PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM DIGITAL HARM

Five-Year Roadmap



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Protecting Children and Youth from Digital Harm (PCYDH) Five-Year Roadmap builds on USAID's Protecting Children and Youth from Digital Harm Primer. It details specific approaches and programmatic priorities that USAID will undertake over the next five years to continue the objectives outlined in the USAID Digital Strategy 2020-2024 and proceed with those outlined in the USAID Digital Policy 2024-2034.

BOX 1:

Digital Harms definition

USAID defines digital harm as any activity or behavior that takes place in a digital ecosystem and causes pain, trauma, damage, exploitation, or abuse directly or indirectly in either the digital or physical world, whether financial, physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual.[1]

BOX 2

Rewards and risks of digital access for children and youth

The proliferation of digital technologies dramatically affects the way children and youth across the world play, learn, work, interact, communicate, explore, and obtain access to information and services. Children and youth explore new cultures and societies and stay connected through the use of online games, music, movies, social media, and video chat platforms. However, access to these digital spaces also increases the risk of exposing children and youth to harm, in both the digital and physical world. Online activities provide opportunities for risk-taking behavior and enable exposure to predators, organized crime groups, and violent extremist organizations who can use these platforms to groom children and youth.[2] Children and youth are particularly vulnerable to technology-facilitated harm, such as online sexual violence, gender-based violence, hate speech, cyberbullying, trafficking,[3] digital recruitment in violent extremism groups,[4] and other such harms.

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1 There is no universally agreed upon definition of digital harm.

2 "International Organised Crime Threat Assessment," Europol, 2021, 25, https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/internet_organised_crime_threat_assessment_iocta_2021.pdf.

3 "2021 Trafficking in Persons Report," U.S. Department of State, 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/. The report identifies drastic global increases in online commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, including online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC), and demand for and distribution of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM), including content that involved human trafficking victims.

4 Julie Werbel, Kyle Beaulieu, "Policy for Countering Violent Extremism Through Development Assistance," USAID, April 2020, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/USAID-publication-Policy-for-Countering-Violent-Extremism-through-Development-Assistance-April2020.pdf. The report details how violent extremist organizations (VEOs) disproportionately target children and youth aged 10 to 29 for recruitment both online and in-person.



Photo Credit: Soumi Das for USAID

Digital technologies can help USAID reach the most vulnerable children and youth and protect them from digital harm. The programmatic priorities in this Roadmap address those risks to enable children and youth to take advantage of the opportunities digital access has to offer.

USAID's first-ever Digital Strategy 2020-2024 charted an Agency-wide vision for development and humanitarian assistance in a rapidly digitizing world. It aimed to equip USAID staff and partners to develop programming that supports countries in their process of digital transformation. This transformation comes with potential risks and rewards that affect various actors, including children and youth. The Digital Strategy laid the foundation for the new USAID Digital Policy 2024-2034.

In this rapidly digitizing world, children and youth are the next generation of digital leaders. Preparing them to capitalize on those rewards and to mitigate risks is essential moving forward. This Roadmap is a key step for USAID in supporting children and youth in this process.

> ***USAID will increase awareness of both the value and risks of online and mobile access for children, to reduce their exposure to disturbing or potentially harmful content, and to prevent exploitation…Through the Digital Strategy, USAID commits to supporting the strengthening, implementation, and enforcement of laws and policies that prevent, respond to, and protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect, including children vulnerable to online violence and exploitation.* – USAID Digital Strategy 2020-2024**

The PCYDH Roadmap builds on various U.S. Government strategies that provide a strong infrastructure for developing complementary approaches and programmatic priorities to address this issue, along with the USAID Digital Strategy 2020-2024 and the Digital Policy 2024-2034. The most relevant strategies are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Key U.S. Government strategies related to PCYDH



USAID has a unique role in preventing and responding to digital harm to children and youth. The Agency can draw on existing internal and external strategies, policies, and programs to develop a collaborative, multi-stakeholder, targeted approach to protecting children and youth from digital harm.

The Roadmap builds on these strategic frameworks with two mutually reinforcing pillars of USAID's work over the next five years. The first pillar focuses on ***internal*** knowledge and capacity-building across USAID. The second pillar focuses on ***external*** PCYDH programming.

1. Pillar 1 (internal): Share knowledge and raise awareness among USAID staff about digital harm to children and youth and the need to integrate child protection from digital harm into all sectors and programs from their inception.

2. Pillar 2 (external): Implement programmatic priorities that target children, youth, and their support systems, both online and offline. These action areas will work with existing stakeholders, drawing on USAID's strengths, and adding value to the field without duplicating existing efforts by USAID, USG partners, or external partners.

The action areas include:

a. Empowering teachers, parents, caregivers, and communities to protect children and youth from digital harm, including strengthening of youth-led networks;

b. Integrating digital safety and civility education into every sector's initiatives with an online component. (See Box 3 on page 12);

c. Improving and increasing access to mental health support for children and youth; and

d. Identifying and filling gaps in research and data on digital harms to children and youth.

This Five-Year Roadmap describes a series of overarching principles that will guide USAID in this work. It provides details of specific programmatic approaches USAID will take under these two mutually reinforcing pillars. The Roadmap details the roles of both internal and external actors who will support the delivery of the two pillars of work with USAID. Finally, it outlines an approach to communications and monitoring and evaluation that will accompany the pillars.

The Children, Youth and Families (CYF) team in the Bureau of Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation's Inclusive Development Hub is responsible for USAID programming that provides support to vulnerable children and youth, building on the Agency's capabilities and geographic reach, and complementing other USG programming. CYF also works in collaboration with the Innovation Technology and Research Hub's Technology team, which was responsible for implementing USAID's Digital Strategy 2020-2024.

USAID'S APPROACH

A core set of principles guides USAID's overall approach to PCYDH. These principles are woven throughout Pillars 1 and 2 and align with the strategies listed above and with the best international standards and practices in the field of child protection.

- **Prioritize prevention**: Key to USAID's approach to PCYDH is preventing digital harms *before* they occur. This prevention-focused approach aligns with the violence prevention objectives of the Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Strategy and Digital Strategy. Prevention of digital harm has several components, including:

  - ***Addressing the root causes of violence***: In an effort to make more systematic change, USAID will analyze the root causes of violence against children and youth online to ensure that programming adequately addresses those causes rather than just its online symptoms.

  - ***Taking an evidence-based approach to preventing digital harms***: USAID will design tools and approaches that take an evidence-based approach to preventing digital harms, drawing on the work of groups like INSPIRE, which has developed a set of seven evidence-based strategies that are proven to reduce violence against children.[5] These strategies include engaging parents and caregivers and strengthening families' financial standing. The strategies help policymakers, planners, practitioners, funders, and advocates operationalize prevention strategies in their country or setting.

5 "Inspire," End Violence Against Children, 2016, https://www.end-violence.org/inspire.

- » ***Using technology to be more effective and efficient to protect children and youth***: The unsafe use of technology can expose children and youth to new harms, but technology can also be leveraged as a tool to protect and prevent violence to children and youth. Rapid advances in technology can facilitate communication between children and parents and caregivers and provide critical health and online safety information. Software can block or limit internet use and screen time. Electronic case management systems can more effectively and efficiently track social support needs for vulnerable children and youth. AI and other kinds of automated content moderation technology can identify and block harmful content before it reaches children and youth.
- » ***Building and strengthening capacity and digital protection skills of children and youth***: Children and youth are often early adopters of digital tools, making them central to prevention efforts. Children and youth can play a role in preventing their online experiences from exposing them to harm, and also protect others online, including peers and their families. This means educating children and youth throughout their digital journeys to guide them in making safe choices online and avoiding harmful content and actors not only for themselves, but also for others.
- » ***Raising awareness and strengthening oversight of families and communities to build safe digital spaces***: Preventing digital harm against children and youth requires working with parents, caregivers, communities, schools, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and faith-based actors to address causal factors and social norms that perpetuate violence and exploitation. Aligned with the Digital Strategy, USAID can advance digital literacy programs that promote and teach safe practices online, equipping parents or caregivers with the skills and knowledge to support their children's digital safety, ensuring that children and youth engage in safe digital spaces and can take advantage of the benefits of digital access. Children and youth often have higher levels of digital literacy than their parents and caregivers, making it even more important to equip parents and caregivers with the skills to oversee their children's digital use wisely. This is especially beneficial for parents as they support their children in engaging in distance learning during periods of school closure due to crisis, conflict, or global health emergencies.

- **Tailor responses to differences in age and maturity**: Digital harms do not affect all children and youth in the same way. The nature of risk or harm, as well as a child's capacity and knowledge of digital protection tools is influenced by age, developmental stage, and other personal or environmental risk factors. Adolescents—as compared to younger children—are more exposed to online grooming, harmful material such as extreme pornography, hate speech, and extremist propaganda, as well as cyberbullying. As USAID outlines programmatic priorities, it will take into account the *ages and stages* approach, designing tailored programming for different age groups as they mature and their digital access and skills evolve. This age- and maturity-sensitive approach reflects priorities outlined in both the USAID Digital Strategy and the APCCA Strategy.

- **Meet the needs of victims and survivors:** Prevention will be prioritized, but interventions for recovery and rehabilitation will always be necessary. The PCYDH Roadmap focuses on providing child and youth-friendly support for victims and survivors of digital harm, focusing on two priority areas: (1) mental health services for survivors of digital harms and (2) survivor-centered services for those who have experienced TFGBV, with particular focus on services for women and girls who are disproportionately affected by GBV. The first step is recognizing the implications of digital harms both online and offline before equipping existing support services with the training and tools needed to support victims and survivors. In some places, these services are nascent or even non-existent and may need to be equipped to provide a broad range of basic support services, as well as more digitally-focused services. The disproportionate effect of digital harms to girls and women requires unique survivor-centered, child-friendly services, as well. This type of support will be offered in partnership between USAID's Inclusive



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Development (ID) and GenDev Hubs, which have already designed and implemented programming and created resources that take a survivor-centered approach, prioritizing methodologies that address emotional, sexual, and physical violence to certain groups, including women and children.

- **Promote an inclusive approach**: The PCYDH Roadmap pays special attention to the rights and inclusion of marginalized and under-represented populations of children and youth, including children in adversity, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI+ persons, recognizing that the intersectionality of vulnerable groups intensifies digital harms. Without this dedicated approach, children and youth in these populations risk being left out and exposed to digital harms, exacerbating the harms they already experience. Through USAID's Inclusive Development Hub, all PCYDH programming will promote the input and engagement of a wide range of children and youth while safeguarding them from additional risks or harms throughout their engagement.

PILLAR 1: SHARE KNOWLEDGE, RAISE AWARENESS, AND GUIDE ACTION WITHIN USAID

As the digital ecosystem evolves, so do digital risks. USAID and its partners must dedicate time and resources to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to keep pace with these changes and mitigate digital risks in future programming. Digital harm to children and youth evolves rapidly, making knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising vitally important. This is the focus of the first pillar of the PCYDH Roadmap.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DIGITAL HARM TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACROSS USAID

USAID will systematize information-sharing and awareness-raising about digital harms across the Agency through several complementary activities:

- ***Bi-Annual PCYDH Virtual Symposium:*** On February 8, 2022, USAID held its first PCYDH Symposium. The virtual symposium provided a space for key stakeholders around the world to identify and discuss ways to tackle digital harm issues, and a forum to learn, share, and engage with leaders in government, civil society, the private sector,

and youth. The symposium built awareness of this issue across actors as it set the stage for strategic partnerships going forward. USAID will host this symposium every other year.

- ***Distribute the PCYDH Primer:*** This primer introduces USAID and its partners to the risks and rewards that exist for children and youth in digital environments. It highlights USAID's role and responsibility in preventing and responding to digital harm to children and youth. USAID will distribute this primer digitally across the Agency and host regional webinars to familiarize USAID staff and partners with its content.

- ***Develop and distribute the PCYDH 101 Training:*** USAID will develop an introductory training for staff on PCYDH that covers key concepts, including the nature of digital harms to children and youth, why PCYDH is important to USAID, and USAID's role in preventing these harms.

- ***Develop a range of communications materials related to the PCYDH Roadmap:*** USAID will develop an approach to communications that enable knowledge-sharing across Missions, Offices, and Bureaus, as outlined in the Communication section of the Roadmap.

- ***Establish collaboration mechanisms:*** USAID will establish regular collaboration mechanisms with and between Missions, Bureaus, and Operating Units for knowledge-sharing and general updates on PCYDH programming. This will include webinar presentations, quarterly update calls, and learning sessions, and will build on existing communication channels such as newsletters.

GUIDE THE INCORPORATION OF PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM DIGITAL HARM APPROACHES AND PRACTICES ACROSS USAID

USAID will develop resources that provide practical guidance on sector-specific ways to integrate digital harm prevention into existing and new programs. These resources, as relevant, will be accompanied by tailored technical assistance to USAID staff. Resource development will be undertaken in two stages:

1. ***Creation of a self-assessment checklist for programs and sectors to identify and evaluate digital harms:*** USAID will develop a checklist that helps program staff identify potential digital harms to children and youth in existing programming, and evaluate the extent of those risks.

2. *Creation of general and sector-specific guidelines on addressing digital harms through policies and work plans:* Once the self-assessment checklist is complete, USAID will develop guidelines that provide next steps to address the risks identified using proven policies or evidence-based interventions.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO USAID IN FOLLOWING GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH DATA

Regulatory policies guiding data collection, sharing, use, and disposal are essential when considering the protection of children. Bringing awareness to data governance is also essential as it cuts across all of USAID's digital programming. The Inclusive Development Hub will partner with USAID's Digital Societies and Governments team to advise internal and external actors on the development of key policies to implement and increase responsible data governance practices with a specific focus on implementing partners since they are largely responsible for data collection. This will help ensure that staff are able to support a strategic, values-based approach to oversight of the data lifecycle by holistically evaluating plans for the collection and use of children's data so it is not exploited. USAID is developing toolkits for use by students, parents, teachers, and administrators to support the governance of data ecosystems in India's public schools.

PILLAR 2: IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES

The PCYDH Roadmap builds on and complements existing strategies and programs across USAID and the USG and aligns with the principles of the Digital Strategy and the APCCA Strategy. The Roadmap identifies five programmatic priorities that will ensure the best value-add and return on investment in the short term, focusing on working with key external stakeholders and USAID partners:

EMPOWER PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM DIGITAL HARM

Parents, caregivers, educators, schools and school administrators, and communities play a crucial role in primary prevention of violence and digital harms, since they can address the causal factors and social norms that perpetuate such violence and exploitation. USAID can leverage its existing parent and community-focused programming to enhance its capabilities in this regard by:

- Advancing existing USAID digital literacy programming through the Digital Strategy initiatives and other existing projects, including activities that equip parents with the skills and knowledge to ensure digital safety for themselves and their children. USAID's digital literacy initiatives provide a foundation for digital literacy programming that can be expanded to include content on digital harms, specifically digital harms to children. For example, in India, USAID is conducting cybersecurity and digital hygiene training for women entrepreneurs. This activity could be expanded to provide these entrepreneurs with ways to help their children navigate new digital platforms safely. The digital literacy levels of children as compared to that of their parents and caregivers should be taken into account when expanding digital literacy programming.

- Developing and integrating new parenting modules into existing parenting curriculum and other materials. Education on positive parenting practices has been a key focus of USAID and USG programming. Existing trainings can be expanded to include information on PCYDH. These modules will focus on how to prevent digital harm to children, adolescents, and youth to help parents, families, and communities understand their role in prevention and protection, as well as how to safely interact with the larger digital ecosystem. They will also educate parents and caregivers on the mental health impacts of digital harms so they are aware of the severity of the issue and are better able to identify and respond.

- Identifying and bringing awareness to and guiding parents and community members to existing specialized services—funded by USAID as well as externally—such as helplines and hotlines that educate and provide information on how to prevent, identify, and support children and youth exposed to digital harm.

Integrate digital safety and civility education into every sector's digital initiatives

As digital access expands globally, children and youth are spending more and more time online. While digital access has enabled learning— particularly during COVID-19 related lockdowns— it has also opened the door to more digital risks. Safe and secure online learning has increasingly become a priority.

BOX 3

Digital Civility

According to Microsoft's Digital Civility Index reports, digital civility is defined as the overall tone of interactions that happen online. It looks at factors such as whether people operate online with dignity and respect, whether they value cultural differences and diverse perspectives, the extent to which they post content that is hurtful to others, and whether activities that threaten safety online or offline are reported.[6]

Through the Improve Digital Literacy workstream of the Digital Strategy, USAID will leverage existing resources and develop new resources to ensure that digital safety and civility education is delivered in schools— both virtual and in-person—community programs, online, and through other channels that can reach marginalized groups of children and youth. The first step is identifying existing activities across sectors that can be leveraged or adapted with new digital safety and civility content. USAID can then develop new content and make recommendations for where it can be added to its programming. These efforts will be tailored to the needs of target consumers as follows:

- ***Instructors or educators***: Content will support educators in teaching and modeling digital safety and civility, as well as in establishing schoolwide digital safety policies to ensure that learners develop and adopt these skills and habits.
- ***Parents and caregivers***: USAID will equip parents and caregivers engaged in digital literacy programming with knowledge, skills, and strategies to guide themselves and their children on digital safety.
- ***Children and youth***: USAID will distribute content directly to children and youth by leveraging popular channels they are already using so they are more likely to consume the content and adopt safe online practice. This might include enhancing or developing online games, virtual safety clubs, and peer-to-peer digital harm prevention programs.
- ***Mission staff and implementing partners***: USAID will develop guidelines on tools used for online learning that guide Mission staff and implementers to pay special attention to safety, security and privacy features for children and youth, and follow safety-by-design principles.
- ***Technology companies***: USAID will partner with technology companies, including educational technology (edtech) providers, that produce online learning software used by children and youth to make sure that solutions are built with digital safety measures included.

Improving and increasing access to mental health support for children and youth

Across the board, mental health and psychosocial services have been under-prioritized, leaving gaps in evidence on what works. Mental health impacts of digital harm can have lifelong effects on a child's health, well-being, and productivity. Recognizing that this is an under-resourced area, addressing the mental health impacts of digital harm to children and youth is a key programmatic priority for the survivor-centered approach in this Roadmap. It is critical to raise awareness and to upskill educators, parents, caregivers, social workers, faith-based leaders, health workers, children, and youth on how to recognize and address mental health issues in children and youth. The proliferation of digital platforms provides ways to scale up the provision of counseling and mental health support via virtual platforms to anyone around the

6 "Digital Civility Index & Our Challenge: Microsoft Online Safety." Promoting Digital Civility. Accessed 2024. https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/online-safety/digital-civility.



Photo Credit: Riaz Jahanpour for USAID/Digital Development Communications

world who can connect to the internet. These services are no longer restricted to face-to-face support. USAID will focus on improving and increasing access to mental health support through the following initiatives:

- Establishing and building on existing virtual platforms where children and youth exposed to digital harms have access to culturally appropriate and affordable mental health support from trained professionals online. In some cases, these platforms can complement existing offline mental health services.

- Equipping mental health professionals, social workers, educators, and faith-based leaders with the knowledge, skills and strategies to help children and youth cope with the unique mental health impact of digital harms.

- Designing evidence-based programming in line with existing resources such as Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support into Youth Programming: A Toolkit.[7]

- Incorporating mental health and psychosocial support more broadly into online education programming such as through providing access to counseling, implementing community engagement activities, and awareness-raising on topics related to mental health and psychosocial support.[8]

- Piloting and evaluating online peer counseling networks that leverage peer-to-peer learning and support. In certain cases, these programs can assess complementary offline services.

- Informing mental health professionals of existing specialized services such as helplines and hotlines that support children and youth who are experiencing the mental health-related impact of digital harm.

- Building an evidence base to better understand the impact of mental health and the types of services that best support victims and survivors. This can be done through implementation research with local partners,[9] with a focus on the impacts of digital harm on mental health.

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7 "Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support into Youth Programming: A Toolkit," YouthPower2, n.d., https://www.youthpower.org/youth-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-toolkit. "Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Marginalized and Underrepresented Groups Toolkit," YouthPower2, May 17, 2024, https://www.youthpower.org/resources/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-marginalized-and-underrepresented-groups-toolkit.

8 "Youth Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Considerations for Education," YouthPower2 n.d., https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/1%20MHPSS%20PULLOUT%20EDUCATION_edit_OCT11.pdf.

9 "Youth Excel East and Southern Africa Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Data Summit," YouthPower2, March 22, https://www.youthlead.org/resources/youth-excel-east-and-southern-africa-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-data-summit-2024.

Identify and fill gaps in research and data on digital harms to children and youth

Despite recent investment into research on digital harm to children and youth, gaps still exist. This research could inform future evidence-based programming for USAID and other stakeholders, especially research focused on children and youth from developing countries. USAID can play an important role in identifying these gaps and generating data and evidence to fill them. Collaborating across the USG and with external partners, USAID will develop a systemic approach to reaching a consensus on how digital harms are defined and measured, identifying research gaps, prioritizing research topics based on sector needs, collecting new data, and supplementing partner research through USAID-funded research initiatives. Key USG and national partners for this programmatic priority include the CDC, Department of State, Department of Justice, UNICEF, WePROTECT Global Alliance, End Violence Partnership, and the Global Data Institute.

The first step is to ensure that all of the actors conducting research in this space are working with the same definitions of key terms such as "digital harms" and key indicators so the development community is measuring comparable results across research studies. This allows better aggregation as well as a common language for discussing findings and progress. USAID can play a key role as a convener for USG agencies and external international stakeholders.

The next step of this programmatic priority is prioritization of data and evidence gaps. There is a large gap in low and middle income countries in understanding how children and youth behave online, and how their online presence affects their perceptions of the world and their mental health. This will be the primary focus of research under this priority. The Protecting Children from Digital Harm - A Landscape Mapping of International Stakeholder and Initiatives identifies the following research topics:

- Harm in the online gaming space;
- Solutions to grooming, across languages and cultures;
- Harms associated with live streaming and pay-per-view online;
- Privacy and data protection, including the long-term impact of the misuse of children's data;
- The victimization of boys, online and offline; and
- Harms that are specific to marginalized and vulnerable groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, LGBTQI people, migrants, and ethnic minority children and youth).

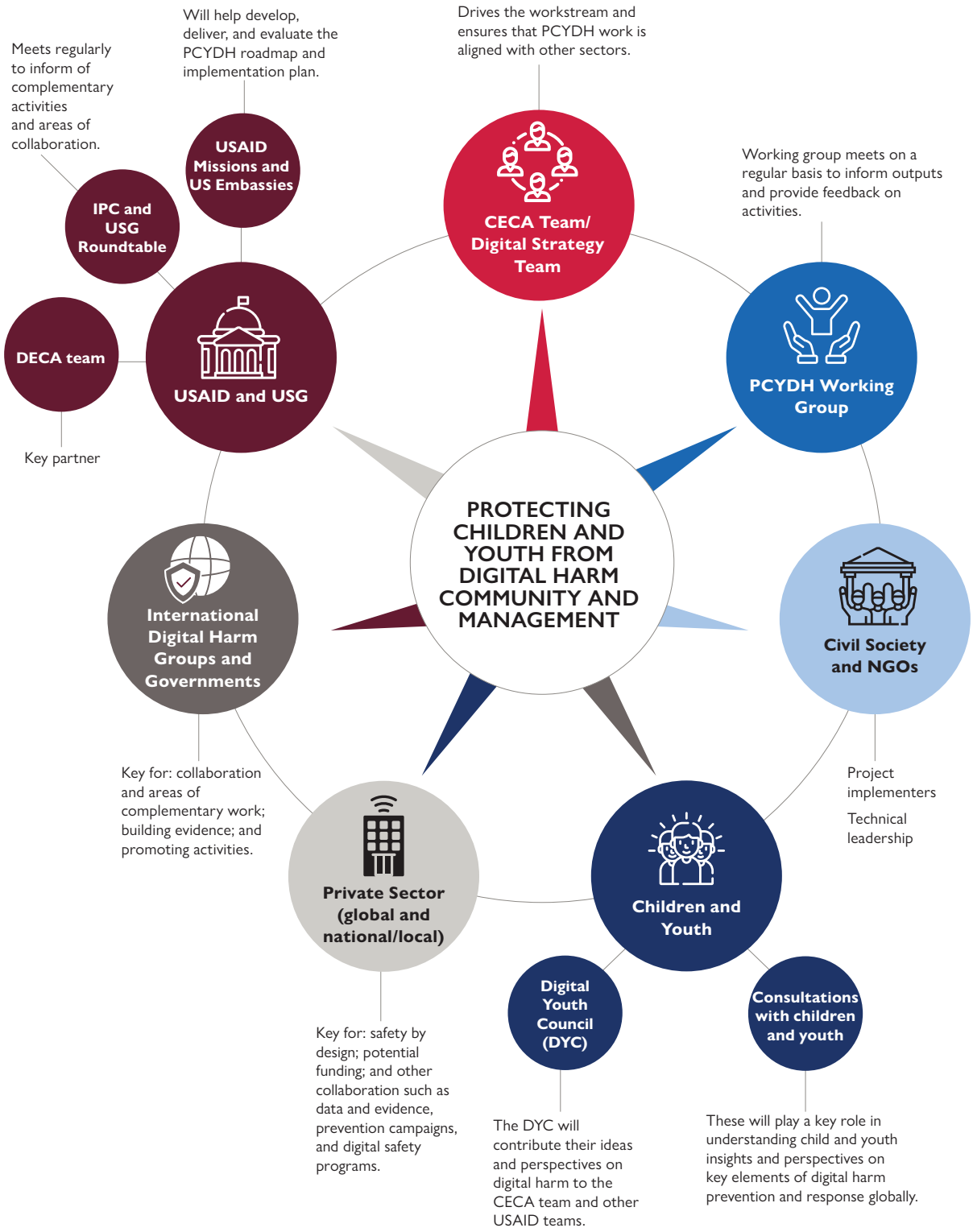
USAID's other unique key value-add for this programmatic priority is its reach and its existing Positive Youth Development programming, which allows USAID to ethically consult with children and youth in the research process to ensure that evidence is driven by those whom the initiative aims to protect. USAID will work through those projects to consult with its participants and gather, analyze, and use data to understand, prevent, and respond to digital harm around the world. Finally, USAID will integrate a child and youth digital harm section to the Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment (DECA) framework to systematize data collection in an existing and popular research tool.

WHO WILL DRIVE THE PCYDH ROADMAP?

A core principle of the APCCA Strategy is to Promote Strategic Partnerships. This is reflected in the range of partners needed to successfully drive and contribute to the programmatic priorities in the PCYDH Roadmap.

FIGURE 2

Protecting children from digital harm community and management



OTHER OUTPUTS

COMMUNICATION

A strategic PCYDH communication effort is critical across both pillars of this Roadmap. Communications materials will share knowledge, raise awareness, and guide action on this issue (under Pillar 1) as well as promote learnings and successes from programmatic priorities across USAID, USG, and external partners (under Pillar 2). The following are key components to be completed as part of this Roadmap:

- ***PCYDH Virtual Symposium and external events***: As described in Pillar 1, USAID will host one to two more symposiums over the next five years. Additionally, USAID will present at external conferences and events on progress made toward the activities in this Roadmap as well as on lessons learned.

- ***Digital Strategy network:*** Leverage the Digital Strategy network which includes 17 workstream leads for the other Digital Strategy initiatives to elevate the importance of PCYDH across both digital and non-digital initiatives throughout the Agency.

- ***Communications guidelines for P2:*** USAID will develop a set of guidelines on how to protect the personally identifiable information of children and youth in all communications materials aligned with Pillar 1's approach to ensuring that data governance measures are in place.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of PCYDH is extremely challenging. USAID will embed PCYDH priorities and principles into the Digital Strategy MEL plan. This will help USAID hold itself accountable to the commitments made in this Roadmap. First and foremost, USAID will measure the impact the programmatic priorities have on the lives of children and their families. The PCYDH section of the Digital Strategy M&E Plan will include the following:

- ***Theory of Change***: The PCYDH theory of change will guide how USAID's approach will lead to specific development outcomes demonstrating the causal analysis and including predicted results after the five-year time period.

- ***Baseline and key qualitative and quantitative indicators***: Prior to beginning this work, USAID will identify the baseline indicators—both qualitative and quantitative—that are important to measuring success in programmatic priorities over time. These indicators will differ between Pillars 1 and 2.

- ***Learning questions:*** Prior to implementation, USAID will determine key learning questions it wants to answer over the next five years. These questions can be linked to the research agenda finalized under Pillar 2.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In order to operationalize Pillars 1 and 2 as well as the Communications and M&E approach, the first step is to develop a concrete implementation plan—embedded in the Digital Strategy Implementation plan— that outlines next steps for each programmatic priority, including persons responsible and necessary partners. This will include a five-year GANTT chart that provides a timeline for the completion of activities. The implementation plan will be updated annually based on learnings from the year and funding availability.



Photo Credit: Teamwork.MD for USAID

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