



**USAID**  
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# CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED USAID-PERU PROJECTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Photo: Cindy Prada

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# PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to offer relevant conclusions and recommendations to USAID from a series of case studies highlighting the Capacity Development (CD) interventions carried out by seven activities<sup>1</sup> funded by USAID/Peru. The following questions guided the research conducted to develop the case studies:

## 1. What capacity development **model or methodology was applied** by the activities?

This question aims to identify the model or theoretical approach to CD that the activity used in the intervention, including how the activity design conceptually focused on capacity improvements, the methodologies and strategies used, the components of capacity development considered, and any gender or intercultural approaches and considerations that were taken into account.

## 2. How did USAID **activities implement** capacity development models and methodologies?

Several aspects related to activity implementation were addressed. Questions attempted to identify the strategies and mechanisms used to obtain institutional commitment and stakeholder engagement; consideration of the institutional context of counterpart institutions; and how initial performance was described by implementing partners. Interventions implemented included training (e.g., workshops, courses, internships, mentoring, diplomas) and technical assistance (e.g., coaching, technical meetings, tutoring, accompaniment), as well as the organization and implementation of activities that involved sharing experiences among institutions.

## 3. How were CD **achievements** of activities **measured and monitored**?

This question aims to understand the monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as the indicators, used to measure the results and outcomes obtained at both the individual and institution levels.

## 4. What **achievements**, in the CD of individuals and institutions, were achieved as a result of USAID interventions, **according to the monitoring and evaluation** system results?

The last question aims to identify the most important achievements, as well as the primary obstacles and limitations, to successful capacity development in each case study, as related to the sustainability and institutional mastery of new capacities by counterparts and target populations.

The cases analyzed are as follows:

### *Box 1: Cases Analyzed in Selected Activities*

Project	Case
New Alternatives (NAP)	Contributing to the Strengthening of a Life Without Drugs in the Monzón Valley - Huánuco
Amazonia Lee	Innovation to Improve the Learning of Reading and Writing in San Martín
ProDescentralización	From Practice to Policy: an Experience in Articulating and Capacity Development to Improve Education Services in San Martín
Pro-Integridad	Contribution to the Anticorruption Justice System in San Martín
Perú Bosques	Contribution to Forest Management in Ucayali, the case of the Regional Environmental Authority
Peru Forest Sector Initiative (PFSI)	Contributing to Forest Management in Loreto: The First Geospatial Information Portal
Amazon Conservation Initiative (ICAA II)	Conservation of the Amazon based on Learning about Economic Incentives in Ucayali

## >>PURPOSE

The conceptual framework used for this study is the Human and Institutional Capacity Development model (USAID, 2010), which offers a systemic, integrated and holistic approach to understanding the process of capacity development at both the institutional and individual levels.

This study uses a case study methodology, built on information obtained through an extensive desk review of available documents as well as interviews with key informants. This methodology allows for an integrated and in-depth examination of the seven activities identified by USAID that have some degree of CD interventions incorporated into their work, but also represent a diversity of activities covering all of the Mission's three Development Objectives. Additionally, the team prepared a matrix of findings to yield specific conclusions from each case, in addition to cross-cutting conclusions from across all seven cases.

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## MODEL AND METHODOLOGY

- The concept of capacity development is understood and implemented by the seven activities using diverse methodologies, but in most cases aims to strengthen institutional development. In the case of training activities, designs for the interventions did not always include a clear link between the overall work of the activity and institutional strengthening.
- In activities that were most clearly oriented toward CD, either as a general objective or a specific intermediate result, the methodology was generally either derived from a theoretical conceptual model or developed based on lessons from previous interventions. When the focus of the activity was other than CD, the activity generally didn't apply a specific theoretical model or approach to capacity-development, nor consider targeted gender or intercultural approaches.

### **Recommendations:**

- To successfully advance CD, the activity design should explicitly include a definition of the capacity development component(s) planned and the target audience in mind, to clearly distinguish among related activities, and set aside budget resources to effectively monitor tasks. In case of a cross-cutting CD component, carving out explicit budget and staffing requirements to support the CD activities is critical, otherwise it is likely true CD will not occur.
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## IMPLEMENTATION

### **Conclusions:**

- In interventions that carry out capacity development activities according to the needs and requirements of a local counterpart, activities were successful in establishing a dynamic and direct relationship with local leadership. This relationship can be quite useful. On the other hand, some activities focused their needs assessment on CD at the individual level, without orienting it towards the achievement of sustainable institutional capacities. For those activities whose core purpose is capacity development, local institutions were willing to work with USAID.
- There are technical assistance activities that support institutional arrangements of the counterpart, but without clearly defining the design, implementation and monitoring of this support. Consequently, at the institutional level, it is difficult to visualize the capacity development results of the assistance and its specific contribution to the final results, and the mechanisms in place to ensure integration with the individual trainings.

## >>IMPLEMENTATION

- In some cases, technical assistance activities oriented to produce counterpart institutional documents did not include a socialization or training of organization members. This might lead to a gap in sustainability.
- Each activity addresses gender and cultural backgrounds in different ways, and in some cases there is no gender analysis that can guide specific strategies and activities with a gender focus.
- USAID's support and involvement with the activity contributes significantly to reinforce the commitment of the counterpart to the activity. This allows feasibility and achievement of expected results of the intervention.

### **Recommendations:**

- Activities should begin implementation with a contextual diagnosis of counterparts to identify the opportunities and risks and to improve the assumptions. To do this, continued use of a participatory approach is necessary. The approach will better elucidate the contribution of the activity to the counterpart's achievements, manage risks, and reformulate the activity strategy in a timely manner. This diagnosis can be carried out through a contextual baseline or situational diagnosis that identifies and describes the trends, risks, and opportunities of the socio-political environment related to capacity development objectives of the activity.
- Clearly define the design and implementation of a capacity building intervention, including monitoring of technical assistance tasks. This allows identifying the scope of the activity and distinguishing the contribution of the activity to strengthen capacities.
- After initial products or institutional documents are developed for your local partner, the activity must ensure the socialization and training of counterpart staff on each new tool to teach our counterparts how to use the tools.

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## MONITORING

### **Conclusions:**

- Progress reports for partners are not homogeneous, since there are no common indicators or reporting formats required for all partners. This makes it difficult to monitor, measure, and compare the degree of progress that the various activities achieved.
- Monitoring systems in capacity-building interventions do not record important assumptions related to the institutional context, nor do they systematically observe the evolution and/or trends. It is reasonable to assume that, in cases of greater institutional complexity, the absence of a systematic monitoring of the environment represents a proportional risk for the activity to achieve the expected results.
- Capacity development activities are often not directly monitored in terms of expected CD results, but rather reported on as part of the achievements of the counterpart. However, focusing on the achievement of counterpart results to corroborate the effectiveness of capacity development activities assumes that there is little influence from other possible institutional or contextual determinants, which is not always the case.

### **Recommendations:**

- To distinguish USAID's contribution towards institutional capacity development, the desired outcome of the training activity should be clearly stated up front to align the design and monitoring instruments should be developed early on. Use specific CD indicators for activities where CD is a desired outcome, at the processes, results and impact levels.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

## **Conclusions:**

- In all the cases, the activities reported the satisfactory achievement of their expected results in relation to capacity development and institutional change, with documentary support and considering the current commitment and interest of the counterpart.

## **Recommendations:**

- Ensure the formulation of clear and appropriate strategies for the institutionalization of products developed with Mission support, making effective linkages between individual and institutional levels. Specifically, include actions oriented towards the sustainability of activity achievements, in terms of institutional and personal changes in the counterpart.

The content of this document is based on the study of "Capacity Development in Selected USAID-Peru Projects". You can find the complete report on PGRD: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00N45V.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N45V.pdf)

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