



# Select Success Stories on Utilizing Localization in International Development

*From the Members of the Small Business Association for  
International Companies (SBAIC)*

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## LOCALIZATION OF HORTICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT IN SENEGAL

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### FOSTERING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Connexus is implementing USAID's Feed the Future *Nafoore Warsaaji*, a three-year, \$6.5 million activity, which employs local market-based approaches to link Senegalese vegetable and fruit farmers with market information and proven technologies. Connexus is working with Feed the Future Senegal *Kawolor* activity to link women farmers to input suppliers, last mile entrepreneurs, off-takers, transporters, and buyers, fostering partnerships and promoting access to finance up and down the horticultural value chain.

By the end of three years, *Nafoore* will help 30,000 farmers access new technologies, increase gross margins, horticultural sales, and private sector investment in Senegal's horticulture value chains. Connexus is facilitating local solutions to the organization, logistics, and governance of horticulture value chains through technical assistance, access to finance, new technologies, and deals between end-market buyers and growers. Through the COVID lockdown, *Nafoore Warsaaji* has continued to foster local solutions to strengthening horticultural production to market systems through:

- Working with the *La Banque Agricole* (LBA), the Senegalese National agricultural bank, to introduce professional collateral management at major horticultural trading centers, allowing producer organizations and aggregators to use their stocks of onions and potatoes as collateral to secure credit lines. As a result, LBA has extended more than \$1.1 million in credit to seven major horticultural buyers. In addition, these loans indirectly benefited more than 600 smallholder farmers and helped avoid trade disruptions during the COVID lockdown.
- Facilitating a \$300,000 co-investment with input supplier Holland Greentech (HGT) to create 20 new demonstration farms to engage 30,000 *Kawolor* smallholders. These farms are training smallholders to use advanced technologies to meet the quality standards of buyers in Dakar, while also serving as a sales and demonstration platform to showcase and sell HGT products and services.
- Facilitating contracts for 120 MT of horticultural produce to be grown by *Kawolor* producer groups for Dakar-based buyers for the 2020/2021 winter season.
- Helping the *Caisse Nationale Assurance Agricole du Sénégal* (CNAAS) insurance company to pilot new horticulture-focused insurance products, including heat-indexed crop insurance, to reduce the risk for small farmers in commercial horticultural production.
- Working with private firm Beyseddo to increase efficiencies in the onion and potato value chains by improving packaging and marketing through regional collection hubs. This private sector engagement is catalyzing more than \$620,000 of co-investment from Beyseddo in addition to a loan of \$1.2M from *La Banque Agricole*.
- Working with *La Banque Agricole* to create an invoice financing product to improve cash flows among small horticultural businesses by allowing them to access credit based on presentation of verified invoices awaiting payment.

### A FOCUS ON BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

Calm and attentive, Fatou Kiné Diabang has a reserved attitude and keen business sense. After obtaining a master's degree in Human Resource Management, she became a producer in the horticultural sector and founded *Sénégal Progresse* in 2016.



Fatou Kiné Diabang, an accomplished farmer and agri-preneur leads *Senegal Progresse*, a local horticultural company.

*Sénégal Progresse* is a local horticultural company that began with cultivating peppers and selling them directly in commercial markets. Fatou Kiné noted the post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables produced by smallholder farmers. To reduce losses, she organized farmers to sell their harvests directly to large-scale retailers, such as Auchan and Carrefour, as well as local hotels and restaurants.

Feed the Future Senegal *Naf Moore Warsaaji* brought together small producers and producer groups in the Niayes region of Senegal and facilitated marketing contracts with *Sénégal Progresse*. Fatou Kiné believes that the collaboration between *Sénégal Progresse* and *Naf Moore Warsaaji* was very "fruitful and of great importance." This partnership not only created new business opportunities for her company with farmers and distributors, but also made it possible to pool resources. Fatou reported a positive impact on the quality and quantity of horticultural production, thus enabling *Sénégal Progresse* to diversify its agricultural product offering by adding potatoes and onions to its product portfolio. Through its collaboration with *Naf Moore Warsaaji*, Senegal Progresse has increased product distribution from 12 tons to 20 tons per month.

"The collaboration has also brought about big changes to the company structure thanks to the training courses," says Fatou Kiné. During its early years, *Sénégal Progresse* had only two employees; today it has 12 permanent employees. Thanks to *Naf Moore Warsaaji*, the team is receiving training on Sage software, which improved their capacity to manage the company's accounting and daily data flows.

Next, Feed the Future Senegal *Naf Moore Warsaaji* plans to support *Sénégal Progresse* in the digitization of its services and investment through development of an e-commerce to coordinate the flow of rural production to urban consumption markets.

## USAID EDGE Project: A Case Study of Locally-Led Development

- **Contracting Title:** Economic Development, Governance, and Enterprise Growth (EDGE) Project
- **Period of Performance:** August 14, 2019 – July 28, 2022 (with two one-year option periods)
- **Contracting Officer Representative:** Steven Little
- **Where Work is Performed:** Europe & Eurasia
- **Summary of the Work:** See below

The USAID Economic Development, Governance, and Enterprise Growth (EDGE) Project works in all twelve Europe and Eurasia (E&E) countries supporting inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic growth. The EDGE Project is a model of locally-led development and of utilization of local personnel and local organizations.

### Overview

The EDGE project has three intermediate results to advance sustainable economic development. The first intermediate result (IR 1) of the EDGE project is to improve the business environment and reduce barriers to trade. The second intermediate result (IR 2) promotes financial sector stability and increased access to finance. EDGE's third intermediate result (IR 3) aims to improve competitiveness through value chains and trade promotion. In addition, a cross-cutting intermediate results is to counter malign influences, corruption, and violent extremism. Economic development activities that have participation in at least two countries are implemented through EDGE's "Core Component." A flexible "Buy-In Component" is utilized by Individual Missions, other USAID Operating Units, and other donors. In the past year, EDGE has supported six buy-in projects that support local initiatives that advance EDGE goals.

### Locally-Led Development

USAID Missions and EDGE Project staff work to ensure that all Project activities reflect the principles of locally-led development. The team engages with local counterparts to co-design activities to ensure local buy-in for activities and to make sure that activities are addressing assistance needs identified by local counterparts. The team also implements all activities in close coordination and collaboration with local counterparts. See sidebar for an illustration.

### AN ILLUSTRATION OF LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT

EDGE activities to rebuild tourism in the EDGE countries involved local leadership to improve business practices, understand global trends in tourism, and establish connections with Western European and regional buyers. EDGE partnered with the Association of Hospitality Industry of Ukraine, National Association for In-Country Tourism in Moldova, and the Association of Tourism Organizations "Partnership," the Global Healthcare Travel Council, and the USAID Moldova Competitive Project to organize an online forum to encourage coordination and best practices in the tourism industry. There was a total of 5,000 participants in the forum, and the leadership of the associations agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for conducting projects and forums going forward.

### Local Capacity Building

All EDGE activities aim to build capacity of local organizations and local systems so that they can support growth, create jobs through productive enterprise, and improve governance in the region. 5,406 beneficiaries participated in EDGE activities over the last year. The following list gives examples of capacity built through EDGE activities:

- EDGE supported compliance of EDGE countries with WTO TFA by conducting an assessment report reviewing the 12 countries' implementation rate of WTO TFA provisions. The report was then distributed to government institutions, private sector associations, donors, and international and regional organizations. The needs identified by the assessment report were used to design two sets of trainings to increase the capacity of customs administrations in EDGE countries to utilize Post- Clearance System Based Audits (PCASBA). A total of 86 post-clearance department managers and auditors from beneficiary countries attended, and many took steps to implement recommendations
- EDGE supported the establishment of a Joint Border Crossing Point between North Macedonia and Albania and provided a grant to the Customs Administration of North Macedonia to purchase equipment and tools for increasing the efficiency of border controls. This is one achievement in its support for implementation of trade integration and facilitation activities in the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). EDGE organized a meeting with 70 representatives of local economic institutions to discuss an agenda to facilitate and grow trade.
- EDGE partnered with local associations to address needs identified in the analysis of the Wood/Furniture Value Chain. This included a series of webinars on digitization and ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software systems to improve efficiency and competitiveness. The webinars were held in cooperation with the International Forestry and Wood Association Bosnia and Herzegovina (INTERFOB) and the Institution for Professional Education of Adults- WMTA, both from Banja Luka. There were 73 attendees and several regional businesses represented at the events.
- EDGE collaborated with the USAID Competitive Economy project to support fruit and vegetables processors from WB6 countries to participate in the Belgrade Food Show Fair of 2020. This activity helped strengthen networking, understanding of new trends, and back to business after COVID-19, with the aim to increase sales and profit for local producers.
- EDGE's grants under contract mechanism also provides local opportunities to advance EDGE'S objectives, such as the project "Increasing Competitiveness through Strengthening Fruit and Vegetable Value Chains" in Macedonia and Kosovo. A grant was awarded to Integrated Quality Systems (IQS), which partnered with the Association of Fruits and Vegetable Processors of Kosovo to survey opportunities for improved market linkages and technology transfer and offer trainings in Albanian and English on how to optimize production quality and safety. The project also carried out a GAP assessment of infrastructure for 41 companies, offered training on procedure and standards for 40 companies, and resulted in 13 companies completing certification audits.
- A grant was issued to AHK Azerbaijan with partners in Georgia, Belarus, and Ukraine to conduct the project "Joining forces to make SMEs stronger: Diversification and Innovation through

partnership” which aimed to boost competitiveness of SMEs in those countries and promote new business connections with domestic suppliers with German international investors, with specific interest in promoting female entrepreneurship. This included an SME Development Forum and eight tourism companies’ participation in ITB Berlin, which reached 65,700 users and offered networking to potential partners and clients.

Below is a detailed list of EDGE counterparts and highlights capacity built through EDGE activities.

### **Utilization of Local Organizations and Personnel**

Wherever local talent exists, EDGE utilizes local personnel and local organization to provide assistance. All twelve full-time EDGE employees are local, resident in the countries where EDGE has offices – North Macedonia, Armenia, Moldova, and Albania. Of 74 consultants, 58 are local and 16 are international. EDGE uses 8 local subcontractors and has given Grants Under Contract (GUCs) to 15 grantee organizations.

#### **EDGE Personnel**

- 12 local EDGE Employees
- 58 Current Country National (CCN) consultants
- 10 Third Country National (TCN) consultants
- 6 US Expatriates (USX) consultants

#### **Local Subcontractors**

- ACT LLC, a Georgian firm that surveyed the impact of COVID-19 on small and mid-size enterprises in the region.
- GLCC Solutions LLC, a Georgian firm that assessed compliance with World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions.
- Strategic Development Consulting (SCD), a North Macedonian firm that assisted Grantees with delivering training courses and technical assistance.
- TÜV Nord Cert, a North Macedonian firm that delivered auditor training.
- National Association for Incoming Tourism in Macedonia (NATIAM) held a back to business networking event.
- Union of Civil Society Organizations Rural Development Network of North Macedonia (RND), planned, coordinated, and oversaw a study visit trip of rural development representatives.
- Smart Solutions, an IT provider in North Macedonia.
- Creative Business Solutions (CBS): An Albanian consulting firm, supports IDG by providing operational and technical oversight for the SPS and PRINC Buy-Ins.

## Local Grantees

### *EDGE Core*

**Active Albania:** Aims to increase offerings of tour operators for inbound tourism to Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia by introducing a new tourism product called “Pack Rafting” that is innovative and eco-friendly. The product was a development under the expertise of the World Rafting Federation.

**Caucasus Environmental Ngo Network (CENN):** Supports the growth of smalls and mid-size enterprises (SME) from Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan involved in the sustainable tourism value chain by developing and promoting the Caucasus Region as a Unique Tourist Destination, working on improving marketing and branding, using modern information and communication technology (ICT) tools, and improving business sophistication.

**Georgian Farmers’ Association (GFA):** Promotes agritourism and improved regional partnerships among South Caucasus countries by training and increasing product sales of agritourism enterprises in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

**German/Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce:** Works on fostering the competitiveness of SMEs from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus from the selected three value chains to promote new business linkages of domestic suppliers with German international investors by establishing cross-regional cooperation, accelerating digital transformation, and promoting female entrepreneurship.

**ICT Hub Serbia:** Improves the digital skills of tourism businesses in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro by enabling them to use open-source ICT tools and digital platforms such as Booking.com, Trip Advisor, Google for businesses, Mailchimp, Instagram, and other tools to increase their competitiveness and sales.

**Integrated Quality Systems (IQS):** Supports SMEs producing fresh and processed fruit and vegetables from North Macedonia and Kosovo to implement and obtain certifications in international standards such as BRC, IFS, HACCP, ISO 22000, FSSC 22000, ISO 9001 that will enhance their exports to international markets.

**Linkacross – Skopje:** Assists SMEs from North Macedonia and Albania in all three value chains to prepare and implement Business Expansion Plans that will result in expanded market linkages, new buyers, and growth.

**Macedonian Chamber of Information and Communication Technologies (MASIT):** Supports SMEs from targeted value chains (fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, apparel and textiles, wood processing, and tourism) from North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia by developing Digital Transformation Strategies and increasing their e-sales.

**The Customs Administration Of The Republic Of North Macedonia:** Works on strengthening North Macedonia and Albania Customs and Border agencies’ capacity to establish and perform joint controls at the Kjafasan- Qafe Thane border crossing, in line with European Union (EU) and international standards and best practices of Border Control Points at external EU land borders.



Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE (SWG): Brings together ecotourism, rural tourism, and adventure tourism stakeholders from rural cross-border regions of the Western Balkans countries to jointly develop and sell attractive cross-border and value-added tourism packages. This is being done by: increasing the level of integration, capacity, and marketing of ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism value chains in rural cross-border regions of the Western Balkans; strengthening the cooperation among their participants; and obtaining endorsement (by national authorities responsible for rural development) of relevant policy recommendations related to inbound tourism in rural areas in the Western Balkans.

#### *Grants for Advocacy on Privatization (GAP)*

Transparency International Ukraine: The project aims at building civil society sector's capacity in ensuring fair and transparent privatization of state and communal property developing monitoring tools, ensuring proper communication of key messages on privatization and lease, and increasing the State Property Fund of Ukraine's capacity.

Internews Ukraine: Supporting the implementation of the Privatization Communication Strategy whereby the public will have access to real-time information and a clear understanding of the privatization process and its benefits for the Ukrainian society.

#### *Moldova Competitiveness Transition Activity (MCTA)*

National Inbound Tourism Association of Moldova (ANTRIM): Supporting post pandemic recovery of Moldova's tourism sector through implementing activities, events, and tourism services and experiences that aim to strengthen Moldova's role as an international tourist destination.

The Light Industry Employers' Association (APIUS): Supporting post pandemic recovery of Moldova's light industry sector as it aims to increase the competitiveness of its members on the local and international market. APIUS represents the community of Moldovan fashion producers of knitwear, clothing, footwear, accessories, etc.

ZIPHOUSE Design Hub (ZipHouse): Supporting post pandemic recovery of Moldova's light industry sector through providing activities like fashion shows, fashion events, popup shops, etc. to highlight and promote the talent of young fashion designers and encourage community engagement and industry collaboration within the light industry sector.



## Small Business Success Story Washington Business Dynamics LLC

Contract was awarded to Washington Business Dynamics LLC (a VA-certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business) under the New Partnerships Initiative. The project success below is an example of our application of Local Solutions in Paraguay.

Contract Title: Private Sector Engagement Support Mechanism (29 August 2019-28 August 2024, with option years)

COR: Seema Johnson, [sejohnson@usaid.gov](mailto:sejohnson@usaid.gov), USAID/DDI/PSE Hub

Success Story Work Performed: USAID/Paraguay

In 2020, the USAID Mission in Paraguay (USAID-Paraguay) asked the Private Sector Engagement Support (PSE Support) team at Washington Business Dynamics (WBD) to engage the country's private sector stakeholders to fight corruption and promote a culture of lawfulness. Specifically, the Mission wanted PSE Support to identify Paraguayan businesses that would help the Mission:

- **Strengthen the rule of law.**
- **Increase formal business opportunities.**
- **Strengthen civil society oversight and engagement.**

The Latin America experts on the PSE Support team used their network to identify local Paraguayan consultants with expertise in the financial industry and the development sector. The two local partners helped the team conduct a Private Sector Landscape Assessment (PSLA) to identify private sector partners with the potential to advance USAID-Paraguay's goals.

With its local Paraguayan consultants, PSE Support carried out a comprehensive stakeholder analysis that identified shortcomings in Paraguay's democracy and governance sector. The analysis mapped critical private sector relationships and prospective partnership opportunities in a variety of sectors that could fortify the Mission's democracy and governance objectives. **WBD interviewed 50 private sector enterprises and other stakeholders across the public-private-civil spectrum to identify concerns with democracy and governance structures in the country, gauge private sector willingness to collaborate with other stakeholders, and determine opportunities for formal partnerships.**

Throughout their work, PSE Support engaged Mission staff and provided weekly updates, mini-capacity building sessions, progress reports, and opportunities to attend all interviews.

Based on findings from the PSLA, PSE Support provided USAID/Paraguay with multiple strategies for consideration, including the recommendation of 19 individual private sector

stakeholders as potential partners to achieve the Mission's democracy and governance outcomes. The PSLA provided a rationale for selecting each potential partner including:

- An analysis of how each enterprise's core business aligns with the Mission's development outcomes.
- Summary of the enterprise's constraints to growth
- Potential partnership strategies outlining how USAID could address the constraint and the potential for impact.

The PSE Support team at WBD is building USAID's capacity to partner with the private enterprise to achieve sustainable development outcomes at greater scale. Our emphasis on strategic collaboration with local partners helps USAID Missions develop the relationships they need to carry out the Agency's Private Sector Engagement Policy.

**Contract Title: USAID/Laos Business Enabling Environment Activity**

**Contractor Name: IBI**

**Period of Performance: October 2019 – October 2024**

**Contracting Officer's Representative: Somsangouane Keovilay**

**Place of Performance: Lao PDR**

**Success Story:**

### **Laotian SMEs Improve their Digital Skills via a New Online Training Portal**

Digitalization has become a determining factor of whether a company survives while COVID-19 restrictions are in effect. SMEs in Lao PDR are at risk of being left behind in the digital marketplace due to low levels of digital literacy. Strengthening SMEs' digital skills and facilitating their active participation in the digital economy will improve Laos' competitiveness and ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth.



*Anita Takounsy, Component I Lead, USAID/Laos Business Environment Activity, presenting during the SMART UP launch event in September 2021*

With this goal in mind, in September 2021, the USAID Laos Business Environment Activity, implemented by IBI (a woman-owned small business), together with the Department of SME Promotion and Lao ICT Commerce Association, launched an online educational platform called **SMART UP**

([www.smartup.lica.la](http://www.smartup.lica.la)) that provides SMEs with free training and other resources for enhancing digital skills. In designing and producing the content for the platform, IBI engaged two local partners who are both new to working with USAID: the National University of Laos, whose professors developed the content; and SVENG IT Solution, a local IT firm.

The platform offers eight modules developed and delivered by prominent professors from the National University of Laos. Module topics include Multimedia for SMEs; Introduction to Digitization; Digital Marketing and Sales for SMEs; Accounting Tools for SMEs; Data Analysis for SMEs; Introduction to Full Stack Web.

A launch event that was organized both in-person and via Facebook Live attracted over **1500 views in less than 24 hours**. Noy, 29, a small business owner who was never introduced to principles of accounting and the science behind digital marketing, said that the platform has deepened her knowledge of digitalization and helped her shape new business strategies to survive and thrive amid the COVID-19 pandemic. She believes that this platform will offer many entrepreneurs and small business owners, who did not have a university education in business, an opportunity to learn from prominent professors at the tip of their fingers anytime and anywhere.

Within the first month, **373 users have registered for courses through the SMART UP platform**, including:

- 109 users enrolled in Basic Accounting for SMEs
- 63 in Digital Marketing for SMEs
- 43 in Introduction to data analysis for SMEs
- 35 in Full Stack Development
- 34 in Multimedia for SMEs
- 34 in Introduction to Digitization

Although the pandemic has posed many challenges, it also provides an opportunity to introduce digital advancements that can help the Lao PDR improve readiness to participate in the global marketplace and tackle other complex development issues.

***Written by:***

*Anita Takounsy, USAID Laos Business Environment Activity, implemented by IBI.*

- Contract title and period of performance: USAID Cambodia Small Business Applied Research (SBAR) Award: **Local Organizations – Movement Towards Self-Reliance (LO-MTSR)**, October, 2019 through (projected) September, 2022.
- Name of Contracting Official or Contracting Officer Representative: Technical POCs: Sophea Tan and Javiar Castano
- Where the work is performed (Region or Mission): Cambodia

**Background:** *The Cloudburst Group is evaluating an innovative organizational resiliency strengthening model, called ResiliencyCambodia, through a randomized control trial (RCT) impact evaluation to test the mechanism behind ResiliencyCambodia with civil society organizations.*

### Success Story: Wellbeing Workshops

As part of the ResiliencyCambodia program, organizations had the option to include staff wellbeing in their Resiliency Roadmaps. While originally intended to be an in-person training for ten organizations, the evolution of COVID-19 dictated that all further trainings and workshops be held virtually. Although the training was virtual, the attendance of participants dramatically increased from ten organizations to 24 organizations, with over 80 participants attending the first workshop.

These Wellbeing workshops focused on:

1. creating an Introduction to Wellbeing;
2. Wellbeing in the Cambodian Context;
3. Wellbeing in Leadership; and
4. Creating a Culture of Wellbeing in the Workplace.

As a result of the workshop, 75% of participants expressed they would be sharing information with other colleagues that they had learned, with 77% taking the extra step of committing to implement something new as a result of the webinar.

### Wellness in Action

One organization, Kampuchea Women’s Welfare Action (KWWA), a High Priority organization located in Kratie, communicated that the wellbeing training directly addressed many emotional needs that were currently missing in their workplace culture. One tool of particular importance was the Wellbeing Culture Wheel that was shared with organizations. This wheel assesses employees’ connection and positive relationships with their colleagues, learning and development in the workplace, listening and adapting to feedback from colleagues, fairness and accountability, solid leadership, lived and shared values at work, well-trained managers and people skills, team cohesion, how leadership recognizes staff, implementing and modeling work/life balance, unified purpose, and communication and openness between colleagues.





KWWA currently has implemented the practices behind the Wellbeing Culture Wheel by having it hung in public places throughout the office, and staff members who attended the training also led a discussion at a staff meeting regarding the topics that were covered as part of this wheel. Subsequently, staff were able to discuss areas in which they felt they were strong and areas in which they needed further growth.

The readiness and immediate implementation of new wellbeing practices at KWWA is but a microcosm of the impact that wellbeing awareness and training can have on staff who are operating in restrictive spaces. KWWA, and other organizations, communicate their excitement to work alongside their coaches to further implement and improve wellbeing practices within their respective organizations.

### **Leveraging New Partnerships to Increase Revenue**

Organizations are also implementing revenue diversification strategies into their organizational workplans as part of their Resiliency Roadmaps. Last quarter, all organizations received a how-to guide on Creating Meaningful Partnerships and Networks with both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, including the public and private sector, donors, and their respective communities. This guide included (1) how to create shared value with the private sector; (2) how to establish and/or leverage networks for collective impact; and (3) leaning on networks to build capacity.

Since receiving the guide and working with their coaches, organizations have reported multiple formal and informal partnerships that have been created as a result of implementing new strategies presented in this guide. Organizations continue to leverage these strategies by also enacting several enterprise strategies that were presented in early 2021 as a part of their Resiliency Roadmaps. Over twenty organizations have successfully begun implementing alternative revenue strategies and are collaborating with one another to build crowd fundraising platforms. For example, the organization Bantay Srei in Battambang has opted to sell goods in order to generate revenue. In the month following the revenue diversification training, they were able to support 12 families working in agriculture. They have also utilized the strategies presented in the Toolkit and have created opportunities to discuss with Oxfam Cambodia on how to develop a new strategy for Cambodia focused on women and food security.



*Photo: Cloudburst Consulting Group*

## I4DI OSDBU Article Submission

**Contract title:** Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) for the Women + Water (W+W) Global Development Alliance

**Period of performance:** 2017 - 2022

**Name of Contracting Officer:** Ella Lazarte

**Place of performance (Region or Mission):** USAID/India

**Summary of the work:**

### **A Tech-Forward Approach to Optimizing Evidence-Based Decision-making: The Case of I4DI's Work with the Women + Water Global Development Alliance**

USAID has increasingly focused on the need for data-driven decision-making as a result of the 2016 Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking, and the 2017 report it produced, "The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking" as well the agency's 2018 update of its operational guidance, ADS 201, to demonstrate these changes and strengthen the linkages between the evidence USAID produces about its strategies, projects and activities, and decision points in the USAID Program Cycle.



One example of how the Institute for Development Impact, a woman-owned small business, is partnering with USAID to implement this can be found in the implementation of a tech-forward learning agenda process with the Women + Water Global Development Alliance (W+W Alliance), a five-year (2017-2022) collaboration between USAID, the Government of India, Gap, Inc., the Institute

for Development Impact (I4DI), CARE, Water.org, the Institute for Sustainable Communities and the International Center for Research on Women. Together, these organizations are leveraging their complementary strengths to improve and sustain the health and well-being of women and communities touched by the apparel industry.

From 2017-2021, I4DI, as the consortium's monitoring, evaluation and learning partner, led the development of the project's learning agenda to outline the critical decision-making needs and respective data needs to feed into those decisions from the baseline study and developed knowledge products and strategic facilitation approaches to drive decision-making based on the data.

A critical element in this process was the iterative, participatory nature of program strategy reflection sessions, a foundational part of understanding the key decisions that needed to be made, in bilateral and all-partner conversations. Through discussing the programmatic approach, articulating assumptions, and building synergies across the Women + Water Alliance partners, this process built consensus and strengthened ownership and relationships between partners for their individual components and the common goals to which they were contributing. It also created foundations for the development of the monitoring, evaluation and learning framework and the common learning agenda. I4DI then led the baseline study process to validate the theory of change – this process included not only undertaking a 1,000 household survey in both



Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh states, but also developing a user-friendly interactive report (above), highlighting key findings in a geo-spatial manner. Through reflecting on the data through I4DI's facilitated decision-making workshop, prime contractor Gap, along with consortium partners, deduced significant gaps between the baseline data and the theory of change, and so made major strategic shifts in the program design, including adding a new partner. This helped solidify the onground conditions for reaching all the intended development results. This type of evidence-based decision-making was collaborative across all key project stakeholders, timely, and directly useful for leadership decision-making. In addition, apart from the interactive dashboard (which you can click on above to probe the data), I4DI aided in further data dissemination through these [blog posts](#), [infographics](#) and a [microsite](#) on [GlobalWaters.org](http://GlobalWaters.org).

### **About Institute for Development Impact (I4DI)**

I4DI is a woman-owned, global consulting firm leveraging technology to accelerate data-driven approaches to policymaking and programming for maximum social impact. With technical experts based in Washington, D.C. and a software engineering team in Novi Sad, Serbia, I4DI truly sits at the nexus between tech innovation and rigorous research and analysis.



## Panagora Group: Catalyzing Locally Led Development

Locally-led development matters, now more than ever. For much of the past two decades, U.S. small businesses have been at the forefront of locally-led development. They are the right size to work with local partners because they understand the size, scope, and capacity issues that local partners often face.

Since 2011, Panagora Group has been a hands-on partner to USAID for locally-led development. We employ inclusive development approaches to build and strengthen the capacity of local partners, and drive innovation in social enterprises, franchising models, and local private sector development.

Through our work in over 50 countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, we have been steadfast in our engagement with local partners—whether ministries, networks, organizations, or private sector actors—to support their efforts to identify opportunities, develop strategies, implement plans, and mobilize resources.

We have seen first-hand how engaging these local stakeholders has paved the way for more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development outcomes.

Because Panagora is a small business, it is also nimble, quick to mobilize, and knows the impediments that small business face in enterprise-led development. These include challenges expanding into new markets, managing growth, and accessing capital. We know how to strengthen local partners to be “implementation-ready” as well as “USAID contract-ready.”

We applaud USAID’s commitment to locally led development. On the following pages, please see Panagora project profiles that highlight our impact in locally led development.

## USAID/South Africa's Health Office

### **Project: Technical Support Services (TSS) Activity**

### **Local Implementers: Anova Health Institute, BroadReach, MatCH, Right to Care, and WRHI**

TSS assists USAID/South Africa's Health Office in determining technical priorities and developing creative, innovative solutions for strategically allocating resources, strengthening connections with partners, and replicating best practices and efficient models in seven countries. USAID's Siyenza campaign supports South Africa's



National Department of Health in retaining people living with HIV who are already receiving care and extending antiretroviral therapy (ART) to two million more.

**Localization:** Working closely with USAID, Panagora has supported five local IPs that are providing HIV and TB services in 15 districts (in 65 clusters) throughout South Africa. USAID and Panagora advisors worked with local partners to identify challenges and limitations to HIV and TB service delivery, engaged with teams to develop actions to address them, enhanced data tracking and knowledge management systems, and implemented continuous improvement management techniques.

To strengthen local partner capacity, TSS supported Panagora in working with Anova to scale its structures and systems for rapid expansion in 2019, as well as scale down its workforce in three provinces (Gauteng, Limpopo, and Western Cape) between 2020 and 2021 based on program changes. This included assistance with streamlining Anova's organizational structure and standardizing roles and responsibilities; reinforcing efficient and consistent management and operations; and facilitating optimal performance and sustained service delivery.

**Impact:** TSS has transitioned work directly to four Anova clusters and strengthened Anova's capacity to be a direct USAID partner. Thanks to TSS' organizational development support, Anova is also better positioned to expand its work with other bi-lateral, multi-lateral, and private foundation supporters.

## USAID/Bangladesh

### Project: Surjer Hashi Network/Smiling Sun Franchise Program

#### Local Implementers: 26 Bangladeshi NGOs

Under USAID/Bangladesh's Smiling Sun Franchise Program (SSFP) and as a subcontractor to Chemonics, Panagora worked closely with local partner, Capacity Building Services Group (CBSG), to provide organizational development, business planning, implementation, and mentoring support to 26 Bangladeshi health care NGOs.

**Localization:** Panagora and CBSG conducted rapid organizational self-assessments for the NGOs, including their networks of 325 health clinics, 8,800 mobile clinics, and 6,400 community-based workers. We employed a highly participatory approach to ensure the level of engagement and ownership that is necessary to achieve successful organizational change. Based on the results, our team implemented a network-wide strengthening plan that featured applied training and an innovative mentoring and coaching program. Through a very focused approach, we tripled the target number of local NGOs and organizations ready to receive direct awards.

**Impact:** From this work, the *Surjer Hashi*/Smiling Sun franchise emerged as the world's largest social franchise clinic. Today, with nearly 400 franchises in operation, *Surjer Hashi*/Smiling Sun provides a wide variety health care goods and services to 20 million people. It represents a unique public-private partnership, paving the way for worldwide use of social franchising to create quality, affordable, accessible, and sustainable health care for the poor through national organizations.



The relationship between Panagora, a woman-owned small business, and CBSG, a small Bangladeshi entity, helped ensure the dedicated focus and technical expertise that was needed for success, and introduced a new partner to the USAID contract network. CBSG has grown significantly, becoming a regular go-to USAID contractor for implementing organizations like Abt Associates, ACDI/VOCA, Chemonics, DAI, and Winrock, as well as bi-lateral and multi-lateral institutions.

## USAID/Colombia

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### **Project: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) activity**

**Local Implementers: Sistemas Especializados de Informacion (SEI), Ipsos Napoleón Franco & CIA (IPSOS), Centro Nacional de Consultoría (CNC), Jaime Arteaga y Asociados, and Fundación Crea**

For USAID/Colombia's MEL Platform, Panagora has subcontracted five local partners to conduct technical MEL assignments over the past two years. These include evaluations, assessments, market analyses, and private sector analyses. The local firms have developed fieldwork tools, trained surveyors, implemented data collection, and conducted analyses under Panagora's technical oversight.



They are also tapped into local networks across Colombia and can navigate the local environments to collect quality data for the MEL activity. One of our local subcontractors, SEI, has been a technical partner to Panagora for six evaluations since January 2020. We work collaboratively with them to ensure quality deliverables and manage challenges in the field. We also conduct follow-up meetings to discuss successful strategies and lessons learned.

In total, Columbia MEL has committed around \$1,695,000 to technical subcontracts so far, with values ranging between \$45,000 and \$400,000 for each. By working closely with multiple local subcontractors through MEL Platform, Panagora is strengthening their capacity to take on larger contracts in international development. Through our subcontracts with SEI, Panagora has invested in building their knowledge and capacity to develop evaluation data collection designs, instruments, materials, and analysis; flexibly conduct both in-person and remote data collection; and implement a USAID-funded subcontract.



## Other Mission-Related Work

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### **USAID/Afghanistan Health Sector Resiliency (HSR)**

As a subcontractor to Palladium Group, Panagora built the capacity and improved the sustainability of local private sector associations, including the Afghan Private Hospital Association and the Afghan Medicines Services Union. Using a highly participatory method to create the type of buy-in that is necessary for successful organizational change, we facilitated capacity assessments and supported the development and implementation of institutional strengthening plans; identified new initiatives to build value propositions to members; strengthened governance structures; and identified areas for increased revenue generation to improve long-term sustainability.



### **USAID/Kenya Afya Jijini Activity**

IMA World Health subcontracted with Panagora under its USAID/Kenya Afya Jijini work to organize a grant-making and subcontracting program for local partners. This supported health systems strengthening for a range of health services, including HIV/AIDS; FP; MCH; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and nutrition. Panagora created USAID-compliant manuals, trained IMA's local staff in grant-making and subcontracting to local entities, and provided them with ongoing technical support. Panagora also assessed four local partners and proposed appropriate approaches for IMA to contract with them.

### **USAID/Burundi Integrated Health Project**

As a subcontractor to FHI360, Panagora led cross-cutting private sector initiatives that were tailored to Burundi's private sector and health system. We assessed potential private sector initiatives and used a consultative team approach to develop a PPP and private sector strategy. We then designed, negotiated, and initiated two significant PPPs with a leading Burundian mobile phone company to support malaria prevention. We also developed other PPPs to address FP/RH, MCH, HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, with special outreach to youth.

### **Panagora's CLA and MEL Platforms**

Panagora is currently implementing three CLA and three MEL Platforms for USAID in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Notably, our platform in Southern Africa serves 6 countries. We have also successfully closed out two MEL platforms. In all our platforms, we seek to maximize local partner engagement to ultimately create a sustainable cadre of local MEL service providers that can respond to the range of MEL services that USAID and others require. We

typically create a MEL partners' fund in each country or region for this purpose. For example, under our USAID/Colombia MEL Platform, we have subcontracted with five local partners over the past two years, to carry out such assignments as evaluations, assessments, and private sector analyses; with subcontracts ranging from \$45,000 up to \$400,000.

Moreover, almost 90 percent of our 120 long-term overseas staff members are host country nationals. We also build MEL capacity among personnel within USAID and its implementing partners—also mostly host country nationals—using targeted on-the-job training and a CLA organizational development assessment tool that measures progress from year to year.



**CONTRACTOR NAME:** Info Gain Consulting LLC

**CONTRACT TITLE:** Department of State Enterprise Content Management Solution

**NAME OF CONTRACTING OFFICER:** Harald Olsen, COR, Program Officer, State Department

**WHERE WORK IS PERFORMED:** Kenya

## SUMMARY



*The official launch of the technology transformation project. From left to right: IPOA CEO, Maina Njoroge, Contract Awardee Info Gain Consulting Principal, George Mwangi, US Ambassador Robert F. Godec, and IPOA Board Chairman, Macharia Njeru*

US Department of State (DOS) awarded Info Gain Consulting (IGC) a 5-year contract to provide a complete technology transformation for Kenya's Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA). IPOA is a Kenya government agency that provides civilian oversight to the work of the police.

Using local Kenyan, and US experts, IGC developed 10 software modules to support the management of complaints, investigations, legal documents, communications, vehicle tracking, IT help desk, monitoring and evaluation, audit, reporting, analytics, and back-office processes. IGC also designed and built a data center, a contact center, and a network infrastructure to seamlessly connect the 10 IPOA offices located across Kenya. IGC also implemented a national contact center, that is used by Kenyans to report cases of police misconduct.

IGC has succeeded in Kenya, and other countries, because it has established systems and processes to quickly find staff and launch projects. For example, with the DOS project, IGC initiated and staffed a team of experts in Kenya within three weeks of contract signing. This success has built confidence in both the Kenyan government and with the Kenyan people about US support, which has helped spread the message of US values.