



# STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT: A PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

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QUESTION AND ANSWER AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

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## **PRESENTERS**

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## **MODERATOR**

Julie MacCartee, USAID Bureau for Food Security

Julie MacCartee: We've got our questions over here in a kind of a side window that the presenters can see. We've been collecting them throughout the event. And so perhaps we should just jump back a little bit to when Sara was speaking. And Sophie \_\_\_\_\_ asked, in what ways have you found that capacity strengthening can go both ways between civil society organizations and donors or implementers? I'm not entirely sure what she means by can go both ways. But maybe if you could –

Sara Nitz: Yeah. I think actually that's a really key point. That capacity strengthening from interactions understanding and perspective and our discussions that we have is not only about capacity strengthening of civil society groups and local NGOs, but also capacity strengthening for local governments or donor implementers to how best respond and how to engage with local society. With local civil society groups and NGOs. And I think part of this handbook for engagement is to help with that capacity strengthening for USAID and local implementers and donors. So that there is that understanding and that there is that resource for people to look at and go to. But I think it is key that you can't just focus on strengthening civil society. You also have to look at training and building capacity of local governments or other entities to best respond to civil society so that it can be a mutual and connected coordination between those two groups. So if you just had civil society talking one direction, you're not gonna have a productive movement forward.

Julie MacCartee: Very interesting. I guess we'll keep moving with our questions that have come in. And it looks like there was a – oh, a clarifying question that came in from Indra during Carolyn's presentation. With regard to loans provided to women under your example, were they packaged differently? And I'm assuming she means loans provided to women versus men.

C. Barker-Villena: Mm hmm. So, again, because this is a locally driven project. It was locally driven, so, again, the idea was that we were working with the different rural savings and loans institutions and helping each one develop their own policies on their own context. And so yes, depending on those different local policies the loans were packaged differently. As I had mentioned earlier, there was an effort to really facilitate the access to credit by women. So the period of time that the women had to repay the loans tended to be longer because this was often the first time that they were getting a loan or getting credit. The credit lines that were used were structured differently as well for the women than they were for men, and, again, just I think

largely the idea was that they sort of tried to relax a little bit some of the requirements. And some of this refers back to what Stanlake was talking about in terms of land ownership. As we all know, women tend to not have ownership of land. And so that limits their ability to access credit as compared to men. So again, there was a relaxation of the requirements needed for accessing the loans for women.

I do want to mention, again, and highlight that in the toolkit that I gave the link to in my presentation on the last slide, there's a lot more in terms of lessons learned for each component of the project. So if you're interested in learning more about, particularly about the credit portion, there's a lot more information there. Including, Andrea, I know you were asking a little bit about sort of storytelling, about what the impacts are of – I think that's what your question was referring to. And there are a lot of just success stories, but also the challenges that were faced by some of the women and men in the project implementation on that website. So I highly recommend that everyone take a look at that.

Julie MacCartee:

Great. And if you want to be able to access that link you can download the presentation from today in the little file download box on the bottom left of your screen. That contains a link to the toolkit, and I believe it was also posted in the chat box by one of your colleagues. I mean perhaps not. We can also try and post that in the chat box again as well. But go ahead and download the slides. They'll also be available on Agrilinks.

All right. So, Sue, a few questions came in during your presentation. So I thought we would jump down to those. And Indra asks, with regard to community engagement, do you have any thoughts on reaching collective buy-in when considering cultural differences? Village to village. Region to region. How do cultural differences affect the ability to get a collective buy-in from a community or a region.

Sue Cant:

Yeah. It's a very good question and social and cultural inclusion is incredibly challenging even with this work where we try and have age, sex, ethnic desegregated scorecards. I mean for example, in Nepal a few years ago when we were doing the work we had separate groups for the women, the ethnic Taru women. So we're ensuring that their voice is also heard in the broader community meeting. But I

would acknowledge there are many challenges and we haven't looked, for example, to analyze necessarily how their contributions to those action plans might have been represented. And but what we do know, this is actually quite I'd say more of a cutting edge. Especially as we're looking at working in fragile states and using this kind of work and what the Columbia study did show is increasing in social cohesion from this work. So there are some benefits there. But certainly it's a very challenging area. And it's certainly a lot more work that can be done also around gender I would say, in that specific area.

I think more broadly we're doing this work in rural areas and it's very localized. So you mentioned village. We're doing this at more of the village subnational levels. So there tends to be, especially in rural areas, a more homogenous community. Unfortunately if we'd had Stanlake we certainly might have been able to address some of the resource conflict issues in that case study in Tanzania. But we're definitely seeing a lot more diversity when we're trying to do this work in urban settings. And that is much more complex.

Julie MacCartee: Great. Thank you, Sue. And a question also came in for you from Diana. Who asks, is local leadership comprised in this process by not being able to deliver on policies and investments when national or regional actors are not fulfilling plans?

Sue Cant: Yeah, the short answer to that is yes. There is actually a well-documented what we're starting to call local level accountability track. I should say. In this space. And the cutting edge is really trying to work at aggravating citizen voice and representations at the national level to get policy enforcement. But I'd also like to say that obviously this work is not a silver bullet but it's very significant we're finding in terms of contributions to subnational governance. Because there are often no platforms to bring local level leaders, be they traditional or elected, or bureaucrats together. And that's what this process is doing. Which reinforces the value of all of those local actors.

I'd also say that resources are not always the issue. You know there are bottlenecks and services that are not about resources. And so bring this collaborative process brings that out. And so we're seeing actions where we might not otherwise see them.

But I would share some of the really promising work we're seeing at the national level. When we aggregate the citizen voice, and this will go a little bit to the technology question, because World Vision's now got a database where we're aggregating our work across some thousands now of surface points. I'd like to share this example in Uganda just to highlight how we can break through this local level accountability trap.

In Uganda we had a situation where citizen voice was aggregated across several districts from this work. And in a joint NGO coalition there was an intense campaign which led to pressure on the parliamentarians who then blocked that year's budget, 2012/13, to ensure an increased allocation of 19 million dollars for more than 6,000 health workers. So we can really aggregate this work and push the resource question up to the national level. It is possible. And there's a lot of work being done in particular by Jonathan Fox at American University on how we can bring together this citizen monitoring and policy monitoring to have much greater impact at the governance level.

Julie MacCartee:

Great. Thank you so much, Sue. All right, we have a few more questions to get through. And, we see a question just came in from you but I'm not entirely sure what you mean by tagline. So if you wouldn't mind perhaps just elaborating a tiny bit on that question that would be great.

But we have another question that came in a bit earlier from Indra about how are large companies and stakeholders being engaged to help bring down costs to execute programs, as well as secure a long term commitment to continuing progress? Quite a good question I think. It came in kind of broadly through all of these speakers. So I'm not sure who would like to jump in on that one.

Sue Cant:

I've got an example I can share in DRC, but it's certainly a whole new and very large and complicated area working with the private sector. But we've had some success with TSM in terms of doing social accountability for extractive, any extractive industries where we've brought communities together with TFM and the

government to ensure that TFM actually provides services to those communities. And so we have seen some success there.

Sara Nitz: Yeah. And this is Sara from InterAction. I know from kind of consultations and conversations about Feed the Future 2.0 and moving forward, that public/private partnerships is a key focus of theirs about how best to engage not only USAID but also the continuum of US government assistance. And connecting with commerce or with whether it's different trade organizations so that there is that continuum and sustainability of programming with private and consultation and larger stakeholders as well.

Julie MacCartee: Excellent. Thank you. And I don't believe we have Stanlake back on or do we, Adam?

Adam S: I think we do.

Julie MacCartee: Stanlake, if you're there, let us know. I'm not hearing your voice at the moment. All right.

Stanlake Kaziboni: I'm back.

Julie MacCartee: Oh, you are? Excellent.

[Cross Talk]

Well, we had a question come in about did your study address insurance and if any changes resulted. So if you could address that. And then also if you'd like to make any final points that you weren't able to make when you got cut off, we'd welcome those as well.

Stanlake Kaziboni:

Okay. Thank you. Just to recap what I was about to present on the last slide. So some of the issues that technical assistance to NGOs was able to demonstrate to us, to attribute towards empowered world view and citizen voice and action, where in this location their vibrancy, the small holder farming sector has become more vibrant. New and increasingly organized agriculture value chains. Decreasing vulnerability. Communities were able to bounce back after a drought without external support. Which demonstrate that communities are now better organized. Improving livelihood outcomes. Direct beneficiaries had more income. About \$58.00 higher monthly income compared to the control group. And also policies, institutions, processes. Communities and local government authorities to formalize and enforce natural resource governance. And are putting in place a progressive framework.

So these are some of the things that are emerging. Also remember that this evaluation is of the period of halfway. That's about two and a half years after the project had started. So we believe that there's gonna be more impactful, more results that are going to demonstrate that citizen voice and action can do a whole lot more across a range of interventions. The one that we mentioned is around natural resources. We have other things that we're looking at at value chains. We have other thing that we have also, which we're using around risk reduction. So we're pretty confident that the emerging results will filter through to other sectors.

With regards to the question that was asked, insurance. I'm not really sure if I'm responding to it correctly. Once you have title deeds, the local title deeds, that in itself gives you access to be able to actually borrow collateral so you can access loans from banks. You can also rent it out. So you can actually get income from that land. Maybe if the person who posed that question, if they can clarify exactly what it is that they meant. Thank you.

Julie MacCartee:

Thank you so much, Stanlake. As all of you can see, we have some polls on the screen which we would greatly appreciate your input on. To let us know what topics you would like to see in upcoming Agro Links webinars. Let us know if you found this useful and can apply it to your work. And, of course, let me just say if you'd like to join the Agro Links mailing list or have any suggestions on how we can improve future webinars these type of suggestions are very, very helpful to us.

All right. We've tackled pretty much all of the questions coming in today. If anyone has any final questions speak now. Or hold your peace. Although we're always happy to continue the conversation and engagement around society and the handbook and the questions you have either through the Agro Links website or of course reaching out to the speakers directly. I'm sure they'd be happy to engage with all of you on your further questions and comments.

Well, I think I'm not seeing any other questions come in. And we've had some great engagement today in the webinar. So I think perhaps we should go ahead and bring it to a close. So I would like to thank our excellent line up of speakers for some very interesting presentations and some great useful resources. And most importantly I would like to thank our attendees. You are the reason that we continue to hold Agro Links webinars. On behalf of Feed the Future and the Bureau for Food Security. So thank you very, very much for attending, for asking your questions, for engaging. Letting us know what you're hearing. And we hope to see you at future webinars. And around the civil society engagement topic and circles. We'll keep talking about this. All right. So we will sign off. And have a good rest of your day.

[End of Audio]