

Devex - USAID's New Bureau Launched

Another bureau for USAID

USAID talks tough on democracy, but up until now, it hasn't had the institutional gravitas to back it up.

The agency's bureaucratic muscle and financial firepower are **overwhelmingly concentrated in other sectors**, particularly health and humanitarian assistance, my colleague Michael Igoe writes. It adds up to a mismatch between what's often framed as an existential struggle for the future of global democracy and an agency that spent just over 3% of its total budget on democracy, human rights, and governance in the 2022 fiscal year.

But [USAID's new Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#), which began operating on Sept. 12, is an effort to elevate these issues inside the agency.

“So much of our budget is earmarked and directed and carved up in all of these ways that really don't speak to the needs and the challenges on the ground,” Shannon Green, who leads the bureau as assistant to the administrator, said Thursday at a [launch event](#) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Green said that two key priorities for the new bureau will be building the evidence base for more investment, while also prodding bureaus working on other issues to **use their resources in ways that bolster democracy**.

“Even if we are effective beyond our wildest dreams, there will always be so much more health money and so much more humanitarian assistance money, so we have to be able to **influence the way they're spending that money and what they're doing**,” Green said. “That's where the game-changing interventions are.”