جامعة عين شمس
Ocean - Ain Shams - Kean program
Ministry of International Cooperation
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي المعصية

See Translation



"I see a future where girls and women exercise their rights and no one can stop their dreams!"
- Asmaa, USAID Scholar

#SuperScholarSunday
#OrangeTheWorld #16Days

ANNEX H: USAID/VIETNAM SUCCESS STORY (BLOG FORMAT)²⁶

USAID ASSISTANCE IN IMPROVING TEACHING METHODS HELPS PREPARE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS COMBAT COVID-19 IN VIETNAM

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

Associate professor Ngô Việt Quỳnh Trâm is the head of the Microbiology Faculty, Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Hue UMP). Hue UMP is one of ten medical universities in Vietnam promoting medical education reform through USAID's Improving Access, Curriculum and Teaching in Medical Education and Emerging Diseases (IMPACT-MED) Alliance. In the spring of 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health distributed guidance on prevention and response on COVID-19 to medical and health professors, including Dr. Trâm. She was then tasked with conveying that guidance on to her students. Concerned over how to best deliver such an extensive amount of content both quickly and efficiently, she turned to her experience over the past three years with IMPACT-MED. Utilizing skills gained from the IMPACT-MED program, she and other colleagues developed learning objectives, proactive assessments and teaching methods to deliver 20 theoretical and practical training courses for 450 final-year medical students from May to June 2020. These comprehensive training courses covered preventive medicine, treatment, and applications in public health, and elicited enthusiastic student feedback. Additional medical residents and post-graduate students also enrolled in the subsequent optional courses offered in July.



Associate professor Ngô Việt Quỳnh Trâm delivers a lecture.
USAID IMPACT-MED

In less than two months after attending these COVID-19 prevention and response training courses, students have become front-line volunteering medical officers to prevent and respond to the pandemic. More than 370 students and nearly 20 young lecturers of Hue UMP volunteered to participate in COVID-19 tracking and prevention activities in Danang, in response to the second COVID-19 wave in Vietnam.



Medical students attend associate professor Ngô Việt Quỳnh's lecture.
USAID IMPACT-MED

Dr. Trâm shared, "I am very happy and proud because I have applied the knowledge of the medical education reform supported by USAID to assist my teaching plan, lecture design, and the delivery of knowledge of COVID-19 precautions to my students over the past few months, and thanks to those skills, we have been able to effectively share a significant amount of knowledge to my students in such a short period of time."

READ MORE

[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Latest News](#)
[Success Stories | Vietnam](#)

²⁶ <https://www.usaid.gov/vietnam/success-stories/sep-2020-usaid-assistance-improving-teaching-methods-helps-prepare-university-students>

ANNEX I: USAID/VIETNAM SUCCESS STORY (FACEBOOK FORMAT)²⁷

 **USAID Vietnam**
October 22 · 🌐

Phó Giáo sư Ngô Viết Quỳnh Trâm là Trưởng Khoa Vi Sinh, Đại học Y Dược Huế. Đây là một trong 10 trường y ở Việt Nam đang đẩy mạnh cải cách giáo dục y khoa thông qua Dự án Liên minh Cải thiện Chất lượng Đào tạo Y khoa và Quản lý các bệnh mới nổi (IMPACT-MED) do USAID tài trợ. Đầu năm 2020, do ảnh hưởng của đại dịch COVID-19, Bộ Y tế đã phổ biến hướng dẫn về phòng và ứng phó đại dịch COVID-19 cho các giáo sư ngành y, trong đó có Tiến sĩ Trâm. Tiến sĩ Trâm sau đó đã được giao nhiệm vụ truyền tải hướng dẫn đó cho sinh viên của mình. Bản khoăn về việc làm thế nào để có thể truyền tải tốt nhất một lượng lớn nội dung như vậy, Tiến sĩ Trâm đã tìm tới những kinh nghiệm của bản thân trong 3 năm qua với dự án IMPACT-MED. Để đọc thêm câu chuyện, mời các bạn truy cập: <https://go.usa.gov/x7rKw>

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²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/USAIDVietnam/photos/a.498719120145654/5143729158977937/>

ANNEX J: USAID/PARAGUAY FACEBOOK STORY²⁸



USAID/Paraguay ✓
March 2 at 5:05 PM · 🌐

➡ Today in our " Ambassador Tuesday " of Ethics, Equity and Transparency, we invite you to meet Milagros Carregal, teacher of the Instituto Nacional de Educación Superior "Dr. Raúl Peña". Miracles recently culminated the Leadership Certification in Ethics, Equity and Transparency conducted by the [Rutgers University-Camden](#) and the [Universidad Nacional de Asunción](#), with the support of USAID / Paraguay.

📌 What Miracles stands out from experience is the fact that participants were divided into groups and designed projects to implement in their communities or workplaces. His group designed a project for INAES that combines building a Comprehensive Early Care and Learning Center for Children aged 6 months and 5 years, with a new curriculum approach that includes the culture of legality and ethics , equity and transparency.

💡 In this respect Miracles mentions that " If we want to install the idea that each person has individual responsibility to help build and maintain a society with a rule of law, we must undoubtedly start our work with children and their families and of course the teachers. It's about achieving in developing attitudes and actions from early childhood education that help build a more just, sustainable, equitable and solidarity society."

⚙️ · [See original](#) · [Rate this translation](#)



Milagros Carregal
Profesora del Instituto Nacional de Educación Superior
Embajadora EET

👍❤️👤 86 19 Comments 16 Shares

²⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/usaiddparaguay/photos/a.121553271206520/4272689329426206/>

ANNEX K: SUPER SCHOLAR SUNDAY QUESTIONNAIRE

Background information:

Name?

Age?

What town and governorate are you from?

What scholarship program are you in, including years, school(s), degree earned?

Current job and work experiences following scholarship?

Questions about your scholarship experience:

- Why did you apply for the scholarship?
- How did you feel when you learned you had been selected for the scholarship?
- How did you feel on your first day of school?
- How did you feel on graduation day?
- Pick one or two of the topics below and describe how these may have had a lasting impact on you: orientation/bridge year, English classes, study abroad, internship, community service, job skills training, degree program.
- Describe your experience and what you gained. What will you always remember? What is your proudest accomplishment?
- What struggles or challenges did you face? How did you overcome them?
- How will you use the knowledge, skills, and experience you gained to accomplish your dreams or goals?
- Now that you are an alum, how are you giving back to your community/country?
- Optional, if time: What are your hopes for the future?

FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Background Info:

Name?

Age?

What town and governorate are you from?

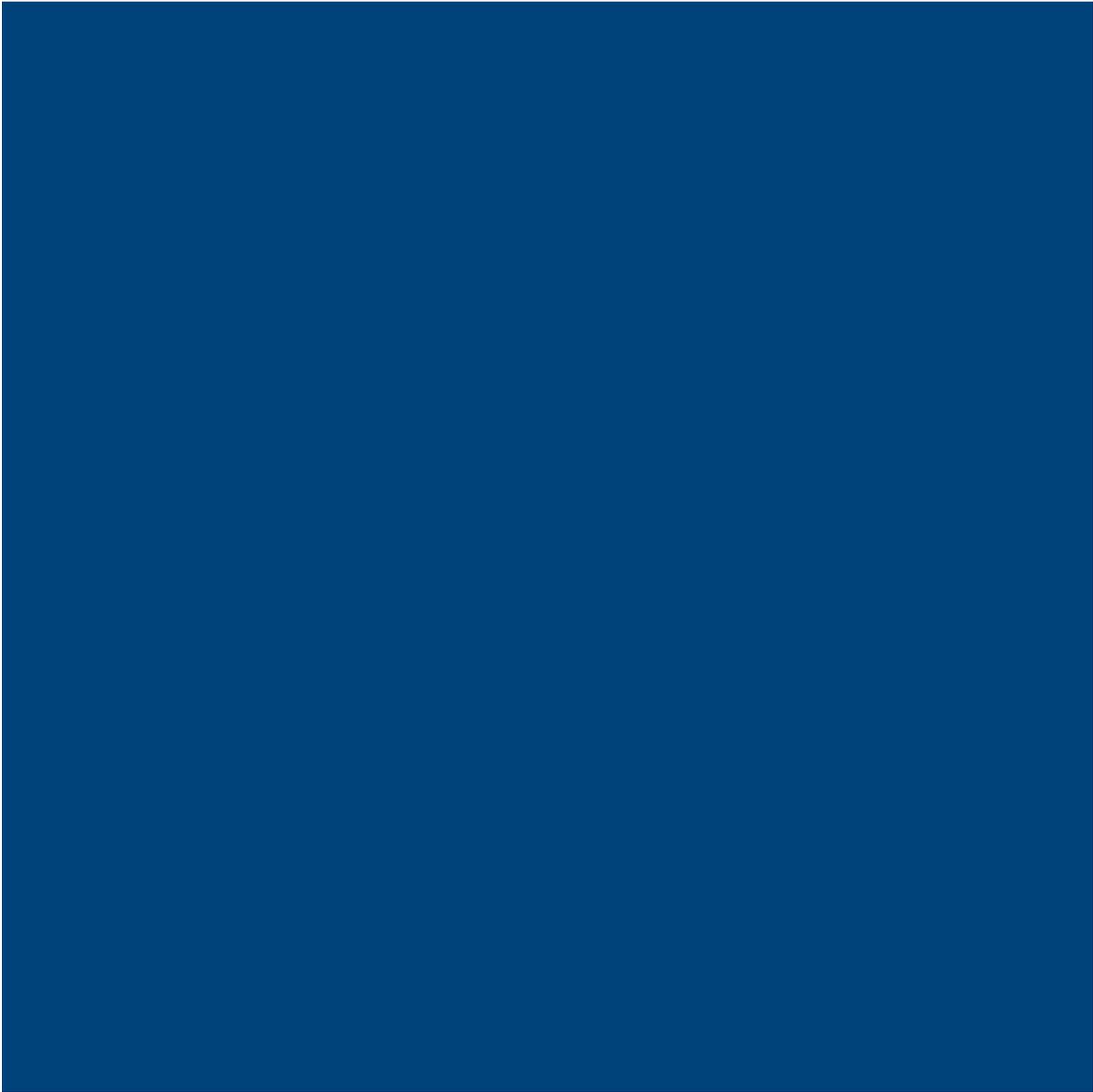
What technical education program are you in, including years, school(s), degree earned?

(If relevant) Current job and work/education experiences following degree?

Questions about scholarship experience:

- Why did you apply for this school?
- How did you feel on your first day of school?
- How did you feel on graduation day?
- What kind of training did you receive? What skills have you gained?
- What struggles or challenges did you face? How did you overcome them?
- How will you use the knowledge, skills, and experience you gained to accomplish your dreams or goals?
- (If relevant) Now that you are an alum, how are you giving back to your community/ country?
- What are your aspirations for the future?

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