



## USAID DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT: VENEZUELA DIASPORA FOCUS GROUPS

### FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

#### DATE/LOCATION

Specific dates TBD (March – April 2017). Locations include Houston and Miami.

#### RECRUITMENT

Each group will include 8-10 Venezuelan diasporans living in the United States recruited with the help of partner diaspora organizations identified by the research team. Each group also will include individuals representing a diverse mix of gender, occupations, generation, region, income, and interest/experience in support provided to Venezuela.

#### TIMING

15 min	Participants arrive, are greeted by research team, are provided snacks and are asked to complete a short survey (15 minutes before the focus group formally begins) [attached via pages 9-11 below]
15 min	Participants are invited to join moderator at conference table at their designated (with nameplate) spot. Moderator provides an overview of the focus group activity and “rules of the game.”
15 min	Introduction (Q1) and transition question (Q2) are discussed. (~10 min each)
60 min	Key question Q3 is discussed (~10 min each; five parts)
10 min	Key activity Q4 is completed by participants (~15 minutes)
20 min	Closing questions Q5 and Q6 are discussed. Participants are thanked for their participation.

#### CHECKLIST OF SUPPLIES

##### THINGS TO BRING

- Completed nameplates for each participant (first names only) – put at check in desk or arrange intentionally
- Moderator’s business cards – put at check-in desk
- Focus group surveys (bring 12 copies) – put at check-in desk
- Focus group worksheets (bring 12 copies) – save for distribution at end of focus group
- Moderator time-keeping instrument (watch, phone, stopwatch) – put by where moderator stands/sits
- 20 blank sheets of paper and 12 pencils
- Diaspora engagement concept sheets (2 sets – one for flip chart, one for wall)

- 150 Stickers (5green/5yellow/5red for each participant – 50 of each color for a 10-person group)

#### THINGS TO HAVE IN ROOM

- Flip chart in room with markers (see note in protocol – write investment models on separate sheets of flip chart)
- Water/light snacks for participants; water for moderator
- Digital recording/transcriber (table and chair for transcriber if present in room)

#### QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION – My name is XXXXXX. I've been hired as a consultant for the Partnership Services Program (PSP), a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project implemented by SSG Advisors. PSP is supporting USAID's Global Development Lab, Center for Transformational Partnerships, and the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau (USAID/LAC) to perform a Venezuelan diaspora engagement survey. In my role as consultant, I will moderate this focus group discussion today. In this study, USAID is asking the question: How does the Venezuelan diaspora feel about investing their time, talent and/or financial resources in Venezuela to promote development? We call this diaspora investment of time, talent, and/or financial resources "diaspora engagement." So, what types of diaspora engagement are the most attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? We will be exploring this in detail today. Your opinion and voice count. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this conversation today.

Let's first identify terms more specifically. "Diaspora engagement" means a broad range of things from remitting cash to friends and family, contributing money or goods to charities, investing financial capital into for-profit businesses or non-profit businesses, and participating in volunteer opportunities in Venezuela— even traveling there for business or pleasure. "Diaspora" refers to people who maintain an identity or connection with Venezuela. This can refer to those who have emigrated from Venezuela and are now living outside the country, it can refer to individuals who spend part of their time in Venezuela and part of their time in another country (or countries), or it can refer to the children and grandchildren of emigrants from Venezuela— as long as they feel an affinity for Venezuela as a type of "home."

How many of you have ever participated in a focus group (show of hands)? This is how one works. The role of the moderator is to facilitate conversation (like a class), foster conversation – even disagreement, by asking questions. The goal is to have everyone speak, and it is more interesting when different points of view are voiced. There are no right or wrong answers to anything we will discuss today. We are seeking your honest and detailed opinion.

Please respect the opinions of others. We have purposefully selected individuals from different backgrounds with different opinions so we can better understand the important diversity that exists within this diaspora community. We encourage you to politely listen when others are speaking – even when they say things that you might not agree with. But we also encourage you to interact with one another: question each other, ask for clarification, and where you would like amplify or respectfully disagree with another person. Our job is to facilitate a conversation among all of you -- not to lead the conversation.

Our discussion will be audio recorded for the purposes of note taking and analysis only. The audiofile will remain in the possession of the research team and will not be shared. The transcript of the discussion will be analyzed along with the other data collected in this study. In neither the transcript nor in the final report will your comments be attached to your name. We will only identify speakers by gender, age, and the city where this discussion is taking place. Does everyone understand and agree with this plan? [get verbal consent]. Is there anyone who is uncomfortable with or does not understand this plan? Feel free to speak up now so we can clarify. [pause]

All right! Let's proceed. This is going to be fun! The conversation should last about two hours. If you need to use the facilities at any time, please feel free to step out. The restrooms are located XXX.

Any questions?

[OPENING]

1. **Each of you has a sheet of paper in front of you. Would you please take a moment to write down two adjectives – descriptive words – that describe how you FEEL about being a member of the Venezuelan diaspora. In a moment, we will share our thoughts with others.**

[Pause] **For this first question, let's go around the room. First, tell us your name. Then, share with us: "How do you feel about being a member of the Venezuelan diaspora– and WHY? [PROBE – Is it comforting? Is it frustrating? Is it sad or lonely? Is it joyful?]**

[TRANSITION]

2. **As we said before, "diaspora engagement" is our focus today – and diasporans engage in their countries of origin and heritage in many different ways – sending remittances, traveling back home, giving to charities, volunteering, investing in businesses, etc.**

**What are some of the main Venezuelan diaspora organizations that you know of?**

**What do you think are KEY OBSTACLES to diaspora engagement in Venezuela? What needs to change, improve, or be created to encourage diasporans to engage more in Venezuela? [PROBE – Are their specific changes needed from the Venezuelan government? US government? Others? The diaspora organization that you belong to?]**

[KEY – CONCEPT INTRODUCTION]

3. **Next, I'm going to show you six different general descriptions of diaspora engagement opportunities that could be marketed to the Venezuelan diaspora. We will discuss each in turn. For each, I'd like you to tell me **WHAT YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE ABOUT THE CONCEPT, IF YOU THINK THE CONCEPT WOULD****

BE ATTRACTIVE TO THE VENEZUELAN DIASPORA, AND HOW THE CONCEPT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED OR ADAPTED TO BEST ENGAGE THE VENEZUELAN DIASPORA.

*NOTE – PLACE THE TEXT THAT APPEARS IN EACH OF THE GRAY BOXES BELOW ON A FLIPCHART BEFORE THE FOCUS GROUP BEGINS. MAKE SURE THERE ARE SEVERAL BLANK PAGES COVERING UP THESE OPTIONS ON TOP. THEN REVEAL ONE AT A TIME AND DISCUSS DURING THIS PART OF THE FOCUS GROUP. IN EACH FOCUS GROUP, CHANGE UP ORDER OF CONCEPT PRESENTATION TO PREVENT ORDER-EFFECT BIAS.*

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES PLATFORM FOR VETTING NON-PROFITS]

**A. Imagine an online platform that connects vetted non-governmental organizations in Venezuela that are eligible for charitable donation to the Venezuelan diaspora?**

4D1. What do you like or dislike about this model?

4D2. Do you think such a model would be attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? Why or why not?

4D3. What types of sectors should this project focus on (probes: health, education, sanitation, skills training, etc.)?

4D4. Would a platform be enough to engage participation from the diaspora, or would face-to-face communication and meetings be necessary, such as in the form of an organized visit to Venezuela.

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES START-UP PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM]

**B. Imagine an online platform that facilitates and establishes knowledge-based, investment or trade partnerships between diaspora entrepreneurs with start up or other businesses in Venezuela.**

4C1. What do you like or dislike about this model?

4C2. Do you think such a model would be attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? Why or why not?

4C3. What types of sectors should the projects focus on (probes: for example, agriculture, health, education, energy, enabling environment)? In what regions would this be most interesting/relevant?

4C4. Would a platform be enough to engage participation from the diaspora, or would face-to-face communication and meetings be necessary, such as in the form of an organized visit to Venezuela.

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES INVESTMENT FUND]

**C. Imagine the creation of an investment fund that raises funds from the Venezuelan diaspora to lend money to enterprises in Venezuela. Depending on how the fund is structured, USAID or another partner might offer some sort of credit enhancement or guarantee to reduce the risk of lending to Venezuelan enterprises. Enterprises receiving funding would be selected and vetted based on strict criteria and would be expected to conform to US standards of transparency and audit.**

4E1. What do you like or dislike about this model?

4E2. Do you think such a model would be attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? Why or why not?

4E3. What types of sectors should the projects focus on (probes: for example, agriculture, health, education, energy, enabling environment)? In what regions would this be most interesting/relevant? Would you prefer that the loans be made to microenterprises? Small and medium sized firms? Larger firms?

4E4. What would be the most important objective of this fund? Financial returns? Social returns?

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY]

**D. Imagine a volunteer opportunity in which members of the Venezuelan diaspora were invited to participate in short-term internships or mentorship programs in Venezuela, working in local organizations or with entrepreneurs there.**

4F1. What do you like or dislike about this model?

4F2. Do you think such a model would be attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? Why or why not?

4F3. Next, let's talk about what other aspects or details about the opportunity you would want to consider before deciding to engage.

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES ONLINE MENTORING OPPORTUNITY]

**E. Imagine a volunteer platform in which members of the Venezuelan diaspora were matched with entrepreneurs and/or university students in Venezuela to mentor them online.**

4H1. What do you like or dislike about this model?

4H2. Do you think such a model would be attractive to the Venezuelan diaspora? Why or why not?

4H3. What types of mentoring activities would you or people you know envision doing in this type of program?

[DISPLAY GRAPHIC THAT ILLUSTRATES ACTIVIST/AWARENESS RAISING PLATFORM]

**F. Imagine a platform in which members of the Venezuelan diaspora were brought together to monitor, report on and raise awareness in the United States of the Venezuelan context, including through partnerships with US and international organizations**

[KEY ACTIVITY]

4. You will notice that we have posted signs up around the room that represent each of the diaspora engagement opportunities that we have discussed today. There are six of them. We are going to give you some stickers to allocate to these opportunities to determine how you feel about these opportunities to support Venezuelan diaspora engagement in Venezuela.

If you place a RED sticker next to an opportunity, you are communicating to us that you think this opportunity IS NOT valuable. If you place a GREEN sticker next to an opportunity, you are communicating to us that you think this opportunity IS DEFINITELY valuable and merits further exploration. If you place a YELLOW sticker next to an opportunity, you are communicating that you either have questions or concerns about the opportunity – or you feel that this is a lower-priority opportunity.

Do not pay attention to how others are allocating their stickers. We want your stickers to reflect how you feel personally.

Please take a moment, walk around the room and place stickers under the diaspora engagement opportunity signs.

5. [After all stickers are allocated, add up each color for each opportunity. Note the tallies out loud to the group]. Did the outcome of this activity surprise anyone? How/why? Was this activity easy or hard? Why? Are there any differences of opinion reflected in the stickers or does there seem to be general agreement. How/why?
6. So far we have been focused on the present day and the current context. However, as we all know, political and economic situations evolve over time. To what extent do you think diaspora engagement might shift, for instance, if the 2018 elections resulted in a change of government?

Would diaspora engagement increase or would new forms emerge?

Do you expect that diaspora members would move back to Venezuela? If so, which sub-groups in particular?

Our goal today was to learn from you how the Venezuelan diaspora feels about investing their time, talent, and/or other resources in Venezuela. Is there anything we missed? Is

**there anything that you wanted to say tonight that you did not get a chance to say? We are particularly interested to hear about other types of diaspora engagement ideas that you have that we did not have time**