

LACLEARN

Latin America and the Caribbean Learning and Rapid Response: Improving Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

SEPTEMBER 2020 – 2025



Photo Credit: Ciudadanos por la Transparencia (CxT), Mexico. This LACLEARN grantee's initiative included youth civic engagement activities, as pictured.

Background

According to recent reports from Freedom House, the Varieties of Democracy Institute, and the Economist Intelligence Unit, many LAC countries are experiencing declines in democracy-focused Sustainable Development Goals. Throughout the region, countries face escalated crime and violence, weakened democratic institutions, increased corruption, and broader democratic and security crises. If not addressed, these issues will impede efforts to promote inclusive growth, reduce poverty, bolster resilience, and strengthen democracy throughout the region.

Activity Overview

Under the Analytical Services IV IDIQ, the LACLEARN Task Order contributes to improving USAID's DRG and citizen security work in LAC through three key aims:

Analytical Services: Generating evidence through gender-informed analytical research, assessments, and studies.

Learning Support: Facilitating evidence utilization, dissemination, and related capacity building.

Rapid Response: Targeted and short-term technical assistance for transition environments.

LACLEARN has provided services for USAID's LAC Bureau, technical bureaus based in Washington, and over 10 local Missions/offices in LAC. The mechanism undertakes a demand-based approach to meet stakeholders' needs and accepts buy-ins from Missions and other operating units for activities. To date, LACLEARN has implemented over 45 research/learning activities and issued over 30 grants to local and regional organizations; examples are highlighted on the following page.

Contacts & Implementing Partners:

LACLEARN is managed by the LAC Bureau's Office of Regional Sustainable Development (LAC/RSD). For USAID stakeholders seeking LACLEARN support or additional information, contacts are provided below.

Cara Thanassi
Contracting Officer's Representative
USAID/LAC
cthanassi@usaid.gov

Gabriela Leva
LACLEARN Chief of Party
Development Professionals, Inc.
gleva@developmentpi.com

LACLEARN is implemented by a Joint Venture between **Development Professionals, Inc. (DPI)** and **Making Cents International (MCI)**, with subcontractors **NORC at the University of Chicago** and **Tetra Tech ARD**.

Illustrative Activities:

LACLEARN's [LAC/DRG Learning Agenda](#) (2021) prioritizes four learning themes: Citizen Security and Crime/Violence Prevention; Accountable, Transparent, and Effective Governance; Democratic Governance and Authoritarian Resurgence; and Innovations in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL). Illustrative activities include:

- Conduct targeted studies and assessments tailored to Mission strategic needs, such as diagnostic research on select DRG trends.
- Develop toolkits for practitioners to promote best practices in LAC/DRG program design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Facilitate regional learning events to highlight technical innovations, share lessons learned, and build communities of practice across LAC.
- Provide targeted and short-term technical assistance to support country-level response preparedness in transition environments, such as rapid research, learning support, or other institutional support.
- Mobilize grants for local research and learning initiatives (see [Annual Program Statement](#)).
- Implement an Evidence Help Desk to support urgent evidence needs on select themes.



Evidence to Date:

To date, LACLEARN has produced over 100 analytical products (e.g., reports, briefs, guides) for USAID, USG, and local stakeholders in support of DRG and citizen security in LAC. These include:

- [Gender-based Violence \(GBV\) Impunity Regional Study](#) (2024): This study investigated factors driving GBV impunity and survivor-centered solutions across LAC. Eight country case studies included Colombia, the Dominican Republic (DR), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru.
- [Haiti Citizen Security Assessment](#) (2022): This study assessed the state of Haitian citizen security, providing timely recommendations for USAID and other USG actors.
- [Northern Central America Extortion Study](#) (2022): This study provided a holistic examination of extortion trends and impacts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
- [Empowering Stakeholders for Transformational Development in the DR: Partnership for Democratic Development \(PDD\)](#) (2024): Through this research LACLEARN identified key challenges in democratic governance, in support of USAID and local stakeholders in the implementation of the PDD process.
- [Crime and Violence Prevention for High-Risk Youth in LAC: A Handbook for Practitioners](#) (2024); also available in Spanish [here](#). For crime and violence prevention practitioners, this Handbook provides background on tertiary risk intervention and guidance for those seeking to design, implement, and/or monitor relevant interventions.
- MEL Practitioner Guides (2023): [Engagement and Inclusion in Theory of Change Design](#); [Alternatives to Survey Measurement for Activity and Context Monitoring](#). These products guide MEL practitioners on specific issues relevant to the DRG context in LAC.