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

Locally Led Development Initiatives

MARCH 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

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TONGA: WOMEN AND WATER

PHOTO CREDIT: PEACE CORPS
IN 2019, THE VAINI WOMEN'S GROUP POSES WITH A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER AS THE LAST OF THE SEVEN WATER TANKS ARE INSTALLED.

In Tonga, climate change has contributed to increasingly unpredictable weather. This poses a challenge to families across the country, as many rely on rainwater for drinking. Bottled water is inaccessible, so families often have to travel long distances just to collect rainwater. In Vaini, a community in the middle of the country, women are at the forefront of creative solutions to this

challenge. A Vaini-based women's group partnered with a Peace Corps Volunteer to install rainwater collection tanks for the community. With a grant through the Small Project Assistance Program, the women's group was able to acquire and install seven new water tanks. Each water tank serves approximately 38 people, meaning the project provided water security to more than 260 community members in total. Community members also received training in tank maintenance and cleaning, ensuring continued access to clean water for years to come.

USAID supported this project through the Small Project Assistance Program (SPA), a longstanding partnership with the Peace Corps.

CHAMPIONING LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT: LUSINE HAKOBYAN

This past year has been an especially challenging time for Armenia. The country was hit hard by COVID-19, and conflict erupted in the Nagorno-Karabakh region in late September of last year. Lusine Hakobyan, Program Specialist from USAID/Armenia, recounts, "Our partners were unable to continue their work in a significant way. The conflict was so personal for so many of us; for a small nation, this was felt by virtually everyone." While these crises may have slowed the Mission's work, they did not deter Lusine and her colleagues from moving forward.

PHOTO CREDIT: USAID/ARMENIA
LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION LUSINE HAKOBYAN

Through Local Works, USAID/Armenia is fostering citizen-led development within diverse Armenian communities. Lusine and the team had initially planned to kick off their engagement with civil society organizations with in-person partner sessions, but facing constraints due to COVID-19, Lusine quickly pivoted to a virtual forum.

"We decided to still have this conversation with local actors, and at that time, no one was as experienced in the virtual forums, we didn't possess the knowledge of virtual tools that we do now." As the Mission's first virtual Local Works workshop, it proved a success. More than 40 participants — including representatives from the communities, civil society, and the government — convened to identify and discuss community priorities, ranging from the short-term needs for food and hygiene supplies and computers for school children, to long-term concerns about the lack of disaster preparedness. The event has informed USAID/Armenia's short-term COVID-19 response efforts, and is contributing to the Mission's future planning as well.

According to Lusine, an important discovery at the workshop was "that the [most] successful efforts to address COVID-19-related problems in the communities entailed close coordination and

"Build relationships and trust - [it] is the key to nuanced understanding of the local

collaboration of all actors on the ground," which will inform USAID/Armenia's future activities in support of democratic reforms and economic growth.

Speaking from her firsthand experience, Lusine advises other development professionals to "find opportunities in every challenge, and move forward." That's what she and the Mission have sought to do--despite the challenges they personally have faced in recent months.

context. Understand the actors, their roles and relationships, power dynamics, root causes of issues. Listen to local voices, and give them the tools to achieve long-term sustainable outcomes."

- Lusine Hakobyan, Development Program Specialist, USAID/Armenia

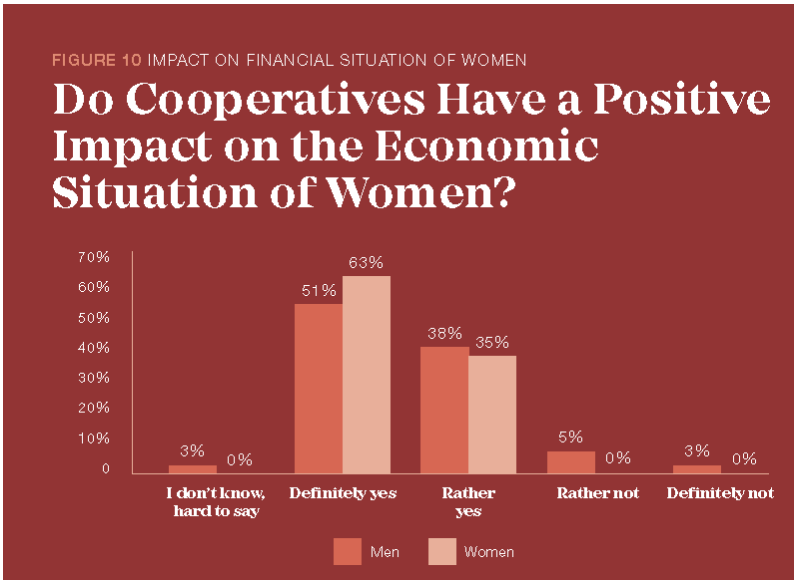
Because, by "engag[ing] with local actors [and] local communities on the ground; [and] listen[ing] to local voices, [we can] give them the [most appropriate] tools to achieve long-term sustainable outcomes."

USAID/Armenia is part of the Local Works program. The Local, Faith, and Transformative Partnerships Hub recognizes individuals from the USAID Local Works Missions for their exemplary work in advancing locally led development.

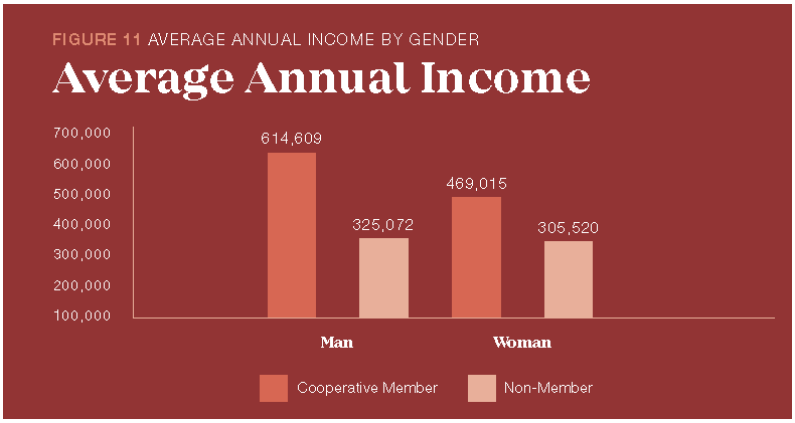
KENYA: COOPERATIVES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In Kenya, a new study conducted by the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council, a Cooperative Development Program (CDP) partner, highlights the role of cooperatives in empowering women across the country.

The study found that cooperatives are providing significant economic and social advantages to women in Kenya. Although women are generally underrepresented in Kenyan cooperatives, 99% of women cooperative members believe that their membership positively impacts their economic status.



In fact, the study found that women who belong to cooperatives have 35% higher incomes than women who are not members. The women surveyed also reported that they benefit from services provided by their cooperatives, such as improved access to financial services, markets,



and high quality education for their children.

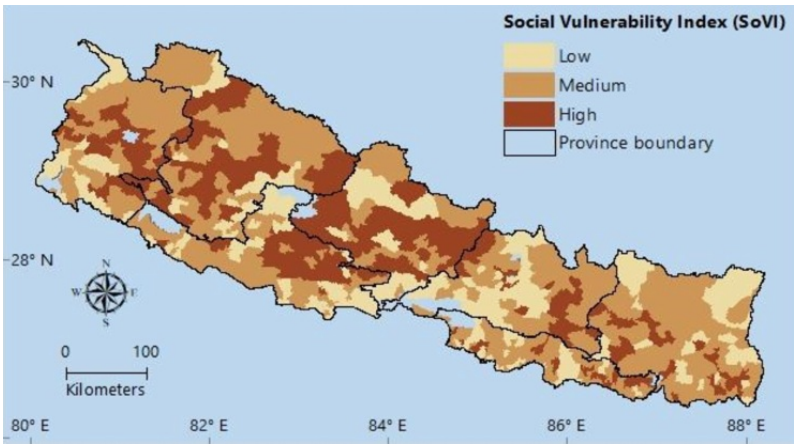
GRAPHIC CREDITS: U.S. OCDC RESEARCH COUNCIL
TWO GRAPHICS HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPACT OF COOPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN KENYA

These findings suggest that increasing the membership and voice of women within cooperatives could greatly enhance their economic opportunities in Kenya. Read the full report.

NEPAL: USING DATA TO DRIVE INCLUSION

In Nepal, Local Works is using data to support inclusion. Working with a local research firm, USAID conducted an assessment of social vulnerability and marginalization, including factors like gender and sexual orientation. This was cross-referenced with other risks, including natural disasters, poverty, and the COVID-19 pandemic, to create a comprehensive view of the challenges that individuals and communities are facing.

The analysis found that gender was one of the most important factors, with "the less economic, political, and cultural power that women and gender minorities have before an event, the greater their suffering during and in the event's aftermath." USAID/Nepal created a geospatial view of the findings, which it will use this to inform programming moving forward.



GRAPHIC CREDIT: USAID/NEPAL
MAP WITH THE CLASSIFICATION OF MUNICIPALITIES (LOW, MEDIUM, AND HIGH) BASED ON SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

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This data-driven approach will support a more effective means of facilitating inclusion in USAID/Nepal's programming moving forward.

USAID/Nepal is part of the Local Works program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

60th Anniversary of the Peace Corps: Peace Corps Week commemorates President John F. Kennedy's establishment of the agency in 1961, and celebrates all the ways that the Peace Corps makes a difference at home and abroad. While officially last week, you can still join us in wishing the Peace Corps a happy anniversary! Retweet this to celebrate.

Small Project, Big Impact: In reflecting on the last six years of the Small Project Assistance Program (SPA), with more than 3,900 grants and 530 training activities, a few stories stand out. Check it out.

Kagunda Women: In Zambia, a women's group in rural Kagunda partnered with a Peace Corps Volunteer to hold sewing classes. With support from SPA, women from the community were able to hold a series of trainings, and now sell more than 20 different items to supplement their income. Read more.

USAID's American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Program: ASHA supports commodity and construction projects for hospitals, schools, libraries, and centers of excellence around the world. ASHA's FY2021 application is now open to all U.S. not-for-profit non-governmental entities. The deadline for questions is March 16, 2021 and the deadline for applications is April 23, 2021. Learn more.

USAID/Kosovo: Seeking applications from local actors to increase socio-economic cohesion among marginalized communities–Kosovo Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian–through the facilitation of sustainable recycling models led by the private sector and in cooperation with communities and local governments. Deadline to apply is March 26, 2021. Learn more.

Movement for Community-Led Development Chapters Report: The Movement highlights how locally led development enabled civil society organizations and other Movement members around the world--from Benin, Nigeria and Philippines--to quickly respond and adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and attend to other local and national community-driven priorities. The pandemic has illuminated the power and versatility of locally/community-led development. Check it out.

State of Community-Led Development Report and Assessment Tool: The Movement has released a new report assessing the state of community-led development programming based on a review of more than 170 programs, including a significant number of USAID programs. It has also released and is seeking feedback on bilingual excel and mobile based tools for assessing community-led development in programs and activities. Read the report and check out the assessment tool.

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