PILOTING POSITIVE DISRUPTION AND CATALYZING LOCALIZATION

KEY ACTIONS & RESOURCES

EMBEDDING FLEXIBILITY IN PROJECT DESIGN

Embrace nontraditional partners. Generally speaking, almost any organization is eligible to work with USAID

Nurture flexibility throughout the project. A rigid environment is a static one.

Include Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) staff and Contracting and Agreement Officers (COs/AOs) at the start of the project—in the project design phase—so they can become advocates for activities and for the flexibility needed to accomplish project objectives.

Encourage projects to identify hindrances and ask for changes when a need arises.

Plan and budget for unexpected changes and opportunities. Consider including a line for pivots in the project budget.

Encourage regular pauses throughout implementation to reflect on how the environment may be changing and if current methodologies can still deliver desired outcomes.

Prioritize communication and trust in order to lay a foundation for flexibility.

When writing Requests for Proposals (RFPs), embed language that reflects your expectations about innovative practices and that encourages partners to build flexible approaches into their proposals.

CULTIVATING AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE

Recognize these three phases of defining project/team culture:
1. Setting the culture in the hiring process
2. Understanding team culture using assessment tools
3. Strengthening and nurturing culture through leadership practices

Build trust through rapid response, high quality, and "showing up" for all project team members, from the Agency to the partners.

Maintain a low-hierarchy structure of utility players who support one another.

Articulate team culture in a variety of settings (e.g., team meetings, job interviews, one-on-ones).

Cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. Team members should treat their portfolio like a business.

Create a space for regular, open, positive, and constructive feedback. Take immediate action on input, particularly when the situation requires correction.

Give teams room to innovate by describing when and how leadership will be involved.

Use audio interviews to screen candidates, when possible. This can be a low-investment way to assess candidates' energy and fit.

Use assessments and surveys to understand your team chemistry, employee strengths, and ways of working. Recommended assessments include Kolbe A, Trend Hunters, and PXT. USAID offers access to the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment via request through the HR LaunchPad.

Be aware of how leadership influences culture. A leader's beliefs, values, attitude, and energy shape an organization's operations.

EMBRACING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Remember that working with local organizations takes patience, empathy, and resilience.

Listen deeply—and with cultural understanding.

Visit WorkwithUSAID.org's Partner Directory to view profiles of local organizations, export lists of relevant organizations by country and sector, and (coming soon!) communicate directly with local organizations through the directory.

Learn more about how to conduct a partner landscape assessment to identify local actors.

Direct local partners to WorkwithUSAID.org for easy-to-navigate, practical resources, including subaward/subcontract opportunities, partnership events, and more.

For more ways you can use WorkwithUSAID.org, see our internal fact sheet for USAID staff.

REVITALIZING OUR PURPOSE

Explore how you can achieve your "purpose" in new ways by asking yourself and colleagues:

What can we learn from this?

How can the Agency look inward and improve processes to further localization?

How can we think bigger and look forward not only to best practices but also to "next" practices?

What tools do local partners need for successful project implementation?

How can we streamline and simplify processes and make the workload more manageable?

Take programmatic risks to achieve objectives and identify innovative solutions to challenges.

KEY RESOURCES

NPI webinar recordings
Localization page
Localization at USAID: Vision and Approach
Identifying Local Actors: Partner Landscapes: "How To" Guide
Advancing Equitable Partnerships: Subaward: "How To" Guide
Local Capacity Strengthening Policy
LCS microtrainings
2023 Updated A&A Strategy
WorkwithUSAID.org Pre-Engagement Assessment
WorkwithUSAID.org Start Here checklist
Identifying Local Actors: "How-To" Guide for Conducting a Partner Landscape
Local Works tip sheet
Webinar resources (slide 35)
NPI resource on more equitable subaward relationships
Localization Playbook