My name’s John Gillies. I’m with FHI 360, the director of the education program. The paper I did was focused on human and institutional capacity development and looking beyond that to the linkage and engagement with country system strengthening.

The takeaways that I took from this paper, one, we structured the paper around major strategies that had been utilized by USAID over the decades, for contributing to human capacity development. This was focused on betting on individuals and change agents, betting on organizations as change agents, and betting on engaging in the system as a whole through changing the rules of the game. All of these have been major themes and programmatic threads in USAID since the 1960s-1970s.

Key takeaway that I took was the importance of looking at each of these systems as part of one overall system, that each of these elements of people, teams, organizations, institutions, networks, and countries are all part of a linked system. I think one of the real challenges for USAID and for development practitioners is acknowledging and recognizing the linkages and the relationships within a system rather than the specific activities themselves, or only the specific activities.

As USAID moves forward with this effort of acknowledging that they are, in fact, engaged in the political and institutional aspects of development and change, as well as the technical improvements in an organization or a particular sector. The real challenge is developing the tools to recognize and acknowledge and understand the systems that they’re working in, and the systems that inform and influence development within any given country.

So if there’s one major takeaway, it is looking for ways to measure and report at a national level, at a country strategy level, the impact of the investments and programs sectors and initiatives and the linkage out to them to contribute to something larger in terms of country system strengthening, and being able to define what a stronger system is, and most specifically, what USAID’s role might be in engaging in that system.

[Music]

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