



Effective, Sustainable Locally Led Development

RTI International is committed to advancing locally led development (LLD) in every aspect of our work. This means prioritizing and privileging the ideas, perspectives, and leadership of local individuals and institutions in project design and implementation and being humble and inclusive about how we approach development.

As both a global research institute and a leading international development organization, we aspire to be a partner of choice to deliver shared solutions for a more prosperous, equitable, and resilient world. We accomplish this vision by actively and inclusively integrating local partners into proposal and project teams to discuss new opportunities and mutual long-term goals.

We pledge to learn from our local partners so that we can adapt our practices to best fit local priorities, including those who are marginalized within the communities where we work. Our goal is to support local actors to be the drivers of their own development. This is the best approach to realizing effective, sustainable locally led development solutions.

RTI's Four Pillars of LLD



We approach LLD in four interconnected ways as shown in the graphic above and described in more detail below.



Shift Power to Local Actors



From proposal design to project implementation, we continuously prioritize local institutions and local voices and co-create with them collaboratively to ensure that solutions are appropriately adapted to the local context and meet partner needs. We also prioritize substantial funding to local partners and ensure that local staff have a large representation in project staffing. We treat local actors as equal partners and promote mutual accountability for results.

Connect Local Actors to Enhance Networks and Systems



Alongside local partners, we examine drivers and barriers to power and resources—especially for marginalized groups—and strengthen platforms for collaboration so that they can better learn from and leverage their respective expertise, relationships, and resources. In doing so, we strive to do no harm and ensure that we do not exacerbate any existing inequitable power dynamics.

Strengthen Capacity of Local Actors in Areas that are a Priority for Them



Recognizing that capacity strengthening is diverse and extends beyond just working with donors, we work with partners to understand their priorities, goals, and what gaps inhibit success. We provide customized support tailored to the unique needs of each institution, utilizing practical techniques (mentoring, coaching, peer learning) that foster deeper learning and soft skills for change management. We help partners measure and assess their own progress against their stated goals and decide what action may need to be adapted as a result.

Learn from our Local Partners and Adapt in Real Time



We humbly learn from local partners and actively seek their perspectives and feedback to improve our approaches. We regularly survey partners about how they feel that we are engaging them in proposal designs and projects. We use this feedback to assess our work and make improvements. We also routinely seek their feedback on project implementation and involve them in management decisions, making pivots to implementation as needed.



Our Commitment to our Local Partners

We believe local partners and stakeholders are the best placed to provide the solutions that affect their own development. To this end, we commit to:

Hold frequent listening and learning sessions on locally led development. In 2023, our “Local Insights Driving Local Impact” learning event in Nairobi included approximately 70 individuals, 86% of whom were from local organizations throughout East Africa. RTI published a learnings report from the event and held internal sessions with our staff to develop an action plan to advance locally led development. View the learnings report at www.rti.org/brochures/locally-led-development-learning-insights.

Co-develop all proposals and projects alongside our local partners. Co-development can take many forms, but at a minimum, we commit to joint solutioning and work planning sessions, shared assessments, and properly funded and well managed collaborating, learning, and adaptive (CLA) mechanisms.

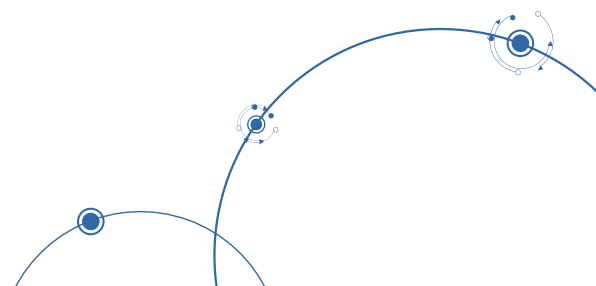
Gather data and feedback from local partners. We conduct surveys of local partners for every proposal and project to understand how we are involving local voices and leadership. We ask our partners about their experience in working with RTI, how they feel that we seek and value their inputs, and the extent to which they are defining priorities and leading implementation of activities. This feedback helps us to improve our approach to LLD.

Dedicate internal research and development funding to projects carried out with local partners and increasing the percentage of our more than 100 annual peer-reviewed publications on international development with a local collaborating author.

Locally Led Development in Practice

Haiti

The **USAID Haiti Local Enterprise and Value Enhancement** project worked with private enterprises to stimulate job creation in the textiles, construction, and agribusiness sectors. Its commitment to continuous involvement and mentoring of local partners led to transformational impact. During the project’s inception period, RTI and local partners assessed the local landscape and identified key players and incentives for potential change, including conducting 190 interviews with private sector firms, government stakeholders, and local training institutes. This process resulted in partnerships with 90 local companies to implement 200 activities using grants to build change coalitions. As one example of impact, one of our local partners, Papyrus, transformed from a small logistics-focused company into a leading management consulting firm. Over the life of the project, Papyrus increased both its workforce and revenue by 1000%. Since then, Papyrus became the first Haitian company to implement a USAID cooperative agreement as a prime implementer and continues to lead projects in Haiti and the region, improving the communities in which they work. Learn more at www.rti.org/impact/expanding-opportunities-high-potential-industries-haiti and www.papyrushaiti.com.





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Senegal

Over a seven-year period, the **USAID Governance for Local Development** project placed local organizations and voices at the center of its approach to strengthening the ability of Senegal's local governments to respond to citizen requests, improve the collection and management of local resources, and foster community participation in the delivery of public services. Capacity strengthening activities empowered local partners to design strategies and activities to address locally identified needs while leveraging the project's network of partners to promote collaboration and peer support. As an example, the project worked with local authorities to conduct participatory budgeting processes with community members. Over the life of the project, the number of local governments using this participatory budgeting process increased from eight to 50 local governments, resulting in increased revenue collection for services and increased investments in priority sectors identified by local communities. Notably, over 120 project interventions 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. Learn more at www.rti.org/impact/integrated-governance-approach-yields-improved-services-senegal.

Tanzania

In leading the **USAID Promoting Tanzania's Environment, Conservation and Tourism** project, RTI took a proactive approach to not only identifying and involving, but also strengthening new partners to achieve the goals of conserving biodiversity and increasing private sector-led conservation in Tanzania. Through dedicated training and mentorship, the Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP), a local nonprofit elephant conservation organization and first-time grantee, upgraded its financial, operational and HR systems, as well as built new partnerships to expand its funding and work, including conservation education in schools. As part of its work under PROTECT and beyond, STEP collaborated with the Government of Tanzania to develop the country's first national human-wildlife conflict strategy. Learn more at www.rti.org/insights/promoting-effective-localization-in-tanzania and <https://stzelephants.or.tz>.

Partner With Us

Email: localization@rti.org

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www.rti.org/locally-led-development

RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Clients rely on us to answer questions that demand an objective and multidisciplinary approach—one that integrates expertise across the social and laboratory sciences, engineering, and international development. We believe in the promise of science, and we are inspired every day to deliver on that promise for the good of people, communities, and businesses around the world. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

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