

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE

Valuing and Sharing Local Knowledge and Capacity: Practical approaches for enabling locally led development co-operation

This Perspectives paper provides key insights on valuing and sharing local knowledge and capacities in development co-operation. It explores the adaptations necessary for valuing, integrating and sharing local knowledge, expertise and capacities. It underscores the importance of policy commitments and practices that embrace and create space for diverse knowledge and support the co-production of knowledge. The paper examines the emerging practice of developing locally led knowledge sharing that is tailored to local contexts and supports system-wide capacities. Finally, it highlights how DAC members are supporting locally led approaches to capacity sharing, including peer-to-peer exchange, whilst founding capacity sharing on equitable and long-term partnerships.

This paper is part of a broader peer learning exercise on locally led development within the Development Assistance Committee [\[DCD/DAC\(2023\)5\]](#). The complete series of perspectives papers is available [here](#).

Related case studies of member practices can be found on the OECD platform [Development Co-operation TIPs -Tools, Insights, Practices](#).

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Perspectives Paper on Locally Led Development

Valuing and Sharing Local Knowledge and Capacity

Practical approaches for enabling locally led development co-operation

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1. Introduction

Recognising and valuing the deep-seated knowledge and expertise of local actors¹ in their diversity is foundational for locally led development co-operation. There is growing consensus that valuing local knowledge, experience and capacities is pivotal for local actor agency in framing, designing, delivering, learning and accountability (OECD, 2023^[1]), and contributes to a more effective (e.g. responsive, inclusive, timely), efficient and sustainable co-operation.² However, to date, the sharing of failures and successes, including new modalities and good practices that value local knowledge and capacities, has been limited.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) understands “capacity development” as “the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (OECD, 2006^[2]). This definition considers capacity development as a process on three interacting levels. Firstly, individual competencies, such as the knowledge, skills and ability to set and achieve objectives (i.e. “soft” competencies, such as building relationships, trust and legitimacy as well as “hard” competencies such as technical, logistical and managerial skills). Secondly, the organisational structures, functions and systems that enable the capacities of individuals to come together to fulfil the mandate of an organisation or achieve defined objectives. Thirdly, the enabling environment, i.e. the policy, legal, regulatory, economic and social support systems in which individuals and organisations operate (e.g. national policies, rule of law, accountability, transparency and information flows).

Recent re-evaluation has transformed the language and practice for knowledge and capacity sharing, with a stronger emphasis on centring power and equity in these processes. Changes in terminology reflect the shifts in thinking, with “capacity building”, replaced by “capacity development”, then “capacity strengthening”, and increasingly “capacity and knowledge sharing”; highlighting rising recognition of the expertise and agency of local actors (EPRS, 2017^[3]).³ The latest framing and shifts anchored in sharing or exchange place increasing value on local knowledge and expertise, underpinned by regional customs, languages, challenges and understanding of the local context. This framing underscores the importance of moving beyond the traditionally narrow focus of capacity strengthening (notably on financial risk) and adopting a more nuanced and detailed understanding, which reshapes power dynamics, centres on local priorities and promotes two-way capacity sharing.

This paper examines how DAC members are recognising, prioritising and investing in local knowledge and expertise in their development initiatives to achieve sustainable development outcomes. The paper also highlights the persisting challenges and obstacles encountered within the development co-operation systems and partnership frameworks, and identifies three areas for continued adaptation to enable locally led development: i) respecting, valuing and integrating local knowledge and expertise through policy commitments and practices that support the co-production of knowledge and local solutions; ii) facilitating systemic and holistic capacity, tailored to local context; and iii) supporting locally led capacity sharing from a distance and establishing long-term, equitable partnership models that enable local agency in framing and delivering capacity sharing (see Figure 1).

This paper is directed towards DAC members, but findings equally apply to other organisations working across development co-operation. The findings can be used to enhance engagement with local stakeholders, streamline decision-making processes and prioritise local realities in knowledge and capacity sharing strategies. Together, these will create a collaborative environment that not only respects but also amplifies the voices, knowledge, experiences and capacities of local actors, and emphasises the importance of continuous dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and learning amongst all actors. This paper therefore highlights the importance of locally led, tailored and system-wide approaches that strengthen diverse capacities and harness the existing knowledge and strengths of local actors and systems, founded on more responsive and mutually beneficial partnership models underpinned by core values (e.g. respect, trust, integrity and mutuality) and core behaviours (e.g. shared visions).

Figure 1. Adapting approaches to local knowledge and capacity sharing to enable locally led development



2. Respecting, valuing and integrating local knowledge and expertise

OECD DAC members acknowledge that local knowledge and expertise is central to effective development co-operation. Local actor agency in framing and designing development co-operation including establishing priorities founded on local knowledge and experience is essential for strategies and programmes that are:

- **relevant** and resonate with a community’s values, traditions and norms
- **inclusive** and responsive to the needs of the most marginalised
- **avoid unnecessary risks** (familiarity with the social and cultural landscape allows local actors to foresee and navigate potential pitfalls that external parties might miss)
- **sustainable** and lead to long-term local ownership.

From a practical perspective, centring local knowledge in development co-operation is also **cost-effective**. Instead of incurring the expense of imported expertise and materials, development initiatives can capitalise on what is already present and understood within the community.

This means challenging embedded assumptions, perceptions and ways of working. DAC members are increasingly facing instances where values and perspectives diverge, which can have consequences for programming. This entails challenging norms and assumptions, including that Global North actors are the “knowledge producers” and Global South are the “knowledge consumers”. This has led to significant bias around the roles of each actor. Conversely, it means acknowledging that whilst traditional or Indigenous knowledge is “invaluable for developing adaptation and natural resource management” (IPCC, 2007^[4]), the rate of change associated with global processes such as climate change can outpace both local knowledge and scientific understanding (UNESCO, 2018^[5]). Other challenges highlighted by DAC members during the peer review and also identified during a consultation led by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on locally led development⁴ include the sharing of knowledge, data and analysis; competition among civil society organisations (CSOs); gaps in information on potential local partners - including local intermediaries - for leading knowledge sharing; and differing values and priorities in relation to capacity strengthening (DFAT, 2024^[6]).

Good practices that DAC members are adopting to respect and value local knowledge and enable locally led development focus on include: i) recognising and embracing the diversity of knowledge whilst acknowledging the contexts in which knowledge is constructed, exchanged, utilised and flows; ii) supporting the co-production of knowledge; and iii) creating space for knowledge exchange and for mobilising local research processes. Figure 2 expands on these good practices, highlighting specific examples which are further discussed below.

Figure 2. Respecting, valuing and integrating local knowledge and expertise

ENABLERS	GOOD PRACTICES	EXAMPLES
Recognising and embracing the diversity of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming the bias around local knowledge Developing policies and strategies to elevate local knowledge Strengthening cultural skills and internal staff capacities 	New Zealand's Strategic Framework integrates Māori worldviews
Supporting the co-production of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing policies, strategies and guidance that support the co-production of knowledge while avoiding extractive practices Integrating diverse knowledge to identify innovative solutions Integrating locally generated data into decision-making processes Avoiding the creation of separate, potentially conflicting systems 	Switzerland leveraging local climate knowledge
Creating space for knowledge exchange and mobilising local research processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating peer-learning exchanges and supporting knowledge banks Reshaping support to local research and its uptake 	Sweden's long-term partnerships with local research partners

Recognising and embracing the diversity of knowledge whilst acknowledging the political economy

Sensitising actors can help overcome bias to respect and elevate local knowledge and expertise.

Progress in valuing local and traditional knowledge has largely been sectoral and initially linked to the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA),⁵ which are intended to guide the adaptation community as it shifts programming, funding and practices towards adaptation that is increasingly owned by local partners (WRI, 2024^[7]). For example, the LLA approach centres on the knowledge, agency and needs of local communities when crafting and executing climate adaptation strategies. By focusing on context-specific solutions and leveraging Indigenous expertise, this approach increases community agency in decision making to access essential local resources for addressing climate change impacts (Soanes and Steele, 2017^[8]; Patel et al., 2020^[9]). Canada's International Biodiversity Programme, which leverages its national experience of combining Western science and traditional knowledge protecting natural environments in Canada, identifies collaboration and partnership with women and Indigenous People as pivotal: "Collaboration is key to bridging different knowledge systems and visions of the ecosystems and the ecological services they provide" (Government of Canada, 2023^[10]). Other DAC members are proponents of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) including Norway, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Developing dedicated policies and strategies can elevate local knowledge. Several DAC members have made comprehensive policy commitments that embrace the engagement of local communities in a holistic manner and commit to valuing local knowledge. For example, according to the 2023 DAC peer review, New Zealand’s strategic framework grounds its foreign policy in the principles of partnership and mutual respect (OECD, 2023^[11]). It integrates Māori worldviews and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) into foreign policy and development co-operation (MFAT, 2021^[12]). This has involved: i) updating its Pacific Engagement Strategy to highlight the connections between Māori and other Indigenous Pacific cultures (New Zealand Government, 2022^[13]); ii) upskilling staff; iii) establishing a Māori partnership group (MFAT, 2021^[14]); and iv) using Pacific Islander-informed Measurement and Evaluation approaches (USP, 2021^[15]).

Strengthening cultural skills and internal staff capacities is critical to access and understand local processes and ecosystems. The diversity of local actors, perspectives and knowledge ecosystems presents challenges in terms of understanding and accessing local processes, knowledge and data ecosystems. In response, DAC members are equipping staff to understand the political economy and contextual knowledge for programming. For example, some DAC members, including Belgium are using regular listening platforms, immersion techniques⁶ and consultation with local staff to understand local perspectives. Other DAC members are drawing upon cultural mediators and providing staff training. For example, Switzerland’s “Leave no one behind” policy mandates sensitising and training staff and partners. Its guidance was informed by consultations with staff in partner countries and headquarters (OECD, 2021^[16]). In addition, a module on leaving no one behind is part of regular project management training and an in-depth online training course (developed through German development co-operation with Switzerland) is accessible to staff and partners. Conversely, some DAC members, including Poland, are recruiting staff with local knowledge for a long-term presence (see Box 1). Likewise, Australia prioritises investment in relationship building to allow “better conversations”⁷ and promote local actor agency in proposing alternative strategies, design, and approaches.

Box 1. Accessing local knowledge ecosystems: Experience from Poland

Poland’s Solidarity Fund invests in both in-country presence and local staff to understand and access the local knowledge ecosystem. The Solidarity Fund has established three local representative offices to date: Moldova in 2012, and Georgia and Ukraine in 2019. Except for country directors, nationals of the respective countries staff these offices entirely. To further transfer expertise, the Solidarity Fund embeds local staff in partner institutions by transferring some staff to work in newly created or relevant existing institutions, depending on local employment and salary conditions. Staff often then remain in the institution, helping to embed capabilities. These practices align with the Solidarity Fund’s “exit by design” strategy that works to ensure locally developed solutions are co-owned and managed by national counterparts. In summary, investment in local staff generates ownership and commitment, supports the development of local networks and builds trust.

Source: OECD (2023^[17]) *Empowering Local Actors by Prioritising Local Capacity and Networks: Poland’s Solidarity Fund*, <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/empowering-local-actors-by-prioritising-local-capacity-and-networks-poland-s-solidarity-fund-25780d66/>.

Supporting the co-production of knowledge

Designing explicit policies, strategies and guidance supports the co-production of knowledge whilst avoiding extractive practices. This means mediating the tensions between different expectations, between extraction and empowerment, and varying perceptions over the use of knowledge (Wilmsen, n.d.^[18]). DAC members have been strengthening local agency in framing and designing development co-operation by establishing policies, strategies and guidance on the co-production of knowledge that is of

mutual benefit. Similar to the comprehensive set of strategies employed by New Zealand in partnership with the Māori, the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Indigenous People's Policy (USAID, 2020^[19]) outlines specific policies and operating principles guiding how to identify, analyse, engage, safeguard, and establish partnerships with Indigenous People. Its accompanying Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge, recognises Indigenous knowledge as "one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements" (White House, 2022^[20]). It calls for the co-production of knowledge as a research framework based on equity and the inclusion of multiple knowledge systems. Similarly, the USAID Listening Locally initiative prioritises listening to the voices of diverse local actors to understand local priorities, needs and innovative ideas for shaping their communities. In 2019, USAID launched a listening process along the Dominican/Haitian Border with approximately 3 000 community members, using the Locally Led Development Spectrum as a common framework for engagement (USAID, 2022^[21]). The findings highlighted how the mission could expand and form deep relationships with communities, laying the groundwork for future locally led partnerships founded on local knowledge and experience.

Integrating diverse knowledge can help identify innovative solutions. There is a growing body of practice whereby DAC members are supporting the integration of traditional and Indigenous knowledge with contemporary approaches whilst navigating power dynamics (see Box 2). The Netherlands, for example, has supported significant research focused on collaboration with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). With the guidance of 35 Pacific Island women leaders they have identified key elements of supportive, equitable, and decolonised models of engagement between Global South Global North women's rights movements (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2020^[22]). Multiple other examples exist, including New Zealand's Hinemoana Halo project, which is integrating Indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge to develop high-impact, ocean-based solutions (Takoko and Chami, 2023^[23]), and Sweden's collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), empowering Indigenous People to use their traditional knowledge to identify self-driven and innovative solutions to challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss (IFAD, 2023^[24]).

Box 2. Leveraging local knowledge in climate programming: Experience from Switzerland

The integration of scientific knowledge with local knowledge and understanding is crucial in countries where the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (SDC) is supporting climate adaptation and mitigation through its Climate, Disaster Risk Reduction and Environment Programme. This is exemplified by work on weather pattern analysis and monitoring in Peru, where traditional beliefs came into tension with the technology being introduced, necessitating collaboration with local actors to effectively "translate" scientific knowledge into locally appropriate language and meanings. Switzerland also regularly partners with national universities and research institutions to implement climate activities, leverage local expertise and contribute to institutional capacity strengthening. An independent evaluation of SDC's engagement in climate change adaptation and mitigation (2015-20) highlighted that half of their projects involve supporting local communities in organising and managing resources for their long-term benefit, drawing upon the nature and community-based solutions (NCBS) approach. This approach addresses the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty, whilst bridging the nexus between humanitarian response and sustainable development. The NCBS approach is recognised as pivotal in addressing these challenges by organisations such as the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Sources: SDC (2023^[25]) *Climate, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Environment*, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/organisation/abteilungen/thematische-zusammenarbeit/global-programme-climate-change.html>; Particip GmbH (2022^[26]), *Independent Evaluation of SDC's Engagement in Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation from 2015 to 2020*, <https://www.aramis.admin.ch/Texte/?ProjectID=48687>.

Integrating locally generated data into decision-making processes can ensure relevance and responsiveness to local needs. For example, Global South regional platforms, such as CSO Platform Africa, a central hub for finding CSOs, are aggregating data and actionable insights on thematic areas of focus, including climate change, health and youth (African CSO Platform, 2024^[27]). Similarly, the Pacific Community's (SPC) Pacific Data Hub⁸, supported by New Zealand, is strengthening regional data capacity and integrates Indigenous data into its monitoring systems (OECD, 2023^[11]). At the national level, Australia, for example, partners with governments in the Pacific Island Countries and Timor-Leste through its Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP) programme (Australian Aid, 2024^[28]), and is designing and strengthening national social protection systems through long-term support, networking, learning and knowledge sharing across the region. At the project level, some DAC members are developing key performance indicators to track the integration of local knowledge, ensuring local perspectives are incorporated into project design. For example, in the climate sector, Switzerland has been leveraging local knowledge and co-designing adaptation initiatives with local actors, including those that act as cultural translators between traditional and scientific knowledge to facilitate exchange.

Avoiding the creation of separate, potentially conflicting systems to facilitate collaboration. Data platforms that are developed in silos often perpetuate fragmentation that makes understanding and collaboration challenging. The collectively operated Pacific Data Hub noted earlier serves as a digital gateway to information from Pacific countries, development partners, academia and research organisations, and the private sector, and acts as a single, authoritative point of entry for all Pacific data, information and publications (OECD, 2023^[11]).

Creating space for knowledge exchange and for mobilising local research processes

Facilitating peer-learning exchanges and supporting knowledge banks contributes to knowledge sharing. DAC members have actively contributed to facilitating peer learning, including exchange visits and investing in platforms that draw on collective knowledge and respond to demands from partner countries for specific thematic areas of expertise. Norway has championed this approach and in 2018 established the Knowledge Bank to strengthen and co-ordinate technical co-operation with partner countries. It facilitates knowledge and experience sharing by drawing on the collective knowledge of more than 30 Norwegian public institutions, along with multilateral institutions and CSOs, to strengthen the capacity of partner country public institutions (Norad, 2020^[29]). The focus is on learning through exchange of experience. The Knowledge Bank has helped share capacities across government agencies and within the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). It is founded on the principle of providing capacity strengthening to institutions to avoid over reliance on individuals, combined with the need for long-term support and adaptation to contextual changes (OECD, 2021^[30]).

Similarly, USAID's Global Development Lab supports innovation and knowledge sharing among partner countries by organising workshops, conferences and networking events where practitioners can share their experiences and learn from each other (USAID, 2024^[31]). Likewise, Australia's Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI) in Indonesia, facilitates knowledge sharing and peer learning among government agencies, civil society organisations and researchers to improve the effectiveness of policies and programmes in areas such as education, health and governance (Knowledge Sector Initiative, 2024^[32]). Further, the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) is focused on technology capacity building (SPIDER, 2024^[33]). It facilitates knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by organising workshops, seminars and study visits where stakeholders from different countries can exchange experiences and best practices. Finally, Australia's Knowledge Hub on Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) brings together practitioners, policy makers and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region, to share knowledge and expertise on humanitarian action and DRR, with a focus on building resilience and reducing the impact of disasters in the region (Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, 2024^[34]).

Reshaping support to local research and its uptake creates space for locally led research and local researchers. This allows local actors to frame research priorities around local needs and questions, ensuring research initiatives are driven by, and responsive to, the communities they serve, guarding against extractive processes, and fostering genuine collaboration and the empowerment of local voices. Examples of joint research include France's Institut Pasteur and Institute of Research for Development (IRD)⁹ and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Climate Change Adaptation in Africa Programme. IDRC is a Canadian crown corporation and offers many examples of how Canada supports local capacity in ways that are responsive and sustainable. For example, the Science Granting Councils Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa, led by IDRC and South Africa's national Science Foundation, with funding from the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and the German Research Foundation (DFG), applies a systems approach, using national granting and peer learning, to leverage and support existing knowledge and research capacity in sub-Saharan Africa (SGCI and IOSRS, 2024^[35]). Similarly, Sweden has established long standing partnerships with local research and learning partners in Ethiopia and in 2023 celebrated the 42nd anniversary of its research and capacity strengthening collaboration with the Addis Ababa University (AAU). The current project agreement with AAU extends from 2018 to 2025.

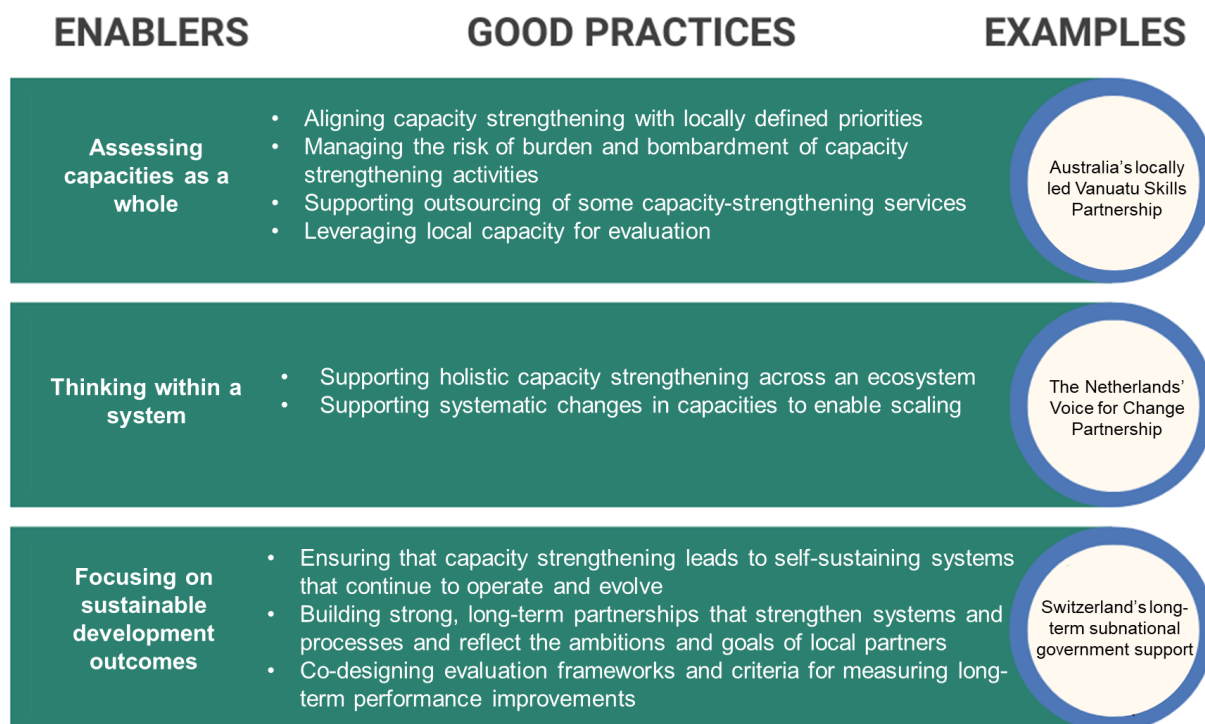
3. Facilitating tailored, systemic and holistic capacity sharing

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played an important role in re-evaluating and transforming the language and practice around capacity sharing, with an emphasis on centring power and equity. Traditional approaches have been constrained by funding modalities and have generally been top-down, focused on project outputs and poorly co-ordinated across providers and sectors (OECD, 2023^[36]; Mollett and Donkin, 2021^[37]; Hayter, 2021^[38]; Spicer and Abalo, 2023^[39]). These approaches have failed to recognise and value existing capacities and expertise. This can be an obstacle to flexibility, creativity and innovation in leveraging different approaches to meet diverse needs and local goals. A significant barrier to developing a dynamic understanding of local ecosystems is the continued practice of short-term project-based funding, which undermines sustainable capacity strengthening of DAC member staff and the strengthening of institutional/organisational systems to enable the inclusion of local capacity and knowledge in operations. When support is provided without due consideration to local systems or priorities of local actors, capacity-strengthening approaches can have unintended impacts¹⁰ including increasing time and resource burdens on local actors (USAID, 2022^[21]). Increasingly, these traditional approaches have been recognised as undermining sustainable capacity strengthening of staff and institutional/organisational systems.

Principled and partnership approaches to mutual capacity sharing and learning are emerging in place of traditional approaches. These are anchoring capacity strengthening in local customs, language and a deep-seated understanding of the local context. They are underpinned by equitable partnerships and mutual learning and prioritise incremental progress towards long-term change rather than a focus on short term outputs (e.g. number of training events). The peer learning exercise, however, highlighted several challenges facing DAC members in long-term capacity strengthening, particularly in politically constrained contexts. It highlighted a need for improved coherence, complementarity and collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace actors working on shared objectives defined by local actors.

Good practices that DAC members are adopting by supporting systemic and context specific capacity sharing to enable locally led development focus on: i) assessing capacities as a whole and providing tailored system-wide support across individual, organisational, and systemic capacities; ii) thinking within a system; and iii) focusing on sustainable development outcomes. Figure 3 expands on these good practices, highlighting specific examples which are further discussed below.

Figure 3. Facilitating tailored, systemic and holistic capacity sharing



Assessing capacities as a whole

Aligning capacity strengthening with locally defined priorities contributes to holistic and sustainable strengthening. Local actors have expressed concerns that the significant capacities within their communities are often overlooked by international partners. Successful capacity strengthening therefore centres on supporting local actors, identifying their strengths and assets, and leveraging and enhancing these to perform roles and have relationships that shape a local system in a way that meets their aspirations, goals and needs. Traditionally, capacity strengthening efforts have focused on Global North priorities, for example, financial risk concerns, or are geared to a specific project, rather than promoting holistic, long-term, organisational strengthening. More recent DAC member approaches include collaboratively agreeing whose capacity to strengthen (i.e. DAC member/local actor), what to strengthen and setting expectations on how capacity sharing will impact the performance of the organisation as a whole, not just the individuals directly engaged. This approach requires a significant investment of time and presence up front to create consensus on the capacity sharing needs. It may also require higher levels of decentralisation (involving multiple capacity-strengthening partners), continual adjustments as the needs evolve and local leadership (see Box 1). For example, the USAID's Positive Youth Development (PYD) Framework engages youth within their communities in a manner that recognises and builds upon youth assets and skills; ensures young people are recognised as agents of their own development and that local capacity strengthening for youth supports them to exercise their power to shape change; and involves co-creation and co-design of programmes and decision making on local capacity strengthening activities (USAID, n.d.^[40]).

Box 3. Supporting locally led capacity strengthening in Vanuatu: Experience from Australia

The VSP, a joint initiative by the Governments of Australia and Vanuatu, is led and implemented by a national team who have been catalysts in influencing the implementation of key government strategies and policies. It aims to support Vanuatu's Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) sector, for which Australia has been providing support since 2005. It is led and implemented by an all ni-Vanuatu national team who have been catalysts in influencing the implementation of key government strategies and policies. Successes include: 1) redefining the role of international advisers; 2) locally led implementation; 3) engaging a support contractor with more flexible systems and technical staff capable of empowering the local team; 4) increasing commitment from the Government of Vanuatu within the TVET system; and 5) adaptive management approaches driven by local structures and coalitions for change to encourage sustainability and ownership of results by local actors.

Source: Australian Aid (2024^[28]), *Partnerships for Social Protection*, <https://p4sp.org/what-we-do/>.

Managing the risk of burden and bombardment of capacity-strengthening activities is essential.

Historically, local partners have faced fragmented and at times duplicative capacity-strengthening efforts. DAC members identified the need to avoid duplication by using existing capacity assessments and by sharing their own assessments more widely. For example, Colombia, Norway and Sweden are co-ordinating capacity assessments and capacity-strengthening activities to streamline processes and maximise impact.

In some key capacity areas, including administrative and financial procedures, outsourcing to intermediary or capacity-strengthening partners enables DAC members to focus on their mandates.

This is particularly powerful when the capacity strengthening partner is also a local entity. The Tanzanian Foundation for Civil Society¹¹, an independent Tanzanian NGO, is funded by Denmark, Switzerland and the European Union to provide grants and capacity-strengthening services to CSOs. Similarly, the Mechanism for Civil Society Support (MASC) in Mozambique, which is supported by the United Kingdom, strengthens the capacity of CSOs that have a focus on marginalised groups including women's organisations, to hold the Mozambique government to account and ensure responsiveness to the needs and priorities of citizens (FCDO, 2019^[41]).

Leveraging local capacity for evaluation contributes to valuing local knowledge. DAC members have demonstrated commitment to innovative evaluation approaches, for example by contributing to the Global Evaluation Initiative, a global coalition of organisations and experts working to leverage their local expertise to reduce fragmentation and catalyse collaboration and partnership (GEI, n.d.^[42]). This initiative further seeks to expand guidance and support partner countries to integrate gender transformative and feminist evaluation approaches. This is exemplified by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and their feminist evaluation practices, which uses local evaluators, connected to existing women's rights movements, for example, for evaluations of the Women's Voice and Learning Programme (WVL). This example demonstrates how local skills and capacities can be leveraged in approaches to feminist evaluation. Similarly, GAC's Evaluation Division has developed a pilot Localisation Analysis Framework, which is an evaluation tool designed to measure a programme's alignment with locally led development across nine dimensions and identify key barriers and enablers to programming with local organisations (GAC, 2023^[43]). Key features include a focus on the relevance of local capacity-strengthening support by funding partners and an assessment of the ability of a programme to leverage and build on existing local capacities and strengths, which moves away from a deficit model.

Thinking within a system

Supporting holistic capacity sharing can strengthen an ecosystem. DAC members are moving beyond a traditionally narrow focus (notably on financial risk) and adopting a more nuanced and detailed approach, as Slater suggests (Slater, 2024^[44]), which considers:

- the **different levels of capacity** (institutional, organisational, individual)
- **type of competencies** (“hard” competencies such as technical, logistical and managerial skills and “soft” competencies such as building relationships, trust and legitimacy)
- **temporal and functional elements** (e.g. strengthening, applying and maintaining capacity)
- **delivery capacities** (e.g. competency, capability and performance).

The goal of holistic capacity sharing is to strengthen an entire ecosystem – not just individual organisations – which requires recognising the diversity of nuanced needs and the priorities of a larger system. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs demonstrates holistic approaches through initiatives such as the “Voice for Change Partnership”, where they engage diverse stakeholders, including local and national governments, to strengthen entire systems rather than focusing solely on local communities (OECD, 2023^[45]).

Supporting systematic changes in capacities enables scaling. USAID sees capacity as largely intangible and dependent on intra-organisational relationships and relationships among an organisation and other actors in the wider local system. Its first principle in its Local Capacity Strengthening Policy (USAID, 2022^[21]) is to “start with the local system” and to understand why and in what circumstances capacity strengthening can contribute to more positive and sustainable change at the systems level (see Box 4). Likewise other DAC members are increasingly “thinking within a system,” i.e. what capacities are needed for each actor to play its role, beyond the local community, including interaction with local and national governments. This starts by recognising operating environments, mindsets, structures and practices that can influence scaling.¹² For example, the National Health Sector Support Programme in Nepal supported by the United Kingdom, focuses on improving access to healthcare services in rural areas. The United Kingdom collaborates with the Nepalese government, local health authorities, community-based organisations and international partners to strengthen the health system comprehensively. This approach ensures that interventions are contextually appropriate and contribute to sustainable improvements in development outcomes.

Box 4. Developing a ‘Local Capacity Strengthening Policy’: Experience from USAID

The Local Capacity Strengthening (LCS) policy establishes an Agency-wide vision based on a shared commitment to seven mutually reinforcing principles, informed by a robust evidence base and a rigorous consultation process, which prioritises the engagement and feedback of local actors and organisations.

Principles for effective programming of local capacity strengthening:

- Start with the local system
- Strengthen diverse capacities through diverse approaches
- Plan for and measure performance improvement in collaboration with local partners.

Principles for equitable partnerships in local capacity strengthening:

- Align capacity strengthening with local priorities
- Appreciate and build on existing capacities
- Be mindful of and mitigate the unintended consequences of support for local capacity
- Practice mutuality with local partners.

USAID has also developed an internal implementation plan and publicly shared the Implementation Updates (see [2023](#) and [2024](#)), which was also based on local consultation and feedback. Publicly sharing the implementation updates promotes transparency and accountability with local actors as it outlines USAID's plans and key actions, notably to: i) institutionalise accountability of USAID leadership, as a key enabler of successful implementation; ii) prioritise accountability of USAID to stakeholders, including regular engagements by the LCS team and an Annual Learning and Feedback Forum; iii) integrate effective LCS practice into the programme cycle; and iv) develop tools and resources to support operationalisation. Annually, a virtual multi-day [Learning & Feedback forum](#) is hosted to continue to seek feedback and insight to inform implementation of the LCS Policy. Using the feedback from ongoing and annual gatherings, USAID updates the implementation plan and shares it with the community through the Implementation Updates to create a positive feedback loop.

Source: USAID, *Local Capacity Strengthening Policy*, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/LCS-Policy-2022-10-17.pdf>.

Focusing on sustainable development outcomes

Capacity strengthening and sharing needs to be a continuous process, particularly given the changing development and humanitarian landscape. This relies on sustainable funding and the provision of core support, as well as better coverage of overhead or indirect costs. Some DAC members are therefore prioritising long-term direct funding for local organisations, allowing them to invest in staff and systems. This approach shifts away from solely providing training towards providing direct financial support to local knowledge providers and holders, to promote sustainability and ownership. It further requires elevating the importance of strengthening long-term capacity as a strategic priority, as is the case for Canada's Women's Voice and Leadership Programme (WVL).¹³ A fundamental, driving principle is that women's and LBTQI+ organisations are provided with flexible funding to develop their organisation's capacities according to their own strategic priorities.

A further approach, that can be adopted by DAC members including smaller members, is supporting the outsourcing of services, including capacity strengthening, to local partners, ensuring more sustainable and long-term solutions. USAID identifies that where possible, through partnering with existing capacity-strengthening providers and supporting their capacity to be sustainable service providers, whilst avoiding designing activities that undermine existing capacity-strengthening providers. This requires an inventory of the local capacity-strengthening market for key services including the reach of existing providers (e.g. NGOs, individual trainers, networks, coalitions, universities, research centres, government agencies, management consulting or accounting firms, local social enterprise and the private sector) and the market prices, scale, location and quality of these services (USAID, 2023^[46]). Finally, some DAC members are supporting permanent positions in local agencies (see Box 5).

Box 5. Supporting permanent positions in government ministries in the Pacific: Experience from Australia

A further modality for sustainable capacity strengthening of local actors is to create and initially fund new positions in government ministries, providing ongoing mentoring and support until the post is absorbed as permanent capacity and funded by the government agency two to three years after. This has successfully been implemented in the Pacific through the Governance for Resilience Programme (Gov4Res)¹ funded by Australia, the United Kingdom, South Korea, New Zealand, and Sweden. Several positions (new climate and disaster resilience posts) have been successfully absorbed in the central planning and finance functions and sectoral ministries (women, environment, agriculture) in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Tonga.

Note: 1. Formerly the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme.

Source: UNDP, *Gov4Res*, <https://www.undp.org/pacific/gov4res>.

Building strong and long-term partnerships strengthens systems and processes. Good practices are shifting the approach from one-off training and short-term project support to creating long-term partnerships that grow in strength and trust over time, and which are founded on direct, core and long-term financial support. This facilitates local actor investment in staff and systems to ensure self-sustaining capacity strengthening. For example, Iceland has established three-year framework agreements with its key partner CSOs to ensure more stable and strategic partnerships based on mutual trust, continuous dialogue and accountability founded on long-term, non-earmarked funds, to build their institutional and financial capacities. These give CSOs flexibility in meeting priorities and help strengthen their institutional and financial capacities. Further, Australia is developing “Localisation-ready support hubs” to support actors in strengthening capacities, achieving compliance and building a local market for consultancies and project management. This is similar to the private sector approach to incubating and accelerating the growth of local businesses. Such hubs could provide tailored, long-term, context-specific support, for example strengthening core management and administrative functions (e.g. financial management, procurement, safeguarding, risk assessment) or the growth of local supply chains for the development sector (DFAT, 2024^[6]). Finally, in 2016, the Netherlands launched its Dialogue and Dissent policy framework to support CSOs in partner countries in their political capacity to lobby and advocate (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014^[47]). Programme monitoring highlighted important results whilst confirming the importance of strategic partnerships with flexible and long-term funding to build trust, innovation and time for social transformation (OECD, 2022^[48]).

Box 6. Providing long-term support to subnational governments in Burkina Faso: Experience from Switzerland

The Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) programme in Burkina Faso showcases how a sustained long-term approach (SDC has been present since 1974), combined with supporting decentralisation, has led to a *de facto* locally led approach. As identified in an external evaluation, supporting subnational governance has been Switzerland's primary approach to sustaining engagement in fragile and conflict affected contexts. In Burkina Faso, SDC has been able to continue its operations by directly funding and working with local and regional authorities and local CSOs, despite the political instability caused by the two military coups of 2022. An external evaluation identified high levels of local relevance and alignment with the needs and rights of local target groups in its governance portfolio, via a "people-centred approach" in its subnational governance work that balances engagement with duty bearers and rights holders.

Source: OECD (2024^[49]), *Peer learning on Locally led development – DAC members deep dive: Switzerland*, [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD\(2024\)26/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2024)26/en/pdf).

Co-designing capacity evaluation frameworks and criteria is relevant for measuring long-term performance improvements. Correctly measuring outcome-level performance improvements from capacity strengthening and sharing (beyond short-term output results focusing on the number of training courses provided) will require local agency in joint identification and monitoring. USAID has developed a Capacity Action Planning Tool to facilitate a process through which local actors identify their own performance improvement priorities and own and manage the capacity-strengthening process (USAID, 2022^[50]).

4. Supporting locally led capacity sharing

Locally led models put local actors in the driving seat. This requires DAC members to stand back and create space for local actor agency in framing, designing and delivering capacity-sharing priorities, and where appropriate supporting more equitable and long-term partnerships.

Good practices that DAC members are adopting to support locally led capacity sharing to enable locally led development focus on: i) peer-to-peer capacity partnerships and capacity exchange; and ii) establishing more robust, long-term and equitable partnerships based on shared values, trust and humility. Figure 4 expands on these good practices, highlighting specific examples which are further discussed below.

Figure 4. Supporting locally led capacity sharing from a distance



Supporting peer-to-peer partnerships and capacity exchange

Working with collaboration networks of local and international actors leverages capabilities and resources effectively. To do so, DAC members are drawing upon existing networks of CSOs for listening, learning, capacity exchange and as potential partners for direct investment. Examples include the Prospera International Network of Women's Funds¹⁴ and the Civil Society Innovation Initiative (CSII), also known as Innovation for Change (I4C)¹⁵, a multi-donor effort initiated by the United States and Sweden, with additional support from the Aga Khan Foundation and the Open Society Foundation (I4C, 2024^[51]; Prospera, 2023^[52]).

Uncovering and engaging local intermediaries can support a change in roles. Recognition of the untapped potential and capacities of local actors is providing some funding partners (primarily philanthropic) to revisit traditional restrictive roles (i.e. local actors confined to implementing roles) and support a change in roles. "Flipping the model" and using local actors as intermediaries has the dual benefit of facilitating locally led development, whilst increasing access to grassroots organisations, therefore supporting the sustainability of local capacity sharing in an efficient and effective manner. National and international CSOs, networks and coalitions' role can evolve during the life span of a programme from fiscal agent, convenors, connectors and amplifiers of locally led initiatives. For example, as the CSII/I4C project was implemented, international CSOs began serving as fiscal agents managing a pool of flexible funding that could be quickly and easily accessed by the CSII/I4C networks with minimal administrative reviews and requirements, whilst leading knowledge and capacity exchange. In Myanmar, the Myanmar Local Intermediary Actors Network (LIA) not only channels money to smaller civil society groups but partners, mentors and coaches smaller organisations, helping partners to grow on their own terms (Myanmar Local Intermediary Actors Network, 2022^[53]). Other examples include the Local Coalition Accelerator supported by several foundations (see Box 7).

Box 7. Supporting local intermediaries through the Local Coalition Accelerator Model: Experience from foundations

The Local Coalition Accelerator (LCA) brings together coalitions of diverse local and national organisations. The intention is to overcome due diligence issues, and funding partner aversions to managing multiple small contracts, thus increasing direct access to bilateral funding. These Coalitions in turn provide peer-to-peer capacity sharing and partner with community structures (including Self Help Groups), as they co-design and implement holistic, evidence-based programming at scale to address systemic, multi-sectoral problems. The LCA model provides technical and financial support over three to five years to coalitions of CSOs, which create a shared governance system, design Joint Action Plans based on community priorities, and ultimately become independent to manage funding directly from funding partners. The model was initiated by The Share Trust and Warande Advisory Centre and is currently being implemented in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda with funding from multiple foundations. The Coalitions are also being used to pivot rapidly to humanitarian response, during a crisis, for example with support from the Start network in Bangladesh (most recently to support the floods resulting from Cyclone Remal in May), and in Nigeria, the Coalitions are supporting smaller CSOs to access country pooled funds.

Source: The Share Trust and Warande Advisory Centre (2023^[54]), Local Coalition Accelerator: Shifting Power, Process and Funding, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b2110247c93271263b5073a/t/641756ddae8f9d30c86d9136/1679251168184/LCA+Summary-March+2023.pdf>.

Supporting peer-to-peer learning and exchange can shift agenda setting and decision-making power to local actors, which is increasingly important where the local presence of DAC members is decreasing. These can include peer-to-peer learning between the Global South and the Global North but also between local actors in the Global South. Australia's regional and country Development Partnership Plans (DPPs) offer opportunities to set ambition and action on locally led development. It emphasises peer sharing and accountability, the use of local intermediaries and facilitates international learning exchanges (DFAT, 2024^[6]). Similarly, Norway's knowledge bank, mentioned earlier, strengthens capacity in public administrations in partner countries through long-term knowledge co-operation with Norwegian institutes (Norad, 2020^[29]).¹⁶ Finally, Ireland's emphasis on mutual learning, knowledge exchange and supporting strong local networks such as intelligence-sharing forums (including with other development co-operation partners) in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos all contribute to finding new solutions and ways of operating in challenging contexts.

Changing the narrative through peer-to-peer networks (P2P) and triangular co-operation¹⁷ redefines the way that knowledge and learning is produced by sharing and scaling up knowledge from the pivotal partner and supporting knowledge exchange, knowledge co-production and triangular co-operation (OECD, 2018^[55]). It also means decentralising the co-operation and the network architecture. Triangular co-operation, which is when multi-stakeholders work together to co-create flexible, cost-effective and innovative solutions is based on the principle that all partners learn and share experience in a project. For example, the Indian model of triangular co-operation focuses on leveraging the strengths of India's diverse landscape of CSOs (OECD, 2024^[56]). Germany's position paper on triangular co-operation¹⁸ further challenges the traditional narrative of how to partner with Global South agencies, governments and private sector partners and rethinks the way that knowledge is produced, shared and scaled-up from the pivotal partner (OECD, 2022^[57]). Japan also mobilises South-South approaches and triangular co-operation to deepen relationships among countries, building trust and co-creating solutions that are well adapted to the context of development countries. For example, the Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Programme¹⁹ has enabled Asian and African countries to share experience and knowledge, and the Kizuna Project²⁰

disseminates Chilean experience throughout Latin America and the Caribbean region (OECD, 2020^[58]).

Promoting multi-stakeholder engagement is beneficial for capacity sharing within communities.

Strengthening diverse capacities also means that capacity sharing approaches differ across levels. At the individual/community level, fostering collaboration of diverse community members has fostered collaboration for peer-to-peer capacity sharing. For example, Dimitra Clubs, an initiative supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) demonstrate the power of community engagement and participation communication in creating platforms where stakeholders from various sectors, including informal groups, producer organisations, local NGOs, women's organisations and government bodies, can come together to share experience and learning, identify community-driven solutions and address local issues effectively (FAO, 2021^[59]). Similarly, the Self-Help Group (SHG) model, which supports community collective action, provides an ideal mechanism for cascading learning (on community priority issues) to other SHGs and to wider community members. For example, the model, which has been supported by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), including in Somalia and Afghanistan, allows women to lead and share learning on key issues (The Share Trust, 2023^[60]).

Establishing robust, long-term and equitable partnerships based on shared values, trust and humility

Leveraging an inclusive approach to local capacity sharing that includes individuals, who may otherwise be excluded, can transform individual agency and create opportunities for collaboration, bring new perspectives and skills, and can drive transformational change (USAID, 2022^[61]). For example, USAID's Local Capacity Strengthening Policy (USAID, 2022^[21]) is grounded in a commitment to partnerships based on mutual respect and reciprocity. The policy enables local actors from all backgrounds and cultures to have their voices heard, exercise their unique capacities, lead their country's development and frame capacity strengthening around locally defined priorities (see Box 4). Similarly, Belgian Development Co-operation is updating its Partnership Policy to include a comprehensive policy and set of requirements for Belgian-funded NGOs partnering with community-based actors. Belgian NGO applicants are screened for their capacity and quality management systems to be able to receive funding for five-year programmes – for which they have significant autonomy – and their own partnership policy is one of the aspects that is screened. The goal is to establish balanced relationships, with mutual contributions and allow the implementation of a common agenda. The partnership policy aims to guarantee the ability of an organisation to maintain relationships with Global South and community-based partners based on trust and mutual learning. Memoranda of Understanding and partnership agreements must include specified elements, notably, common objective mutual commitments, common visions for mutual capacity strengthening, local takeover and sustainability of activities, and transfer of assets.

DAC members can mobilise and influence international or multilateral intermediaries to transform capacity strengthening. DAC members face a range of challenges in tracking the extent to which international partners are enabling locally led development and supporting capacity sharing.²¹ More systematic application of equitable principles for locally led development - including contracts with international intermediaries - is therefore being adopted to influence and shape multilateral intermediary channels and their partnership agreements with local actors. DAC members are starting to leverage their role as a convener to prioritise locally led development principles and structure partnerships that international intermediaries have with local actors. This can incentivise the application of locally led principles and practices, building on commitments made by International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs).²² For example, through Ireland's Civil Society Partnership (ICSP), Irish Aid encourages a shift in CSO practices to shared learning, mutuality and co-development of solutions (OECD, 2024^[62]). Similarly, Switzerland has led efforts to develop fair partnership principles in Ukraine, which includes a capacity-strengthening budget to support local actor planning, fundraising and implementation of its own strategies and activities (OECD, 2024^[49])

Providing direct access to core and capacity-sharing funding for local actors empowers local knowledge providers. DAC members are starting to prioritise long-term, core, direct funding for local organisations, allowing them to invest in staff and systems. This approach shifts away from solely providing training towards providing direct financial support to local knowledge providers and holders, promoting sustainability and ownership. For example, since early 2000, Sweden has been providing long-term support (i.e. up to four or five years), to some CSOs in Ethiopia with the flexibility to change activities and even objectives if needed (Kebede et al., 2022^[63]).²³ Similarly, Switzerland's Governance and Decentralisation Programme (GDP) includes one project with the capital municipality in Mongolia, which established a training centre for its municipal offices. When the project was completed at the end of 2022, following a clear exist phase, the centre was operational, owned, run and funded solely by the municipality, and had also obtained ISO accreditation (SDC, 2022^[64]).

5. Outlook

This paper has highlighted a range of practical approaches adopted by DAC members to value and integrate local knowledge and support capacity sharing as a foundation for enabling local actor agency and therefore locally led development. These approaches have focused on: i) respecting, valuing and integrating local knowledge and expertise through policy commitments and practices that support the co-production of knowledge and local solutions; ii) facilitating tailored, holistic and systemic capacity sharing with a focus on sustainable development outcomes rather than shorter term outputs; and iii) supporting locally led capacity sharing centred on peer-to-peer exchange and equitable partnership models.

Specifically, DAC members could build on these good practices and explore how to:

- **Support systematic change.** Start with analysis of the local system and an understanding of the interplay of diverse actors and stakeholders, then co-design capacity-sharing approaches. Holistic approaches accommodate all levels of capacity, types of competencies, temporal and functional elements, and delivery capacities across both local actors and DAC member staff.
- **Customise approaches.** Anchor capacity sharing in local customs, language, socio-political nuances and a deep-seated understanding of the local context and capacities. Support approaches tailored to local systems and local priorities, with capacity strengthening and sharing efforts tailored to suit the dynamic and diverse needs on the ground.
- **Rethink the co-creation of knowledge.** Promote genuine collaborations and the co-production and sharing of insights and knowledge based on mutual respect, learning and reciprocity to increase local actor agency. This ensures that local voices frame discussions on the challenges and the design of subsequent solutions.
- **Reassess the capacity narrative.** Revisit perceptions on local knowledge and preconceptions on the capacity-sharing needs of local actors. Appreciate and build on existing capacities, strengthen diverse capacities with a range of approaches and design these founded on local knowledge and priorities.
- **Standardise and co-ordinate practices.** Tackle the disparities in DAC member due diligence, compliance and risk assessment systems and practices. This ensures that local partner efforts to strengthen their capacities to manage and comply with essential requirements are clarified and can be streamlined to support the diverse partnerships that characterise civil society and other local actors.
- **Establish equitable partnerships.** Underpin capacity sharing and strengthening with equitable partnerships that are centred on mutual respect, mutual accountability and reciprocity. This approach will guide capacity-sharing efforts towards a strength-based approach, which focuses on exchange, collaboration and mutual capacity sharing, whilst leveraging emerging practices, including triangular approaches.

- **Support locally led capacity sharing.** Invest in and identify funding modalities that enable civil society and local actor agency and ownership to secure sustainable and locally led approaches to capacity sharing. Ensure there is a clear role for local intermediaries (including coalitions and established networks), and local and national governments, to support peer-to-peer mentoring and capacity sharing which adopts a network rather than linear approach to local capacity strengthening, and appreciates and leverages existing local capacity and knowledge.

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Notes

¹ Locally led development has been defined as “an ongoing development process where diverse local actors exercise agency across development policy and programme dimensions (framing, design, delivery, learning, accountability) in given local operating contexts”. Further, local actors are defined as “individuals and entities based and operating within the local context of reference, subject to local laws, whose actions are centred on local issues”. The framework has been updated as a result of the peer learning exercise to support shared definitions and harmonisation across DAC members For more information on the definitions see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/51079bba-en>.

² High level commitments, including those made at the development effectiveness global summits in Paris, Accra, and Busan, and reinforced through global agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Grand Bargain, emphasise the centrality of national capacity, local agency, and leadership to achieving more effective and sustainable development.

³ Some proponents have gone further noting that we should “cancel capacity building altogether” as it comes with an “often unspoken assumption that the funder knows best”. See Frontline Solutions' proposal at: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/should-we-cancel-capacity-building/>.

⁴ Feedback was collected from 33 countries on Australia’s policy commitment to locally led development to inform its associated guidance

⁵ The Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA), endorsed by over 100 organisations, include the following principle: Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty, by “informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, traditional, indigenous, generational and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.” More information about the principles for LLA can be found here: <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/locally-led-adaptation/principles-locally-led-adaptation>.

⁶ For further information on immersion techniques, see : <https://www.participatorymethods.org/glossary/immersion>.

⁷ This information was obtained from an interview with a local stakeholder.

⁸ More information on the Pacific Data Hub can be found here: <https://pacificdata.org/>.

⁹ Further information on the partnership between the Institut Pasteur and the IRD is available at: <https://www.pasteur.fr/en/strengthening-ties-between-ird-and-institut-pasteur?language=fr>.

¹⁰ Some capacity strengthening activities may affect roles, competition, and vested interests in a manner that shifts authority and influence from some individuals and groups to other.

¹¹ For more information on the Tanzanian Foundation for Civil Society, see: <https://thefoundation.or.tz/>.

¹² USAID highlights seven core considerations for capacity strengthening: systems dependency; complexity; interrelationships; timeframes; responsiveness to change; local ownership; and measuring capacity gains through performance improvements.

¹³ For more information on Canada’s Women’s Voice and Leadership Programme, see: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/wvl_projects-projets_vlf.aspx?lang=eng.

¹⁴ For Prospera International Network of Women’s Funds, see: <https://prospera-inwf.org/>.

¹⁵ For more information on the Innovation for Change (I4C), see: <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/civil-society-innovation-initiative-greater-internet-freedom-projects-case-study-locally>.

¹⁶ More than 20 Norwegian government entities form part of the Knowledge Bank, and they engage in long-term cooperation (“twinning”) with government entities that have comparable functions and mandates in partner countries, with the aim of strengthening competencies and capacities of the public institutions to deliver on their mandates.

¹⁷ Triangular co-operation is when multi-stakeholders work together to co-create flexible, cost-effective, and innovation solutions. This comprises a combination of three roles, which may revolve throughout the implementation of the initiative, notably: i) the beneficiary partner, who seeks to tackle a specific development challenge; ii) the pivotal partner, with proven experience in the issue, shares resources, knowledge, and expertise; and iii) the facilitating partner, who helps to connect the beneficiary and the pivotal partners, supporting their collaboration financially and technically.

¹⁸ For Germany’s approach to triangular co-operation, see: <https://www.bmz.de/en/ministry/working-approach/triangular-cooperation>.

¹⁹ For more information on the Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Programme, see: <https://www.ilec.or.jp/en/activities/resource/14541/>.

²⁰ For more information on the Kizuna Project, see: <https://www.agci.cl/index.php/kizuna>.

²¹ In 2021, 28% of gross bilateral ODA was channelled through multilateral organisations (earmarked contributions) and 17% of core multilateral allocations. Further information can be found in the OECD Multilateral Development Finance Report 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8f1e2b9b-en>.

²² To date, 13 INGOs have signed the Pledge4Change (<https://pledgeforchange2030.org/pledges/>), which includes “equitable partnerships” in its first pledge for change.

²³ A recent evaluation of Sweden’s work across 60 years in Ethiopia confirms that its long-term, stable support has emphasised partnerships rather than conditionality, and has meant that Sweden has played a more active leadership role amongst funding partners than would be suggested by the volume of its ODA.