USAID's Approach to Measuring Local Leadership of USAID Programs

There is widespread consensus that development and humanitarian assistance must enable local actors to set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring their capacities, leadership, and resources to bear to make those solutions a reality. Experience has shown that local leadership is critical for greater equity, effectiveness, and sustainability. USAID is committed to elevating local knowledge, leadership, and decision making across our work and in the many types of relationships we have with local actors—whether they are direct recipients of USAID funding, subrecipients or subcontractors on a USAID award, or members of a community that participates in or is affected by USAID programs

USAID developed the Locally Led Programs indicator to hold ourselves to account for working in ways that elevate local leadership and to spark additional conversation about how we can do so. The Locally Led Programs indicator measures the percentage of active USAID-funded development and humanitarian programs that demonstrate the use of at least one good practice to advance local leadership in each of three categories of the project lifecycle: activity design, activity implementation, and activity monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

In total, the indicator tracks the use of ten good practices for elevating local leadership. Including a wide range of practices allows USAID to recognize and appreciate the many approaches that the Agency and its partners can use to advance locally led development. It also provides a menu of options, recognizing that no single practice will be relevant for all programs, all award or agreement types, or all operating contexts.

The indicator was developed based on wide consultations with stakeholders from more than 300 organizations from nearly 50 countries, including community-based organizations, current and former USAID local partners, US-based and international partners, USAID staff, and advocacy networks focused on advancing locally led development. This Learning Lab blog post shares more details about the consultation and indicator development process. The indicator was piloted in FY23, and revised based on results and feedback from the pilot.

Good Practices for Local Leadership

Category	Good Practices for Local Leadership
Activity Design	1. Co-creating or Co-designing Core Elements of Activity Design
	2. Enabling Effective Local Partnerships
	3. Designing Activities Based on Local/Indigenous Knowledge and Systems
Activity Implementation	4. Co-creating or Co-designing Elements of Activity Implementation
	5. Using Demand Driven Capacity Strengthening Approaches
	6. Making Local Subawards and Subcontracts to Local Actors
	7. Providing Direct Monetary Transfers to Individuals, Households, And Micro-enterprises
Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	8. Implementing Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
	9. Conducting Evaluations with Local Evaluation Experts
	10. Adapting Programming Based on Participant Feedback