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Who We Are

The William Davidson Institute (WDI) at the University of Michigan (U-M) is an independent, non-profit with a mission to improve the effectiveness of firms and enhance social welfare in emerging economies. Since 1992, WDI has been closely affiliated with the U-M's Ross School of Business, and leverages its knowledge, experience, and resources. WDI focuses on five initiatives: Performance Measurement, Education, Financial Sector Development, Healthcare, and Scaling Impact.

What We Do

WDI's Performance Measurement Initiative specializes in:

- Designing and implementing customized assessment solutions to understand the economic, social, and environmental performance and outcomes of organizations;
- Utilizing data and lessons learned to improve organizations' effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability; and create more value for all key stakeholders.

We conduct impact assessments with private sector, non-profit, and government partners. Our work focuses on the analysis of multi-dimensional poverty reduction outcomes on low-income stakeholders. Examples of these outcomes include physical and psychological health, knowledge, self-esteem, aspirations, empowerment, and social networks. We also analyze financial outcomes such as income, savings, and risk. Outcomes are measured using rigorous research designs and robust quantitative and qualitative context-specific surveys, all developed by WDI. We also carry out research on how to strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) systems.

Our Impact

WDI's Performance Measurement Initiative's extensive portfolio of projects has led to the following results:

[USAID Global Development Lab. Developmental Evaluation \(DE\) Pilot Activity.](#)

Identify and share how DE is able to capture and promote the use of emergent learnings to improve program design and implementation in complex environments; and the associated barriers and enablers to the DE process.

[USAID Global Development Lab. Balanced Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning \(DMERL\).](#)

Contribute to the development of a framework and process for organizations to balance their DMERL activities by following four principles (relevant, responsible, right-sized, and trustworthy) that will lead to increased developmental impact.

[Danone Ecosystem Fund. Semilla Impact Assessment.](#)

Conducted an impact assessment to identify and share the relationship between specific business and social outcomes. Developed a quantitative survey that was pretested, piloted, and implemented with over 800 people. Ten in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted to further understand quantitative findings.

Why Partner with Us?

- Experience across sectors in multiple countries such as India, Kenya, Mexico, and Peru.
- Ability to leverage expertise of faculty members at the U-M, including the Ross School of Business.
- Close collaboration with partners to co-design research, with a careful consideration of resources.

WDI's Performance Measurement Initiative conducts a sequence of detail-oriented activities and processes to develop robust surveys for data collection (Figure A). We execute pretest (Figure B) and pilot (Figure C) phases to ensure surveys are context-specific. These figures are taken from a previous project in which a third party data collection partner collected data in the field. In addition, we adhere to the following best practices for survey development to collect accurate data while maintaining high standards of rigor:

1. Identify existing instruments (questions) developed and tested by other researchers, when possible, and follow the analysis method prescribed. When creating new multi-item scale questions in the event that no appropriate ones exist, test for reliability of the scale (see point 6).
2. Collect feedback on the survey from experts prior to pretest.
3. Develop a strong 'Informed Consent' form and an introduction section in the survey to set the tone and build rapport with the interviewee.
4. Order sections logically and keep sensitive questions near the end of the survey.
5. Translate to the local language and back translate to English to ensure translations are accurate.
6. For all multi-item scale questions, test reliability of the scale and variability of responses using the data gathered from the pilot.

Figure A: Activities and Processes Conducted for Survey Development and Data Collection

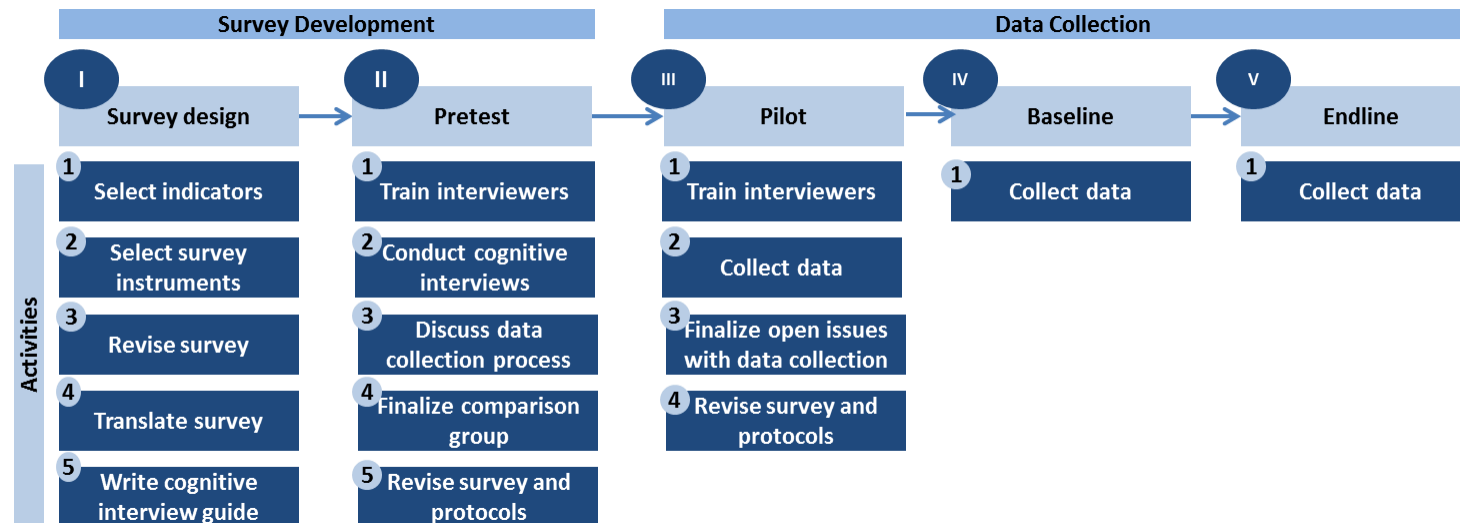
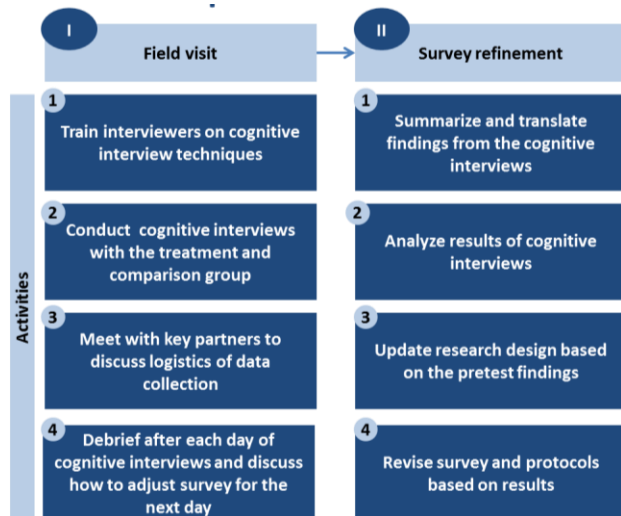


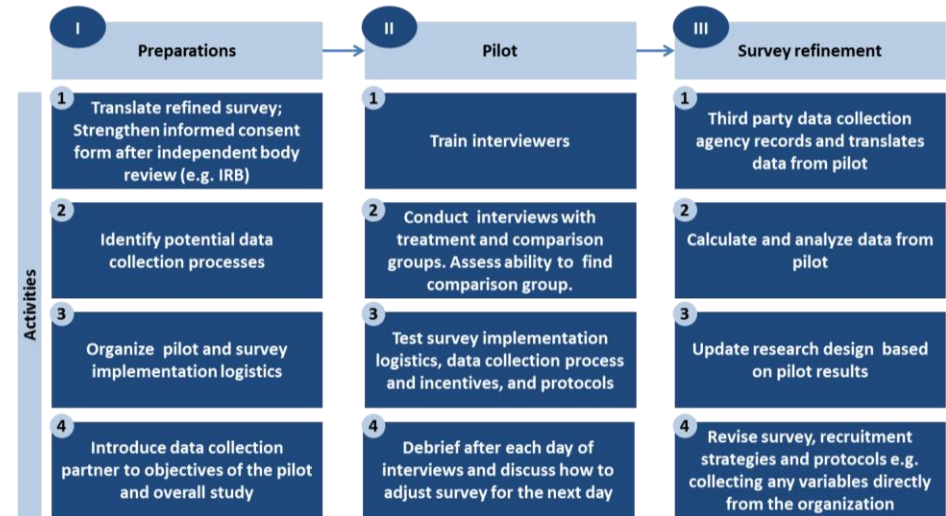
Figure B: Activities Conducted in the Pretest Phase



Why conduct a pretest?

1. Test whether both the treatment and comparison groups understand and can respond to questions
2. Adapt the survey question text to ensure the target population interprets the questions as they were intended
3. Test order of survey sections

Figure C: Activities Conducted in the Pilot Phase



Why conduct a pilot?

1. Test updated survey in its entirety with the treatment and comparison groups while also testing the process
2. Dry run for all parties involved (i.e. interviewers, third party, and organization being assessed) before actual baseline begins

Adaptive management of programs and strategic decision-making in real time require relevant, accurate, and trustworthy data. WDI ensures that any data gathered – qualitative or quantitative – through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other methods, meet these standards.

