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LOCAL, FAITH AND TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS HUB BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND INNOVATION

Locally Led Development Initiatives



DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021

LOCAL WORKS PHOTO CONTEST WINNER: FLAVIO BORGES, USAID/TIMOR-LESTE
USAID/TIMOR-LESTE LOCAL WORKS TEAM INTERVIEWING YOUTH ON THE STREET IN THE LIQUICA MUNICIPALITY

A note from the office: This "Year in Review" reflects on the accomplishments of locally led development programming at USAID throughout 2020, and speaks to the adaptability and resilience of this programming in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of USAID's transformation, the Office of Local Sustainability is now part of Locally Led Development Initiatives in the Local, Faith and Transformative (LFT) Partnerships Hub, within the Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation (DDI).

Stay tuned for the next newsletter in February 2021!

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LOCAL WORKS: A YEAR OF ADAPTATION AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP

PHOTO CREDIT: NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (NACOM)
THROUGH LOCAL WORKS, USAID/BANGLADESH PARTNER NACOM CONDUCTS A COVID-19 AWARENESS MEETING WITH LOCAL WOMEN IN COX'S BAZAR

In 2020, USAID [Local Works](#) Missions around the globe adapted to the COVID-19 context and continued locally led programming amidst challenging circumstances. Some highlights:

- **In North Macedonia**, USAID shifted from plans to hold in-person co-creation workshops to conducting a series of three sets of virtual co-creations with prospective local partners. Co-created activities will empower citizens, civil society organizations, private businesses, and local government authorities to work together on addressing development priorities and advancing the prosperity and wellbeing of their communities.
- **In Serbia**, the Local Works program has adapted several activities to respond to

locally defined COVID-19 needs. This included support for community projects aimed at sewing and distributing face masks, providing volunteer and support services to vulnerable groups, organizing public campaigns and competitions to highlight positive examples of online teachers, and mobilizing private sector actors and citizens to donate goods and funds for COVID recovery efforts.

- **In Bangladesh**, the Local Works program in Cox's Bazar is partnering with local actors and supporting communities impacted by the refugee influx to rehabilitate natural resources and promote alternative and sustainable livelihoods. Local partners have responded to COVID-19 by distributing hygiene materials, training local communities in pandemic awareness, hand washing, and mask making, and ensuring strict COVID-19 safety protocols during in-person engagements.
- **In Paraguay**, USAID launched a program in partnership with [Fundacion Paraguaya](#), a non-governmental organization, to strengthen the economic and social resilience of women entrepreneurs from vulnerable communities in response to COVID-19. In a socially-distanced event which saw both virtual and in-person participation, businesswomen participating in the program shared their experiences of entrepreneurship during the pandemic. The event also showcased crafts, such as tablecloths, painted coffee cups, magnets, and more, created by the women.



COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COOPERATIVES AND CREDIT UNIONS

PHOTO CREDIT: GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

COOPERATIVE MEMBERS IN RWANDA ARE MEASURING MAIZE CROPS TO ENSURE A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

With more than 3 million cooperatives around the world, USAID is harnessing the power of cooperative businesses for development. In 2018, the [Cooperative Development Program](#) (CDP) awarded funding to 10 U.S.-based cooperatives and Cooperative Development Organizations (CDOs) to strengthen cooperative businesses around the world. In the second year (October 2018 - September 2019), the program built the capacity of 90 cooperatives in 15 countries, delivering \$58 million in income and services for more than 3.9 million people (local cooperative members and their households).

"The CDP program comes in as a voice for cooperatives and credit unions, and a great tool through which they can thrive and build their capacities to be competitive in the market."

[World Council of Credit Unions](#), a CDP partner

The CDP also leveraged \$2.4 million in funding from the U.S. and local private sectors during this time. To learn more about what the program has accomplished, [check out this new report](#).

STOPPING AS SUCCESS: 5 TIPS FOR A RESPONSIBLE TRANSITION

Transitioning projects and programs to local ownership is essential, but not all transitions are created equal. [Stopping As Success](#) has five recommendations for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs):

1. **Start at the beginning.** How INGOs *enter* a relationship matters just as much as how they *leave*. Partnerships should be built on a foundation of a shared vision, joint decision making, and trust.
2. **Plan ahead for the transition.** This allows for a more locally driven and owned process (and programming) from the start, ensuring a smoother transition down the line.

3. **Address power imbalances.** Throughout the entire process, INGOs should look to support and facilitate rather than lead.
4. **Don't be afraid to fail.** Transitions are complicated. INGOs should leave room to experiment and try new approaches.
5. **Post-transition partnerships are possible.** Relationships do not have to end when a formal partnership ends.

To see the key takeaways for international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and donors, [read the research synthesis](#). You can also [check out the new book](#) from [Peace Direct](#), [CDA Collaborative Learning](#), and [Search for Common Ground](#) that builds on the research to provide a more comprehensive guide to responsible exits.

USAID supported [Stopping As Success](#) through the [Co-Created Research Initiatives](#).



SMALL PROJECT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: SPOTLIGHT ON RESILIENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: PEACE CORPS/UKRAINE
A ZOOM TRAINING SESSION WITH PEACE CORPS/UKRAINE

In its 37+ year history, the [Small Project Assistance](#) (SPA) Program has weathered multiple country-specific evacuations of Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), and has built lessons learned into guidance and flexible programming. While this year's global evacuation of PCVs was unprecedented, the SPA Program has once again adapted. Through the efforts of Peace Corps staff and the support of USAID Missions, SPA has been able to continue technical training and community engagement efforts. Thanks to this work, SPA's successes remain significant: SPA supported 241 grants, 49 training activities, and 47 program support activities in FY 2020. And with an emphasis on learning and flexibility, it's clear that SPA will continue to adapt and move forward with lessons learned from the pandemic, as well.



MALAWI: INVESTING IN LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

PHOTO CREDIT: WORLD CONNECT
COOPERATIVE MEMBERS IN MALAWI SHOWCASE VASES THEY PRODUCED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE WORLD CONNECT PROGRAM

In Malawi, [World Connect](#) provides small grants and ongoing support and guidance for community-led projects. Three key findings from the midterm evaluation that contribute to learning for locally led development are:

1. **Mobilize local resources, and support project leaders to do so.** The program requires 25% of costs to come from local sources. Project teams were most

- successful when they solicited *small dollar donations* from more community members, and when they collaborated directly with community members to determine their resource mobilization approach.
2. **Respond directly to the needs of local communities.** Flexibility is key: the lack of restrictions on grants ensures that projects can respond directly to local needs. This enables projects to bridge sectors and address challenges otherwise overlooked by more traditional development projects and programs.
 3. **Build local capacity.** Through the program's direct field support and training, local project leaders reported increased capacity in their leadership skills and their ability to effectively carry out their work. Local teams also noted that they have applied these new skills to other projects in their community.

Want to learn more? [Read the full evaluation.](#)

USAID supported this project through the [Unsolicited Solutions for Locally Led Development.](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Peaks and Pitfalls of Co-Creation: This new resource from USAID and FHI360 shares findings and lessons from the Strengthening Civil Society Globally (SCS Global) co-creation. [Check it out](#)

How USAID Brought Co-Creation Online: In April, USAID/Mexico convened one of the largest co-creations ever, and it was all virtual. This four-part blog series shares lessons learned from the event. Read the [first](#), [second](#), [third](#), and [fourth](#) blog posts.

Cooperative Mapping and Legal Framework Analysis: This new interactive map from the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the European Union (EU) showcases research of cooperative actors and legal frameworks worldwide. [Check it out](#)



Competition for the Best Examples of Distance Learning: COVID-19 forced education (and educators) online nearly overnight. With this rapid shift, one of USAID/Serbia's [Local Works](#) program activities, which facilitates conversations between public and private sector stakeholders, held a competition. More than 600 teachers from across Serbia applied to the contest, which collected key lessons on distance learning and resulted in a nation-wide distance teaching manual. [Check it out](#)

Impact of COVID-19 on Agricultural Cooperatives: This new resource from USAID's Cooperative Development Program summarizes the main findings from a study on COVID-19's impact on agricultural cooperatives conducted by [Land O'Lakes Venture37](#), [Equal Exchange](#), [Global Communities](#), and [NCBA CLUSA](#). [Check it out](#)



USAID/Nepal: Call for locally led development concepts on responding to the impacts and shocks of COVID-19 on marginalized and vulnerable populations. Deadline to apply is January 18, 2021. [Learn more](#).

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