Implementation Tips
for USAID Partners

Sharing Resources and Knowledge Among the Global CSO Community   **Inclusive Development 1** | **2020**

This document serves as an introduction to a series of *Implementation Tips* with guidance on inclusion and inclusive development. This series provides information on how to comply with USAID inclusion policies, how to integrate inclusion principles both internally and externally, and considerations for engaging specific marginalized communities. Addressing inclusion internally refers to how civil society organizations (CSOs) support diversity and protect representatives of marginalized groups within their own organizations. Addressing inclusion externally refers to appropriate program approaches and relationships with other actors.

Definitions

Marginalized groups: People who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; or access to healthcare, education, employment) in practice and/or in principle for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Inclusion: Ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people, regardless of differences in personal characteristics or identities.

Barriers: Social, political, economic, or other dynamics that prevent the full and equal participation of a certain group in a program or a social benefit.

Introduction to Inclusion and Inclusive Development

Q What is inclusion and why is it important?

A USAID defines inclusive development as "the concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes."[1] There is growing evidence that inclusion of all social groups is important for development across sectors. For example, research has found a positive relationship between gender equality and progress in socioeconomic development for all members of society.[2] Research also has found that stigma, discrimination, and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people harm a country's economic performance by preventing LGBTI people from contributing their labor and unique strengths to a country's economy.[3] In sum, inclusion is good for development because it allows all members of society to contribute to the common good.

Diversity vs. Inclusion

Understanding inclusion first requires an understanding of diversity. Diversity refers to the ways people differ, including internal and external characteristics and identities. Differences may include gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, ethnic or religious background, and other characteristics. Inclusion involves ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people—regardless of personal characteristics or identities. It also involves harnessing the strengths of different groups to benefit an organization, community, or broader society.

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1 USAID, Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations
2 Lawson-Remer, T., Gender Equality Matters for Development Outcomes
3 Badgett, M.V.L, Nezhad, S., Waaldijk, C., and Rodgers Y. vander, The Relationship between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development: An analysis of emerging economies

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Definitions, cont.

Gender: The socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and obligations of females and males held in societies. These definitions of what it means to be female or male vary among cultures and change over time.

LGBTI: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex. These terms refer to people whose sexual orientation or gender identities differ from traditional expectations of males or females in particular societies. They are also referred to as sexual and gender minorities.

Ethnic Minority: A group of people of a particular ethnicity, race, or nationality living in a country or area where the majority of people are of a different ethnicity, race, or nationality. Although a country or area may have multiple ethnic minorities, a dominant ethnic group typically comprises the majority of the population.

Disability: Long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

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Respect for diversity is a key prerequisite for inclusion. Certain identity groups are often marginalized or excluded from legal, social, political, or economic opportunities due to stigma and discrimination that may be deeply rooted in historical and cultural norms. Meaningfully advancing a country's development requires establishing an equal playing field for all people, including groups that face marginalization and exclusion.

Inclusion and Civil Society

CSOs are an important channel through which citizens from traditionally marginalized or vulnerable communities can engage in governance processes, realize their rights, and advance their welfare. CSOs are often uniquely well-positioned to assess the needs of vulnerable people in their communities and the barriers that prevent them from accessing rights and services available to other members of society.

Some CSOs are dedicated to representing and advancing the interests of specific marginalized groups. Others focus on broader functional or sectoral missions and may identify and engage vulnerable groups in their work. For example, a CSO focused on community health may assess unique health problems facing women and seek solutions to address their needs. An organization providing workforce development services may assess disproportionate economic disadvantages facing a minority ethnic community and provide targeted assistance to members of that group.

Integrating Inclusion into Your Work

Integrating inclusion into your work should involve all stages of the program cycle—design, planning, implementation, evaluation, and learning.

- **Designing** an inclusive program requires understanding the barriers—including discrimination and exclusion—that can prevent individuals from participating in a program or benefitting from its intended services or outcomes. The left-hand column on p. 3 of this Tip lists a few of the many tools available to help design a more inclusive program.

- **Planning** an inclusive program requires outlining concrete steps to engage marginalized communities in program activities in a smart, sensitive, and safe manner.

- Throughout **implementation**, organizations should regularly assess the degree to which marginalized communities are being reached, how they are benefiting from a program, and if they are experiencing unintended consequences. If needed, programs

Resources

USAID's Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle in Mission Operations

USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy

USAID Disability Policy Paper

USAID's Youth In Development: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity

USAID's LGBT Vision for Action

The Transforming Agency, Access, and Power (TAAP) Toolkit

CDA Conflict-Sensitivity and Do No Harm Resources

For More Information

For this or other issues of Implementation Tips, please visit NGOConnect.net. The website is a dynamic and interactive portal dedicated to connecting and strengthening CSOs, networks, and CSO support organizations worldwide.

should adapt to ensure marginalized groups are meaningfully and positively engaged in the program.

- **Evaluation** should include another round of inclusion analysis to assess the program's experiences and outcomes for marginalized groups.

- Drawing on evaluation findings and information collected during implementation, organizations should facilitate **learning** that informs adaptations to better include diverse communities during implementation. See the Resources section for additional guidance and tools on integrating inclusion and inclusion analysis into your work.

Key Principles

Consider these two key principles for including marginalized groups in programs:

- **Do no harm:** CSOs should consider that efforts to engage marginalized groups could have unintended consequences, including negative effects. Accordingly, it is important for organizations to understand and address those consequences to ensure that their activities do not cause any unintentional harm - physical or psychological – to any individual or group. The "do no harm" principle should be incorporated throughout the program cycle, including preliminary inclusion analysis to inform program design and to identify and mitigate potential risks during implementation.

- **Nothing about us without us:** Inclusive approaches feature consultation with marginalized groups to understand their unique barriers, needs, and priorities. These groups should be involved in inclusion analysis and engaged as program staff or advisors.