Success Story: Adapting to Virtual Communications: Pursuing Ideas in New Ways

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the USAID Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity, felt disrupted about conducting in-person training sessions and meetings, and tumbled into a world of virtual communications. Times of disruption, however, can also trigger innovation. USAID activated an integral component of its Activity; collaborating, learning, and adapting through utilizing various virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, to connect with its implementing partners, local institutions working in monitoring and evaluation, and the Government of Jordan to ensure USAID's activities in Jordan achieve their intended results, yet maintaining a safe distance and sparing our partners' health and safety.

Group photo for the Ministry of Education staff attending a virtual training session

The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity, successfully leveraged creative and relevant use of virtual platform tools such as chat queue, Question & Answer pod, collaborative whiteboard, polling, break-out rooms, and virtual hand raising to deliver theoretical and practical training sessions to the Ministry of Education to learn how to develop plans to monitor and evaluate their work.

Managing the logistics and technical pieces of the virtual platform can be stressful. However, by applying a learning by doing approach, the Activity was able to alleviate this stress by pairing an instructor with a technical producer for the entirety of the virtual training session. This supportive role enables the trainer to focus on the content and do what they do best—teach.

In this time of ambiguity, one thing is clear. Virtual learning techniques will continue to evolve and is here to stay. By learning from our experience and adapting to the endless variables, the Activity will continue to innovate and discover what works best for its virtual learners. With the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting to virtual is not optional anymore, it is a necessity.