

## Capstone 1: Policy Memo

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate understanding of key topics in Unit 1
  - a. Defining poverty and considering the “economic lives of the poor”
  - b. The role of geography, institutions, and foreign aid in economic growth and the economic well-being of citizens today
2. Communicate ideas in a concise format through a policy memo

### PROMPT

Your assignment is to choose a low- or middle income country (as defined by the [World Bank](#)) and write a brief policy “briefing” memo directed at a new program analyst at USAID.

The following countries are **recommended** because profiles of individual families/households are available through one of the sources below: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Brazil, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Colombia, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Iran, Indonesia, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Myanmar, Malawi, Mongolia, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Romania, Rwanda, Somalia, Switzerland, South Africa, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

There are **four** key elements your memo should include:

1. **Economic status:** Description of the economic status of the country based on recent data. You should pull this information from a source such as the [World Bank](#), [UN Human Development Reports](#), or other large-scale surveys and data collection efforts ([Demographic and Health Surveys](#), [LSMS](#), etc.). This discussion should include the following factors
  1. Current GDP/capita levels and recent trends
  2. A measure of poverty and recent trends
  3. At least one additional that reflects quality of life and recent trends in them
2. **Institutions:** Description of key events and/or characteristics of the country that has influenced its economic development (that you described above) and a summary of its political and economic institutions. Make sure your discussion is supported w/ evidence.
  1. You'll need to cite our readings (where relevant) in this section
  2. You will also need to bring in **at least 2 external (non-class) sources**
3. **Foreign aid and effectiveness** Summary of aid this country has received and is currently receiving from [USAID](#) (and/or other places) and discussion of whether this aid has been effective

1. Effectiveness can be based on your own impressions, but it should cite other researchers/authors. This could include our class readings, but it also should include **at least 2 external sources**.
4. **Citizen profile:** To help our analyst get a sense of the lives of actual citizens of this country, include a “pop-out” box that profiles one individual or one family. This information can be drawn from Gapminder’s [Dollar Street](#), [Portfolios of the Poor](#) (applicable for Bangladesh, India, South Africa), [Kenyan Financial Diaries](#), [BFA Global Financial Diaries](#) (China, India, Mexico, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda)

Then, include a separate page that has the following:

- Definitions of all terms used (GDP/capita, PPP, HDI, etc.)
  - Make sure it’s clear in your terms what they mean *exactly*. How is poverty rate defined? Is GDP/capita in PPP dollars, US dollars? Based to what year?
- References list
  - Formatted bibliography using [APA](#), [MLA](#), or [Chicago](#).
  - Make sure to include proper citation for any course readings and data sources as well as external articles/readings.

## SPECIFICATIONS

- 1200-1800 words (excluding references and definitions). You may want to consider bulleted lists, tables, etc. to stay within the word count.
- Descriptive title (ie. not “TONGA BRIEF”)
- Spend some time formatting your brief to make it look nice!
- You’ll need quite a few outside sources. I expect the following:
  - Data sources for economic profile
  - Academic and non-academic literature for institutions and foreign aid effectiveness
  - Data sources for current aid
  - External source for citizen profile
- When bringing in outside sources, use in-text citations, be brief, and avoid large quotation blocks
  - Good: “Botswana’s standard of living has enabled the government to invest more in education, a key”engine of economic prosperity” (Acemoglu and Robinson 2009, p77)
  - No: “Inclusive economic institutions pave the way for two other engines of economic prosperity: technology and education.” (Acemoglu and Robinson 2009, p77) *Instead, link to your own points and pare down.*
  - No: “In their book, *Why Nations Fail*, Acemoglu and Robinson (p77) highlight the importance of technology and education as engines of economic prosperity.” *We don’t need the book title, and make the link to what you’re saying clearer. While we can state their arguments, it’s better to integrate them with our own.*

- No: “Botswana has invested heavily in education, as inclusive economic institutions pave the way for two other engines of economic prosperity: technology and education.” Well, now you’ve plagiarised. Even if you include AR in the references!

## **DELIVERABLES**

### **Rough draft (Sept 20 at 1:10pm)**

During class, you’ll peer review each other’s drafts.

What counts as “complete enough” for a rough draft:

- Selected an eligible country
- Content in all four key elements
  - Data and indicators in place for part (1)
  - External sources (2+) brought in for key events/characteristics
- Definition of terms

### **Final draft (Sept. 27 at 1:10pm)**

We will have a remote activity to work with the drafts.