



Supporting Local Actors to Plan for and Measure Performance Outcomes That Are Significant to Them, and Their Local Systems

LINC's reflections on localization, and implementing the Local Capacity Strengthening Policy

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INTRODUCTION

LINC's blog series on localization and the [USAID Local Capacity Strengthening \(LCS\) Policy](#) continues with a brief reflection on Policy Principle #3. Through this series, we're sharing our experiences and reflections on how we are "learning while doing" vis-à-vis the seven principles in the Local Capacity Strengthening Policy. As stressed in our previous blogs, we hope to elicit feedback and sharing from others with this series. We encourage you to provide your comments, or contribute to the conversation, by replying to others, on [LinkedIn](#), and/or on our [website](#).

Like the other Principles in the LCS Policy, Principle 3 advocates for working collaboratively with local partners. When working on activities to strengthen the capacity of local partners and improve their organizational performance, this means planning and measuring the activity with them. There needs to be partnership throughout all phases of the activity.

USAID's Local Capacity Strengthening Policy	
Principles for Effective Programming	Principles for Equitable Partnerships
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start with the Local System.2. Strengthen diverse capacities through diverse approaches.3. Plan for and measure performance improvement in collaboration with local partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Align capacity strengthening with local priorities.5. Appreciate and build on existing capacities.6. Be mindful of and mitigate the unintended consequences of our support for local capacity strengthening.7. Practice mutuality with local partners.

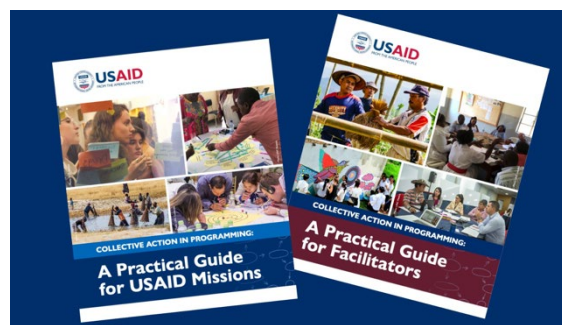
WHO IS PLANNING AND MEASURING WHAT, ACCORDING TO THIS PRINCIPLE?

USAID stresses that local capacity strengthening is a process that can be facilitated through the use of various planning and measurement tools. Wherever possible, metrics, assessments, and approaches that the local organizations already use are preferred, as opposed to those created solely for reporting to USAID. This will help to shift power to local actors to identify their own priorities for performance improvements and be motivated to manage and monitor their own progress.

The LCS policy also stresses that measuring performance improvements with local actors should focus on how capacity is strengthened sustainably. This requires a focus on how USAID programming is deliberately working with local actors to improve their realization of systemic changes that the local actors seek. To measure performance in this regard, there needs to first be a reflection on what long-term outcomes and goals local actors seek, how they are pursuing them, and what plans and assistance are provided for local actors to change how they and the system function to enable better performance. (This is also exactly what [Standard Indicator CBLD-9](#) seeks to capture). As USAID states in the [Micro-Training Modules](#) that accompany the LCS Policy, just using one of the standard organizational capacity assessment tools with organizations over time does not necessarily mean that they are using the skills that donor-funded activities worked with them to improve—like advocacy with local government or quality healthcare.

WHAT DOES THIS PRINCIPLE OF "PLANNING AND MEASURING" LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

One of the ways to put this principle into practice is to support processes that enable local actors to identify the long-term outcomes and goals they seek in their own contexts. This means using tools like those in the [USAID Collective Action Toolkits](#), that enable multiple actors to plan and prioritize together. For example, in Kenya, LINC works on the [Global Labor Program – Inclusive Futures](#) to use Action Learning Groups that bring together diverse local actors to identify their prioritized, long-term outcomes, like employment for persons with disabilities, for instance. Similarly, in Kosovo, LINC worked on the [Up to Youth Activity](#) with Global Communities to involve diverse actors who are supportive of addressing youth concerns to collectively prioritize initiatives that they can jointly plan, manage, and evaluate in nine municipalities.



USAID Collective Action Toolkits

Another way that this principle can be put into practice is to assess, intentionally and regularly, what long-term outcomes or systemic changes are sought by local actors and how they are being pursued. For example, LINC supports the Philippines-based Gerry Roxas Foundation (See the [COPE Activity](#)) and 15 other organizations across Asia and Latin America to conduct a self-assessment of long-term, systemic change goals and how they pursue them, using the principles as a guide, but with open-ended questions and rubrics for scoring. The tool LINC developed, A Systems Change Approach for Measuring Performance Improvement (SCAMPI), encourages local actors to rank what is working well and not, and

where they would like support, to achieve their goals. It also enables member organizations to share and learn from each other.

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT EMBRACING THIS PRINCIPLE?

This principle is not about measuring how “capable” a partner is to be able to work with and/or comply with USAID or other donor funding. Nor is it meant to stress how much “risk” USAID may have in working with a particular local actor. Rather, it considers the long-term outcomes or goals that local actors have identified as prioritized but that they are struggling to achieve without assistance. It encourages collaboratively planning and measuring what assistance they seek and receive but ultimately focuses on whether they are making positive changes toward the outcomes and goals they are targeting.

About LINC: LINC is a mission-driven U.S. small business committed to supporting local stakeholders to lead their own development, which we believe increases development effectiveness and sustainability. Our commitment to localization is reflected in our mission: “working alongside local actors to create sustained change.” Our research, learning, and thought leadership have influenced USAID and other donor’s policies, and the projects we have implemented and the tools we have developed help the international development community better understand, engage, and empower national actors worldwide. The recipient of USAID’s “Small Business of the Year” award in 2017, our country-experience spans more than 30 countries in practice areas including monitoring evaluation, research, and learning (MERL); localization; collective action; capacity strengthening; and systems thinking. Learn more at linclocal.org