TOOLBOX OF EMPOWERMENT
TOOLS TO IDENTIFY, VALUE, AND APPLY LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

USAID is committed to localizing our development assistance. A key aspect of localization and an important objective for USAID's approach to Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning is to strengthen the ability of Agency staff and partners to identify, value, and leverage local and indigenous knowledge, local methodologies, and existing country evidence and learning networks. As a first step, PPL/LER has identified these five "tools" as promising approaches to engaging local actors and the knowledge they hold. This document provides a brief overview of these five tools, how they work, and how they might add value to the efforts of OUs across USAID.

By valuing knowledge of local communities and stakeholders as a key resource for development, we make the development process more inclusive and help dismantle the structural injustice and inequality that are major barriers to progress.

TOOLS TO INCLUDE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: WHOLE SYSTEM IN THE ROOM

WHAT IS IT?

Whole System in the Room (WSR) is an approach that brings together as many different stakeholders as possible, often in an intensive workshop, to strengthen relationships, to learn from each other's perspectives, to build consensus and identify solutions to development problems they are facing, and commit to collective action. WSR helps ensure that diverse perspectives are incorporated into development efforts and that the voices of those affected by a development issue are included. This resource describes the method in detail.

IN WHAT CONTEXTS COULD WSR BE USED?

WSR can be used when there is a prior decision to design and implement a specific intervention, but it can also be used where the desired outcome is relationship building and system strengthening. Therefore WSR could be a useful approach in all parts of the Program Cycle. In terms of Private Sector Engagement, WSR could be used to reach out to a greater variety of businesses (e.g., small businesses, women-owned businesses, non-formal sector, etc.) than is typically conducted. In addition, it can help USAID and larger private sector partners vet potential ideas with stakeholders and groups and obtain feedback on how to improve them to benefit a wider section of the community.

LONGER DESCRIPTION

Some distinguishing features of Whole System in the Room are:

1. Focusing on analyzing the systems that are causing problems and identifying how to change those systems.
2. Attempting to involve as representative a set of stakeholders as possible in the design phase, often in an intensive workshop.
3. Obtaining the input--and commitment to action--from all of the stakeholders, in order to achieve better and more sustainable development outcomes.

What is a "system"? It will depend on the specific context and development issue. For example, for an agriculture or food security effort, the system could be all parts of a specific value chain, that is, the chain that extends from producers to processors to wholesalers to retailers to consumers. WSR would try to bring representatives of all of these groups together to share perspectives so that everyone learns about the different parts of the larger system they all operate within and can seek win-win solutions. In other cases, the "systems" could involve multiple sectors (e.g., health, environment, infrastructure) or multiple types of institutions (e.g., government, media, civil society, universities, etc.).

WSR is not just about designing a project: It aims to help all of the various stakeholders get to know each other and understand each other so that they have stronger relationships and are able to solve problems together in ways that spread risk and reward equitably. If an OU wants to address development challenges holistically and sustainably, strengthen ties between diverse groups in a community, and help everyone achieve a common understanding of the various systems they live in and which affect them, then the OU should consider conducting a WSR.

An FHI360 presentation described the way they carry out WSR ***(the approach can be modified to fit the needs and situation)***:

1. A development organization will create a small Action Team, either internally or through a local organization, to launch the process and oversee logistics for the WSR workshop.
2. The Action Team identifies a small number of local stakeholders to form an Advisory Committee to DRIVE THE PROCESS and CONVENE OTHERS.
3. The Action Team and Advisory Committee carry out comprehensive system mapping of both key issues and key stakeholders.
4. The Advisory Committee uses the system map to identify a much larger number of stakeholders that it categorizes into groups/themes (e.g., government, farmers, businesses, health organizations, etc.), and starts planning the WSR workshop.
5. The Advisory Committee selects additional stakeholders to participate in the WSR workshop. aiming for a large enough group to be broadly representative, but still a manageable size.
6. The Workshop has a deliberate agenda involving everyone connected by a common issue in a change process that they OWN and SHAPE. (The impetus can be a shared desire to initiate some type of change, which may or may not take the form of a "development project" per se.) Components include:
    a. Generation of timelines to create a shared understanding of the historical and global perspective, as well as the current system;
    b. "Mapping" (i.e., brainstorming and listing) all relevant factors that shape current relationships, distributions of power and resources, current development challenges, and how they are changing over time--for example, if the WSR workshop is focusing on maternal and child health, the group might identify factors such as prevalence of child marriage, positive attitude towards women, access to birth control, etc., and whether each factor has increased or decreased over time;
    c. Generating a vision (in mixed groups) of the future that they are willing to work towards;
    d. Find common ground to realize this vision, through refining ideas that everyone has in common, as opposing to debating extensively on areas of disagreement;
    e. Creating action plans to implement this common agenda, with public commitments.
7. The Advisory Committee continues to operate after the WSR workshop to provide ongoing support, follow up on short and long term action plans, foster communication and collaboration among groups, and reconvene the system through a variety of venues (including subsequent WSR workshops).

HOW WSR COULD ADD VALUE

Whole System in the Room:

- Results in agreed-upon action plans to achieve identified development goals;
- Draws on local knowledge, expertise, and networks to identify stakeholders—in particular, the Advisory Committee will identify, and be able to reach, non-conventional stakeholders that an OU might normally not be able to access;
- "Starts at scale" because it engages as many stakeholders as possible in the system at the start to provide input as well as take ownership for transforming the system;
- Engages stakeholders from all strata of a community to directly interact with each other (i.e., both the powerful and vulnerable), so that people with the "power to act" can hear the voices

of those most likely to be affected by decisions (and those most affected can gain power through the plans and decisions made during the WSR process); and
- Emphasizes consensus, so that local action is not delayed.

LEVEL OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT

WSR involves an intensive but relatively short-term commitment of resources. WSR envisions that the Advisory Committee, being composed of local stakeholders, would continue operating, convening everyone at regular intervals, and thus lend long-term sustainability to community plans. The level of necessary resources after the WSR workshop will depend on how autonomously the Advisory Committee operates. Some ACs may have substantial momentum because they bring together highly-motivated people who are already active with the development issue in question. Others may need continued support from USAID or the Implementing Partner for a considerable time.

TOOLS TO INCLUDE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS IT?

Also referred to as Beneficiary Analysis, Stakeholder Analysis, or Stakeholder Assessment, Beneficiary Assessment (BA) was developed by the World Bank in the 1990s to increase community participation in evaluation of ongoing or completed development projects. It is now used by numerous donors and development organizations worldwide.

Most discussions of BA frame it as an approach to evaluate an effort that has already been implemented, either at a mid-point or end of Strategy/Project/Activity. BA aims to gain insights into community perspectives by:

- Interviews and group discussions at a community level; and
- Use of "peers," i.e., members of similar groups, as primary field researchers--e.g., farmers would help carry out an assessment of a set of interventions for farmers.

BA emphasizes collection of both qualitative (e.g., "What changes would you suggest be made to this project? Why") and quantitative data.

IN WHAT CONTEXTS COULD BA BE USED?

As noted above, BA is usually carried out to evaluate an effort that has already been implemented, either at a mid-point or end of Strategy/Project/Activity. Since a key principle of BA is to use what we learned to "correct course", it would also be very useful at the Strategy and Planning phase of the Program Cycle. In terms of PSE, BA could be used:

- Obtain feedback on a proposed partnership;
- Assess community views of a private sector entity, how it operates, how it treats the local people;
- Review past PSE partnerships, identify what worked well or poorly;
- Identify priorities for future partnerships.

LONGER DESCRIPTION

BA is designed to be participatory and to include the voices of all segments of a community, including marginalized and vulnerable groups. BA should ensure that:

- The data collection and reporting reflect the views of the local people in a fair and accurate manner;
- Community members can freely express their views without interference (and in parts of the research process, without being observed by staff of the organization carrying out the BA, i.e., USAID staff are absent, so that people feel comfortable expressing criticisms or other opinions they may assume USAID does not want to hear);
- Those carrying out the research must assess how their own biases may be affecting the methodology, and take steps to mitigate against this, such as;
    - Critically examining and reflecting on the reasons for the BA: Is it being driven by a desire to "validate" that a project or activity was useful?

    - Reflecting on our unspoken assumptions on various segments of the community: What ARE all the different parts of the community, what do we assume their interests and opinions are, how do we assume we must reach them?
- The development organization carrying out the BA commits to modifying its programming in response to the information and insights obtained from the BA, and that these changes are substantial enough to be recognizable to the community.

An example of how a BA is carried out are the steps outlined by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) SDC How-To Note on BA:

1. Initial Planning, to select geographic scope, identify peer field researchers (which SDC calls "Citizen Observers,") and identify stakeholders;
2. Training and Validation of Methods and Tools, to provide training for the field researchers and develop a field research plan, finalize logistics, and produce interview templates;
3. Implementation, in which field researchers carry out the community interviews;
4. Analysis of collected data;
5. Validation, in which there is a workshop or public event with the community to report on and validate the results of the field research;
6. Reporting, in which the results are officially disseminated (including to all stakeholders);
7. Follow-up, in which SDC (or in our case, the Mission/OU) formally decides how to modify its programming based on the feedback received from the BA.

In other words, we use BA to learn from the communities in which we work so that we can improve our programming to better address their needs.

HOW BA COULD ADD VALUE

Beneficiary Assessment directly increases the local knowledge we can draw upon because it uses peer community members to obtain the views, opinions, and perspectives of stakeholders in those communities. It builds in safeguards against bias by ensuring that individuals can express their views without interference. It enables us to supplement our indicator reporting (which favors those types of results that can be counted and measured above everything else) with qualitative information and feedback to inform future programming decisions.

LEVEL OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT

A Beneficiary Assessment can be very resource intensive. The SDC example estimates a full 12 months are needed to complete all 7 steps. However, an OU could carry out a much smaller-scale endeavor utilizing BA elements, such as:

- More deliberate and systematic collection of qualitative information during evaluations;
- Use of peer field researchers to conduct parts of evaluations;
- Holding evaluation After Action Review events in the local community;
- More systematic use of qualitative data and community feedback to modify programming and implementation.

TOOLS TO INCLUDE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

WHAT IS IT?

Inclusive Development Analysis is (IDA) an analytic tool that ***identifies gaps*** between marginalized groups and the general population, ***identifies structural barriers*** that exclude marginalized groups from participating fully in society and development programs, and ***develops recommendations*** to address these gaps and barriers and increase inclusion.

IN WHAT CONTEXTS COULD IDA BE USED?

Inclusive Development Analysis can be done in all parts of the Program Cycle: strategy development, activity design, mid-point evaluation, etc. Basically, for any context that an OU could conceivably do a Gender Analysis, it could also do an IDA.

In terms of private sector engagement, IDA could be conducted for a range of reasons:

- To reach out to more types of businesses;
- To identify how to include marginalized groups in economic activities;
- Perhaps most importantly, to assess, for a proposed partnership with a private sector entity, what the potential impacts and unintended consequences might be, how to modify the partnership to avoid those harms, and how to increase inclusion of marginalized groups.

LONGER DESCRIPTION

USAID defines “marginalized groups” as follows:

People who are typically denied access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (i.e., police protection, political participation, access to healthcare, education, employment), whether in practice or in principle, for historical, cultural, political, and/or other contextual reasons. Such groups may include, but are not limited to, women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTI people, displaced persons, migrants, indigenous individuals and communities, youth and the elderly, religious minorities, ethnic minorities, people in lower castes, and people of diverse economic class and political opinions. These groups often suffer from discrimination in the application of laws and policy and/or access to resources, services, and social protection, and may be subject to persecution, harassment, and/or violence. They may also be described as “underrepresented,” “at-risk,” or “vulnerable”.[1]

USAID does not have a specific approach or format for conducting an IDA. USAID ADS on Inclusive Development Analysis. However there are two key principles that guide an IDA:

1. Do no harm.
2. “Nothing about us without us”--in other words, consult with marginalized groups to understand their needs and priorities.

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[1] *Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Analysis Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations,* Additional Help for ADS 201, USAID/DCHA/DRG/HR, July 2018

Inclusive Development Analysis may focus on questions such as:

- What does identity-based inequality look like in the community or country where a project or activity will be conducted?
- What are the social, political, and/or economic drivers of marginalization in the project area (or in the country)? What are the barriers imposed by formal and informal institutions, norms, policies, and attitudes that marginalize different groups?
- Who is driving marginalization or exclusion? Who is an advocate or champion for inclusion? Why are these key actors motivated to drive or mitigate marginalization? How are they using their influence for their respective purposes?
- Are marginalized groups at risk for being adversely impacted by USAID's efforts? If so, how? How can programs be designed to minimize unintended negative impacts?

Often an IDA is conducted the same way as a Gender Analysis, which is organized around consideration of key domains to frame the questions that will be used throughout the analysis. The IDA uses all five domains of Gender Analysis and adds a sixth:

1. Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices;
2. Cultural norms and beliefs;
3. Roles, responsibilities, and time use;
4. Patterns of power and decision making;
5. Access to and control over assets and resources;
6. Personal safety and security.

Two other activities that are often included in an IDA are:

- Conducting a Desk Review of information sources such as human rights reports to identify marginalized groups and key drivers of marginalization;
- Direct engagement of marginalized groups.

Based on the findings of the above analyses, an IDA should develop clear recommendations for new and existing programming and activity design.

HOW IDA COULD ADD VALUE

Ways in which Inclusive Development Analysis is especially valuable include:

- IDA's focus on historically excluded groups;
- The principle of "do no harm";
- The multi-faceted approach to examining inclusion, especially structural barriers;
- Its goal of improving conditions for and protecting the rights of minorities.

LEVEL OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT

Because much of an IDA can be completed through review of existing information, an IDA will normally require a moderate outlay of resources, but this depends in part on how much original research and direct engagement of stakeholders a given context will require. In particular, if there are multiple marginalized groups, each one may require its own analysis.

TOOLS TO INCLUDE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE:
POWER ANALYSIS

WHAT IS IT?

Power Analysis is a tool developed by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to examine multiple dimensions of power when designing, implementing, and evaluating development programming. Like USAID's Political Economy Analysis, Power Analysis tries to identify interests and incentives for and against change--and why. Similar to the Thinking and Working Politically lens, it seeks to understand the power dynamics that affect a given context, and then use this understanding to adapt development approaches and tactics to improve their effectiveness.

IN WHAT CONTEXTS IT COULD POWER ANALYSIS BE USED?

The Power Analysis can potentially be used in any context in which USAID wants to bring an understanding of power into development programming, and thus could be used in all phases of the Program Cycle. Within the context of PSE, Power Analysis could add profound value by helping an OU understand how a potential private sector partner operates within a community or region, what types of power it exercises--both positive and negative--and how a PSE effort might reduce or exacerbate oppression of marginalized communities.

LONGER DESCRIPTION

At its heart, Power Analysis is about asking many, many questions 1) to identify how power operates in the communities where we work, 2) to understand how power relations may reinforce conditions of marginalization, and 3) to identify how to mobilize alternative forms of power to address inequalities. What follows is just a sampling of questions that a Power Analysis will explore, and gives a sense of the potential richness of insight and understanding it can bring:

- Which identities are prevalent in society (i.e., urban/rural, migrant/local, economic class, religious affiliation, ethnicity, etc.)? How do these identities contribute to social hierarchies, poverty, inequality, discrimination, violence, and conflict?
- How do gender norms reinforce power relations?
- How do beliefs, norms, and cultural practices legitimize and reinforce material power structures that constrain freedom of action, of movement, of economic opportunities?
- Where do beliefs and norms turn into prejudice and discrimination?
- How do different actors perceive how the economy functions, and how poverty and wealth are determined?
- How do different actors perceive practices that donors might describe as "corrupt"?
- Who is influential in the public discourse? What are their political, economic and social connections?
- What are the main resources that sustain prevailing power relationships?
- How are elite actors organized? What are their main networks?
- What is the influence of transnational economic actors?
- How is political power distributed spatially and socially?
- How is power challenged by those on the receiving end?

Sida's approach (Sida) power analysis_a practical guide involves several steps:

1. Clarifying the purpose of the Power Analysis.
2. Identifying core issues and questions, including those related to: structures and norms, actors and institutions, and politics and contestation.
3. Identifying concepts and methods.
4. Obtaining information, through literature reviews, stakeholder interviews, participation in ongoing policy dialogues, and other methods.
5. Applying the findings of the Power Analysis to modify planned or existing activities.

HOW POWER ANALYSIS COULD ADD VALUE

One key value of Sida's Power Analysis is that it comprehensively examines power from a wide range of angles and dimensions. For example:

- It looks at formal and informal power;
- It looks at sources and positions of power;
- It looks at different forms of power: power over, power against, "power to", power with, and power within, as well as power from above (e.g., the state), lateral power, and power from below.

While Political Economy Analysis focuses on "visible" power such as laws and decision-making, Power Analysis also looks at the more hidden aspects of power, such as who sets the political agenda and how, and--even deeper--who shapes meaning in overall social and political discourses and who decides what is acceptable, and how.

LEVEL OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT

The Power Analysis will involve a moderate amount of resource commitment, but this will vary depending on the type and extent of questions to be explored and the amount of direct engagement and consultation with communities.

TOOLS TO INCLUDE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE:
SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS IT?

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is a methodology to identify, for a potential development activity or intervention, the potential negative effects on local communities. SIA considers a wide range of possible impacts, including those on a community's culture, political systems, natural environment, health, human rights, property rights, and land tenure, as well as whether a project will create or exacerbate conflicts. SIA is a decision-making tool, and provides a step-by-step process to determine whether to proceed with a proposed activity, modify it, implement it with measures to mitigate negative impacts, or to not proceed with it.

IN WHAT CONTEXTS COULD SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT BE USED?

SIA is normally done to make decisions on whether to proceed with an already identified activity, and so would normally be used during the Strategic Planning and Design phases of the Program Cycle. As noted above, it must be used if there are any potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples. In terms of private sector engagement, because SIA analyzes such a wide range of issues, from culture to community organization, any PSE effort could incorporate one or more of the SIA questions. In addition, SIA could be used to obtain the views of local communities on a proposed partnership, as well as more thoroughly assess adverse impacts and identify modifications to minimize these.

SIA would be especially important for any PSE efforts that could affect traditional systems of land tenure and natural resource utilization, such as ventures to scale up harvesting and export of a particular crop, or endeavors to introduce or increase tourism to a particular location.

LONGER DESCRIPTION

The Gold Standard for Social Impact Assessment is the Akwe Kon: Guidelines for Conducting Cultural, Environmental, and Social Impact Assessments published by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity: akwe-brochure-en.pdf (cbd.int). USAID also has a framework to guide SIAs: USAID Optional Social Impact Assessment Framework.

USAID's SIA process involves a sequence of steps and decision points that is similar to what is used for Environmental Impact Assessments, and SIAs are often conducted in conjunction with an EIA. ***The Agency's Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (PRO-IP) REQUIRES assessing the impacts of development programming on Indigenous Peoples in any situation where Indigenous Peoples are identified as a stakeholder.***

Major phases of an SIA include:

- Initial consultations with stakeholders to understand the context
- Initial screening to identify potential adverse impacts (roughly equivalent to an IEE)
- Identification of stakeholders for more extensive consultations
- Plan for stakeholder engagement
- Carrying out the comprehensive engagement
- Assessment of baseline conditions (demographic, socioeconomic, community organization, etc.)

- Identification and analysis of impacts
- Decision on avoid / mitigate / rehabilitate / compensate
- Ongoing engagement and monitoring throughout implementation

Also similar to Environmental Impact Assessments, the SIA starts with a relatively rapid assessment to ascertain whether or not significant adverse impacts are likely to occur. If this initial stage identifies a high risk of social impacts, the SIA moves to a much more intensive and comprehensive analysis.

In all cases, an SIA will involve developing a plan to mitigate any identified impacts and monitor the mitigation measures.

Social Impact Assessment is an iterative process, with multiple rounds of consultations with potentially affected communities, as well as internal consultations within those communities. **Most importantly, the communities have a say about whether or not to proceed with the development activity, whether and how to modify it, as well as recommend specific actions for mitigation, rehabilitation, or compensation.**

HOW SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT COULD ADD VALUE

Social Impact Assessment:

- Provides a comprehensive framework to analyze a wide range of potential impacts;
- Has a systematic decision-making process;
- Most importantly, provides ways to integrate stakeholder feedback into the eventual Award or Implementing Mechanism.

LEVEL OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT

Social Impact Analysis requires an intense resource commitment, especially if the initial screening indicates that the potential impacts are significant enough to merit carrying out the full set of steps.