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USAID LOCAL SOLUTIONS SUPPORT - The Study and Modeling of Management Capacity and System Strengthening Project (SMCS)

USAID Local Solutions Support (SMCS), a four-year activity funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Research Triangle International (RTI), provides a wide range of capacity development support to local organizations (LOs), and builds human capital in Laos through engaging with educational institutions, groups of students and lecturers, graduates, research institutes, and others. SMCS partners with national and regional universities in Laos to boost their organizational capacity and improve their effectiveness, efficiency, operation and sustainability.

In order to achieve the country’s development objectives, LOs can play a critical role. However, persistent gaps in skills, systems, and leadership limit LOs’ opportunities to leverage resources and attract funding. These deficiencies also hinder their progress and long-term ability to carry out their missions. Through SMCS, USAID helps to increase management and leadership capacity and improve LOs’ ability to create and implement effective solutions to address local challenges — thereby supporting Laos in advancing its national development goals.



Leadership
Development



Strategic
Planning



Results
Oriented
Management



Human
Resource
Development



Monitoring
& Evaluation



Learning
& Adaptive
Management



Knowledge
Management



Organizational
Viability
& Growth

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

USAID's SMCS encourages a practical and adaptive management capacity development approach. It uses a wide range of techniques that fits organizational needs, promotes innovation and sustainability, as well as enables greater learning and networking exchanges among local organizations and with other relevant stakeholders.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

SMCS works with the National University of Laos as well as regional universities (Souphanouvong, Savannakhet and Champasak) to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved human capital, systems, and the sustainability of local organizations;
- Increased local organizations' ability to generate and diversify revenue streams;
- Increased collaboration and connectivity among local organizations in Laos; and
- Upgraded quality and accessibility of capacity development supporting systems in Laos.

KEY RESULTS

- Completed a mapping of beneficiaries and understanding their capacity development challenges in Laos: This research provided a preliminary picture of local organization types and their capacity which subsequently guides implementation actions that suit the Lao context.
- Integrated gender and social inclusion (GESI): To promote LO's awareness of gender, diversity and inclusion aspects in local practices, the program analyzed GESI status among a cohort of local institutions and integrated into organizational capacity assessment tools and processes.
- Successfully introduced an applied Leadership development and training program: Promoted the "Leading from the Inside Out" concept, tested with an organization and customized this leadership program for the program' local partners and grantees.
- Promoted innovation and creativity of local organizations: Used a Grant Co-Creation approach to identify their problem statements and generate ideas for solutions. This process helped the LOs to better understand and own their planning, visioning process and resource mobilization.
- Enabled Learning and Exchange: Through student and job fairs at universities organized in 2022, the program connected students with employment prospects and allowed them to understand the labor market demands. This has fostered a promotion of student to student (S2S), student to business (S2B), university to business (U2B) networking concept but also opened access to real world experiences.