

Data for Impact’s Approach to Individual and Institutional Capacity Strengthening

Data for Impact (D4I), a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), supports countries to **mobilize the power of data** as actionable evidence that can improve programs, policies, and—ultimately—health outcomes. As an Associate Award of the MEASURE Evaluation project, D4I builds on a decades-long **legacy of working alongside local partners** to strengthen countries’ capacity to collect, manage and use high quality health information.

The objective of D4I is to increase capacity for rigorous evaluation. D4I works in partnership with local institutions to generate evidence, ensure data quality, integrate gender, and promote data use.

D4I works to ensure that its capacity strengthening approach is aligned with USAID’s [Local Capacity Strengthening Policy](#). Wherever possible, the project incorporates intentional, demand-driven processes that start with understanding local systems and the roles that local actors play. Working from this systems perspective, D4I:

1. Collaborates with local partners to **identify their priorities for capacity strengthening** and understand what improved performance would look like.
2. **Plans, implements, and assesses the effectiveness of integrated strategies** including training and mentorship, evaluation co-implementation or learning by doing,

building communities and forums for networking and learning, and supporting the development of new resources and practices to help sustain capacity and performance gains.

Figure 1 (page 3) details the ways in which D4I is intentional in partnership with local organizations for evaluation and research activities through the design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination phases.

D4I supports local actors within existing systems to strengthen capacity and enhance overall system performance.

Strengthening university-based evaluation capacity in the Democratic Republic of Congo: In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), D4I partnered with the Kinshasa School of Public Health (KSPH) to conduct an evaluation the country’s Integrated Health Program. In addition to collaborating on core elements of the evaluation, D4I worked with KSPH to design a capacity strengthening plan centered on KSPH’s priorities for strengthening evaluation and research skills. This included new modules for KSPH’s existing web-based learning platform, a resource library, and an online



The Dean of KSPH



community of practice. The goals of this set of interventions include increasing knowledge and self-efficacy for specific evaluation skills, expanding collaboration and coordination, and enhancing the school's ability to identify and win grant opportunities.

Strengthening capacities of local government partners in Rwanda:

In Rwanda, D4I partnered with the National Child Development (NCD) Agency to strengthen the agency's capacity to collect, manage, and use routine data to optimize child protection and care services. As part of the care system reforms, the Government of Rwanda and its partners identified the need to strengthen administrative data collection and reporting systems to improve availability and use of data. D4I conducted a participatory M&E capacity assessment with the NCD Agency to understand their priorities. Results informed a set of M&E capacity strengthening interventions, including tailored on-the-job training, mentorship, and staff pairing focused on helping participants master M&E fundamentals related to the NCD Agency's data quality assurance and other agency guidelines.

A tool for catalyzing capacity strengthening: D4I's Research and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool and Resource Package (RECAP):

The Research and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool and Resource Package (RECAP) is designed to catalyze and help plan for institutional strengthening. RECAP includes an assessment tool, an action planning template, and institutional strengthening resource guide. RECAP is used by organizations to set priorities for action planning to strengthen organizational capacity in line with local priorities.

"[RECAP] is a very good tool that can help an institution to review itself and plan of effective ways of managing itself since the tool makes it possible for institutions to identify [its] own gaps and resources needed for its operations."

– Local research partner

Strengthening local research capacity through the D4I Small Grants Program:

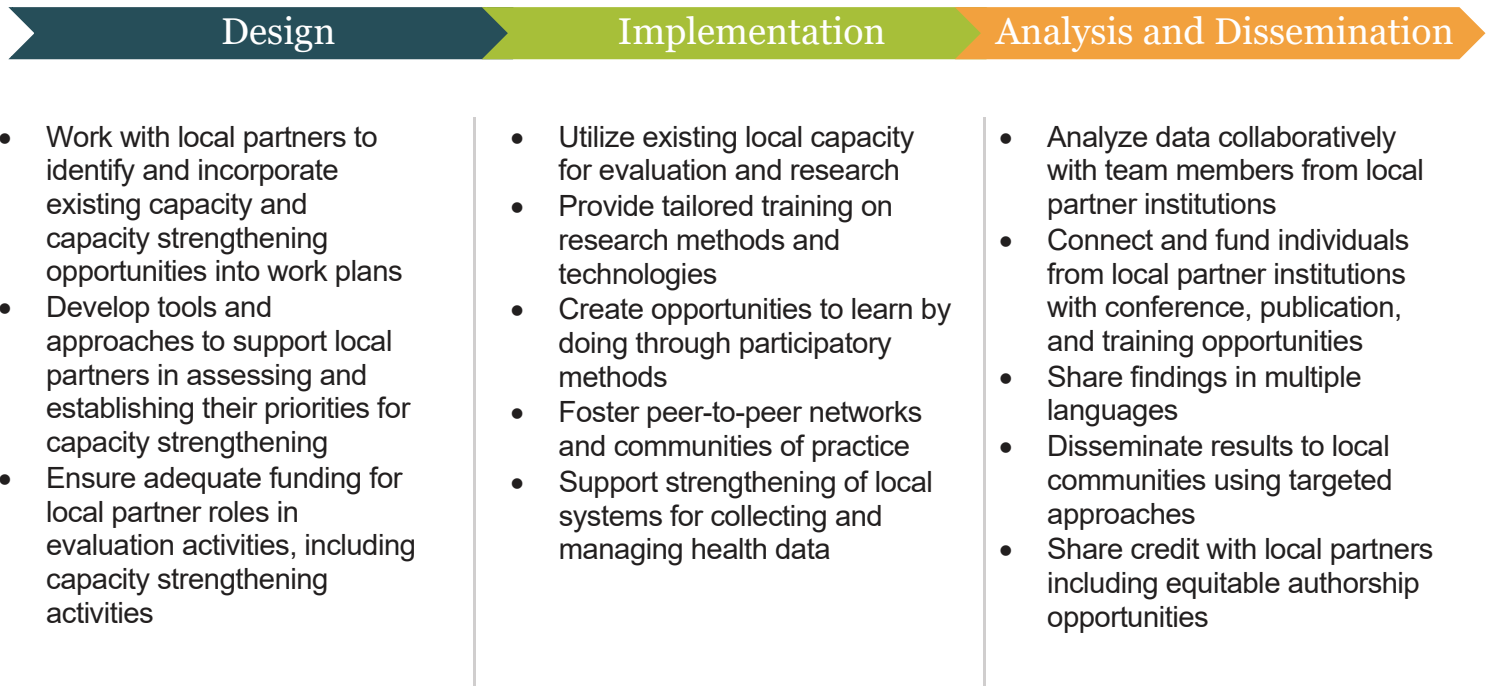
D4I awards small grants to universities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in USAID PRH-priority countries to conduct family planning-focused research projects of their design. The Central Institute of Science and Technology (CiST) in Nepal, the Health Policy Research Group (HPRG) at the University of Nigeria, the Department of Population Science and Human Resource Development at the University of Rajshahi in Bangladesh, and the Organization for Research and Community Development (ORCD) in Afghanistan were supported with tailored mentorship throughout the research process. Participants in the program reported gaining experience with qualitative and fiscal space analysis, as well as writing and program management.



ORCD research team, Afghanistan



Fig. 1*¹: How D4I supports local capacity strengthening throughout the evaluation and research process



For more information

D4I supports countries to realize the power of data as actionable evidence that can improve programs, policies, and—ultimately—health outcomes. We strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of local partners to collect, analyze, and use data to support sustainable development. For more information, visit <https://www.data4impactproject.org/>



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¹ *Figure adapted from *A checklist for bilateral research partnerships*, D Hodson et al.