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Governance for Local Development:
A case study in locally led development

In many countries, the local needs and priorities of citizens are often disconnected or disjointed from national and provincial resources and the resulting activities of local authorities: Senegal is no exception to this. Historically, municipalities across Senegal have encountered numerous obstacles in resource mobilization and basic service provision to its citizens. This case study highlights the achievements of USAID's Governance for Local Development (GoLD) project, implemented by RTI International, in addressing these obstacles, improving resource mobilization, and enhancing the services provided to citizens using a locally led development approach. As a result, aspects of the government are more accountable to the people by funding the priorities of communities. Additionally, citizens are more willing to pay taxes because they see where their money is going. This helps to move Senegal's democracy further along to one that delivers for all of its people. Highlights from this case study include:

» Listening tours strengthen locally led development by integrating local voices and priorities into all aspects of the project and activity design. Local participation in listening tours promotes long lasting impacts through better-targeted capacity strengthening and social accountability support.

» Foreign Service National (FSN) leadership instills confidence in local partners through valuable shared cultural understandings. Empowering FSNs leads to helping achieve locally led development.

» Programmatic impact is multiplied by directly linking governance to service delivery through intentional collaboration with other sectors, including education; health; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and food security and nutrition.

BACKGROUND: Over a seven-year period (2016 - 2023), USAID GoLD supported Senegal's progress toward a more democratic government by prioritizing locally led initiatives throughout implementation. The program offered no financial resources directly to local governments; instead, GoLD focused on fostering collaboration to encourage locally led development. To promote sustainability and local ownership, USAID GoLD facilitated strategic collaborations between national and local authorities, the private sector, local committees, and women's groups, among others, garnering a mutual consensus grounded in institutions. Subsequent capacity strengthening activities empowered local partners to design strategies and activities to address identified needs while leveraging synergies across the project's network of partners to maintain ongoing collaboration. The project placed locals at the center of its approach to strategically share ideas, mitigate concerns, and foster innovative solutions to improve resource mobilization and service provision.

GoLD's efforts elevated Senegal's governance practices and service delivery at the local level. Notably, over 120 of GoLD's interventions in the areas of education; WASH; health; and food security and nutrition have been sustained through collaboration with other institutions or programs not funded by USAID. The improvements within participating communities underscore the lasting impact of interventions that incorporate locally led development. By the end of 2021, GoLD's interventions reached across 77 municipalities and focused on the following components:

Objective 1: Increased capacity of local government to respond to citizen demand.
• For example, 91 percent of municipalities voted on their budget through participatory budgeting within statutory deadlines (preparation, vote, and adoption of the budget and administrative account etc.).

Objective 2: Improved mobilization and management of local public resources.
• For example, a tax collection operation at Kédougou central market allowed the town hall and regional collectors to regularize

souk occupants and collect FCFA 13,658,654 (approximately USD 23,170) in four days.

Objective 3: Increased community participation in service delivery management (health, education, WASH, agriculture).
• For example, a total of 317 community-developed local advocacy action plans were drafted and a total of 308 local advocacy action plans were implemented during the program.

Objective 4: Enhancing the capacity of institutions responsible for improving the system of local governance and the transfer of resources.
• For example, in an effort to incorporate local priorities within the reforms and financial policy for decentralization and local governance, GoLD facilitated synergies between central ministries, local authorities and local partners. These synergies, developed through an ongoing process of developing trust and understanding by scaling up communication between a broad range of local actors, paid off handsomely, such as through facilitating the reform of the Local Tax Commission, and the launch of a digital tax collection tool called Y-TAX.

Objective 5: Cross-cutting dimensions: social inclusion and communication.
• As an example, GoLD strengthened the leadership of 183 women and their involvement in managing peer-to-peer exchanges.

ACHIEVEMENTS:[1] GoLD experienced major achievements reflecting successes across all five project objectives. At the core of these achievements was GoLD's work to engender consistent communication between differing levels of authority and between partners that had not normally been connected. Over time, partners became more willing to integrate priorities and work toward shared goals. For example, GoLD facilitated multi-sectoral communication within the school management committee (ECG) in Bamba Thialène. After 10 years of stagnation due to ongoing disagreements between parties, ECG noted the commitment of the municipality and the mayor to continue with agreed upon priorities such as school supply allocation. Similar efforts in Némataba and Sinthiang Hadji led to the establishment of an educational facility whose location had previously been disputed between the two regions. These examples of progress in both the democracy and education spaces highlight the communities' ability to reach consensus when participating in community dialogue to develop trust and connection.

The integration of local governance and sector-specific programs, as facilitated by GoLD, has been linked to improvements in the access and quality of health facilities in the participating municipalities. The project's use of participatory budgeting, an inclusive process where citizens are involved in decisions relating to resource mobilization, encouraged collaboration between local authorities and communities. Such collaboration generated a consensus of priority actions in the healthcare outpost of Bamba Thialène and led to a 223 percent increase in revenue from 2018 to 2021. The increased level of local public resources allowed the outpost to finance basic services, such as hiring a midwife and a community health worker, and the completion of repairs and maintenance on vital medical equipment. Improved consensus and transparency regarding priorities within sectors led to an increase in revenue opportunities. In fact, all 50 of the initial group of partner municipalities found

> "The planned actions of the meetings I attended meet the needs of the community, especially in the sectors of health, education, and rural hydraulics. I believe that the municipality will now be able to obtain high quality services."
>
> Deputy Mayor of the Children's Municipal Council of the NIANG municipality

new revenue streams in 2021 compared to the previous year. Through inclusive processes such as participatory budgeting, the increases in revenue could be directed to partner priorities. For example, in the municipalities of Tambacounda and Kothiary, more than FCFA 90 million (approximately USD 152 thousand) was invested in the education and WASH sectors.

Improved participation in budget creation and tax payments directly supported increases in resource mobilization. As municipal budgets became more reflective of partner inputs, communities felt more engaged and willing to participate in tax payments. The mayor of Bogal noted increased participation of partners stating that GoLD supported the municipalities efforts in educating communities on the importance of paying taxes to fund priority needs. GoLD supported communication between local actors including authorities at the central, regional, and local levels; the private sector; and local citizens to encourage consensus and place partners at the center of decision-making processes. Partners participated in social dialogue platforms facilitated by GoLD such as EDICs (Spaces for Dialog and Citizen Engagement) where they engaged in discussions on public policies and priorities. Social dialogue platforms paired with participatory budgeting led to positive results in resource mobilization. Over a three-year period, the municipalities of Kédougou, Salémata, and Saraya increased the level of their own resource mobilization by 109 percent. Similarly, the municipalities of Bounkiling, Marsassoum, and Goudomp saw increases of 29 percent.

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1. For more information about GoLD and its achievements, refer to the projects Annual Reports for FY 2020 Annual Report FY2020 (usaid.gov) and FY 2021 USAID/GoLD Annual Report FY 2021 | October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021.

ENTRY POINTS FOR PROGRAMMING THAT SUPPORTS LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

GoLD's successes could not have been achieved without its emphasis on locally led development. The program's efforts to integrate communications to foster improvements based in local contexts was made possible by the use of two entry points for programming that support locally led development in particular: listening tours that emphasized facilitating community dialogue and the empowerment of FSNs.

LISTENING TOURS: Convening and facilitating community dialogue

Program Cycle Entry Points:
Listening Tours

Country/Regional Strategic Planning

Evaluation

Project Design & Implementation

MONITORING

ACTIVITY DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

In the context of GoLD, listening tours and continuous engagement within communities by USAID and the implementing partner served as a catalyst to the incremental, ongoing process of developing trust and understanding by scaling up communication between a broad range of local actors who may not normally have been connected. GoLD served a convening and facilitating role in encouraging dialogue between differing levels of authority (central and local), differing sectors of practices (e.g. education, health), and community members regarding community development. Dialogue platforms, such

as municipal committees, participatory budgeting, and EDICs (Spaces for Dialog and Citizen Engagement), enabled partners to share expectations and discuss what was reasonably achieved among them. Such community dialogue shifted power and responsibility to local partners who agreed upon and designed activities to better their communities.

The responsibility and involvement of local partners, as facilitated by community dialogue, created a type of social contract governed by expectations. For example, the municipality of Tambacounda had long struggled to recover taxes from the "Jakarta" motorcycle taxis (composed of over 3,000 motorcycles). After a series of awareness meetings, supported by GoLD and the regional public treasury, the drivers agreed to pay taxes. In return, the municipality provided the drivers with vests, helmets, license plates, trainings on road traffic, and a room for their association. This is just one example of partner ownership in identifying and actioning locally expressed needs. Together, partners at central and local levels developed action and advocacy plans to encourage improvements surrounding agreed upon priorities. Upon project completion, 308 out of 317 local advocacy action plans had been implemented across the participating municipalities. The integrated process between central authorities, local authorities, and communities better aligned municipal budgeting practices to local needs. Consider the success of Y-TAX, a digitalized tax collection tool designed to increase the collection and transparency of tax revenue launched under GoLD that relied heavily on stakeholder will and social accountability. GoLD achieved strong synergy with the Ministry of Finance and Budget, Local Collectives Office,

> "The involvement of FSNs improves community confidence and engagement through shared values, culture and common interest for the development of the country...We know the community mindset and are better positioned to communicate and approach them and respond to their expectations."
>
> FSN of USAID Senegal

Directorate–General of Public Accounts and Treasury, Directorate-General of Taxation and Property, and Local Public Sector Offices in the tool's design and piloting. The municipalities Kédougou, Tanaff, Bagadadji and Koumpentoum piloted Y-TAX, leading locally designed initiatives that identified taxpayers, revenue streams, and potential challenges in using the tool. In Koumpentoum, close to 700 taxpayers had enrolled after three days of collection and Tanaff experienced a 281 percent increase in the annual recovery on taxes implemented in 2021.

FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Program Cycle Entry Points: FSN Empowerment
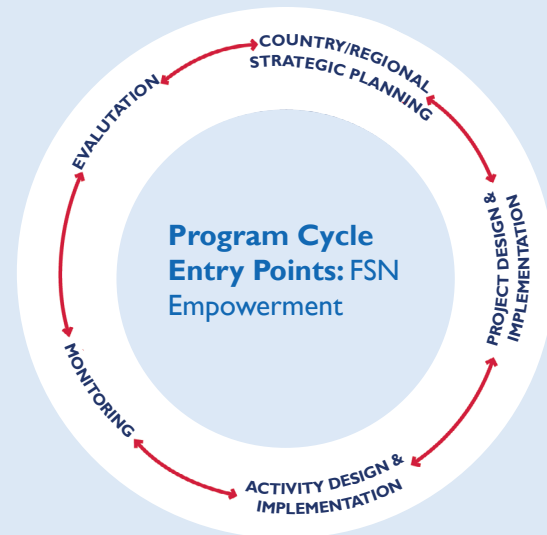
Locally led development starts internally from within the Mission, and GoLD's successes were largely possible due to FSN empowerment. GoLD spanned across multiple USAID sectors, such as democracy and governance, education, health, WASH, and food security and nutrition.

All GoLD points of contact and champions at USAID were FSNs. Governance programs in Senegal had not been linked to service delivery before GoLD and creating synergy and consensus among sectors resulted in similar challenges to creating synergies within communities. The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) of GoLD, a Senegalese national, embraced the challenges of multi-sectoral collaboration and facilitated conversations between sectors to uncover the overlapping benefits of improved service delivery. Together, the sectors visited local communities to better understand their priorities in terms of their sectoral objectives and how to design GoLD in a representative manner.

Despite the differing core priorities of the sectors, all the FSNs held the interest of Senegal in mind and were encouraged to maintain a cross-sectoral approach by a strong AOR who championed this practice and emboldened FSNs to become champions themselves.

Empowering Senegalese FSN staff instilled a sense of confidence in partners and no time was therefore wasted on second guessing intentions. The longevity of the FSN position underscored the opportunities for long-term partnerships and contributed to the partners' confidence in the project. The continued presence and interests of FSNs is an integral part of sustaining pathways of communications and relationships that often take years to form. Agreements among community members are developed based on a strong level of trust and understanding. FSNs hold valuable cultural understandings of partner expectations, cultural practices, and potential challenges, all of which impact a project's level of success. For example, one of the first EDICs was attended solely by supporters of the local mayor. The AOR recognized this and spoke with the mayor to affirm these spaces for dialogue were not political in nature. The mayor felt confident in the FSNs' intentions and eventually a diverse array of local actors began attending. The spaces were met

with such success that local authorities voiced their satisfaction with the approach.

USAID's emphasis on FSN empowerment was mirrored by GoLD's implementing partner RTI, which ensured that Senegalese staff were the technical and operational leaders of the project further creating a context of trust and understanding that facilitated communication between the project and its partners.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: FSN EMPOWERMENT

• Foster internal collaboration between FSNs of multiple sectors. Joint design efforts, such as combined visits to service areas, encourage multi-sectoral support and link common objectives.

• Value FSN leadership from design throughout implementation. FSNs hold contextual understandings of needs and expectations that further project impact.