



## CII Spotlight: Avery Waite

Program Analyst  
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**Q: What is your role at USAID?**

A: As a Program Analyst in the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact (CII), I spend the majority of my time working on the *Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge* and the *Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge*. Through these programs, we focus on sourcing and supporting innovations that look to address infectious disease outbreaks and strengthen global health security. In this role, I co-manage our diverse portfolio of innovations, working with a variety of start-ups, nonprofits, and universities to guide the development and sustainability of their solutions.

**Q: How did you end up at USAID?**

A: The summer after my first year in college, I lived and worked in a rural fishing village in Kenya, conducting research on nutrition and teaching in the primary school system. This was my first time spending an extended period of time living in another culture, and I was struck by how fractured the health system was. People had limited access to basic health services and essential medicines, and many of the children in the community were orphans because their parents died of HIV/AIDS.

Throughout the rest of my time in college, I continued to pursue different opportunities in the global health field. My senior year, I wrote a thesis that explored the implications of the Mexico City Policy on contraceptive use among women in Peru and Bolivia. As I was conducting my research, I came to realize just how influential USAID is in the global health space, and knew that it would be incredibly valuable to understand how USAID functions and prioritizes work streams. When I saw the job description to work in the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact, it seemed like a unique opportunity to support promising solutions to some of the most pressing challenges in global health.

**Q: What makes you passionate about your job?**

A: The recent Ebola and Zika outbreaks have devastated communities around the world. While our Grand Challenges are such a small part of USAID's overall response efforts, it has been inspiring to work on critical issues with people across the agency who are dedicated to improving health outcomes globally. USAID also has the unique ability to bring people together, which I have seen first hand working on our Grand Challenges. Not only are we able to convene some of the brightest minds in the world to develop innovative solutions to global health challenges, but we are also able to play a coordinating role across government agencies and NGOs, as was seen in the development of a target product profile for personal protective equipment for Ebola. I feel lucky to work in a place that is able to tangibly improve the lives of so many around the world.

**Q: What topic(s) in global health interest(s) you the most and why?**

A: Through my work on the *Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge* and the *Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge*, I have become incredibly interested in infectious diseases and global health security. What has been particularly striking to me is how critical it is for us to strengthen health systems around the world, and invest in the next generation tools and solutions to be able to better prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks. .