

Delivering Data Where it Counts

Calls for more inclusive development activity, aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an increasingly complex set of development actors spur the data revolution and a demand for better, more targeted decision-making.¹ Increasingly, subnational governments – that account for almost 40% of worldwide public spending² – are responsible for achieving the SDGs’ “leave no one behind” mandate, and for executing government programming and expenditure. In addition, by 2030, 90% of jobs will require some level of data skills in order to access the opportunities of the global digital economy.³

Within this context, a number of agencies and partners are working to increase the use of data in decision-making, and to strengthen subnational government capacities. The Data Collaboratives for Local Impact (DCLI) program⁴ is the result of a partnership funded by President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and implemented by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

Through informal consultations and its own programming, the DCLI program has been gathering case studies to document drivers and the value of subnational data programming.

Based on these case studies and DCLI learnings, an initial set of principles for subnational data use has been developed. These principles – and the collection of case studies – are a living document.⁵

Unlocking the potential of data and technology to achieve more inclusive, efficient, and effective development outcomes will take time. We should continue to share lessons learned – both successes and failures – to catalyze evidence-based and sustainable development progress.

In addition to the online call for contributions,⁶ the DCLI program will continue to consult the broader community in the coming year, focusing on subnational partners to further validate and improve these principles. Following this engagement, final principles will be presented at the 2020 World Data Forum in Bern, Switzerland, together with a call for organizations and governments to endorse the principles and apply them in their work. **Through this consensus development, we hope to encourage funders to increase the proportion of funding that is directed to subnational data use – and inform where future resources are invested.**

1. See <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

2. See <http://www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/Subnational-Governments-Around-the-World-%20Part-1.pdf>.

3. The European Commission Science Hub, 2018.

4. See <http://dcli.co>.

5. See <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-e3NlhDdOSTEqFcxvGFVKEWw8DIbnMLiS5vYYn4dDB4/edit>.

6. See <https://www.developmentgateway.org/blog/open-call-subnational-data-use-consultation>.



Principles for Subnational Data Use

1. Listen, document, share

Funders should engage with communities to shape development investments. Central to this approach is beginning with listening and gathering data on community needs.

Featured case studies:

- **Aligning budgets to community needs:** Samhir Vasdev, IREX
 - **Keeping CALM during sectoral system design:** Carmen Cañas and Paige Kirby, Development Gateway
 - **IMPACT teams for improved supply chain performance:** Yasmin Chandani, inSupply Health, John Snow, Inc.
 - **How Lanet-Umoja got a health facility:** Jay Bhalla and Benjamin Charagu, The Open Institute
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2. Measure at community scale

We must continue experimenting with creative ways to measure the impact of subnational data use. Quantifiable data are cornerstones of program design and accountability, yet traditional tools are inadequate for measuring the impact of subnational data programs.

Featured case studies:

- **Defining subnational data use indicators:** Samhir Vasdev, IREX
 - **Connecting data to local development challenges:** Jorge Florez, Global Integrity
 - **Measuring transparency and accountability for better outcomes:** Courtney Tolmie, Results for Development
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3. Build local skills

Data transparency efforts should be paired with interventions that increase awareness of the value of data, and with skills needed to transform data into useful information.

Featured case studies:

- **Designing for the local user:** Kathryn Alexander, Development Gateway
 - **Subnational data in action:** Andrea Fletcher, Cooper/Smith
 - **DREAMS South Africa dashboards for improved HIV outcomes:** Manyobvo Machipanda, Lipontseng Matsaseng, and Hilda Manzana, JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
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4. Bridge levels

Data use investments should foster feedback loops and bi-directional information flows between local priorities and national-level decisions.

Featured case studies:

- **How we can make all voices count:** Jorge Florez, Global Integrity
 - **You are the key to data use:** Breese McIlvaine and Emily Carnahan, PATH
 - **Visualizing quality to achieve use:** Sarie Podges and Yazabantu Soldati, JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
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5. Be intentionally inclusive

Social inclusion and gender sensitivity are critical to achieving development progress. Sensitivity means more than generating disaggregated data: it also means equipping youth, women, and other underrepresented communities with the skills, incentives, and support to use that data.

Featured case studies:

- **Empowering women and youth with skills for the digital economy:** Mitch Blaser and Agnieszka Rawa, MCC-PEPFAR Data Collaboratives for Local Impact
- **DCDJ Fellows answer local needs in Cote d'Ivoire:** Marie-Claude Zando, Vanessa Goas, and Emily Fung, Development Gateway
- **Surpassing Participation Targets – Women of the DCDJ Data Fellowship:** Lina Djolo, Fondation Performances Sociétales, Marie-Claude Zando, Development Gateway

6. Fund local organizations

Investing in and working through local institutions should be the default practice. Programs benefit from local know-how, and local organizations gain additional capacity through involvement with international partners and funders – thereby optimizing development impact.

Featured case studies:

- **Investing in local institutions builds stronger, lasting ecosystems:** Dara Lipton, IREX
- **Local partnerships, local strategy:** Frida Seka, Council of NGOs fighting AIDS and other pandemics in Côte d'Ivoire (COSCI), and Marie-Claude Zando, Development Gateway



Data Collaboratives for Local Impact: Making the Case for Subnational Data Use

Mitch Blaser and Agnieszka Rawa, MCC-PEPFAR Data Collaboratives for Local Impact

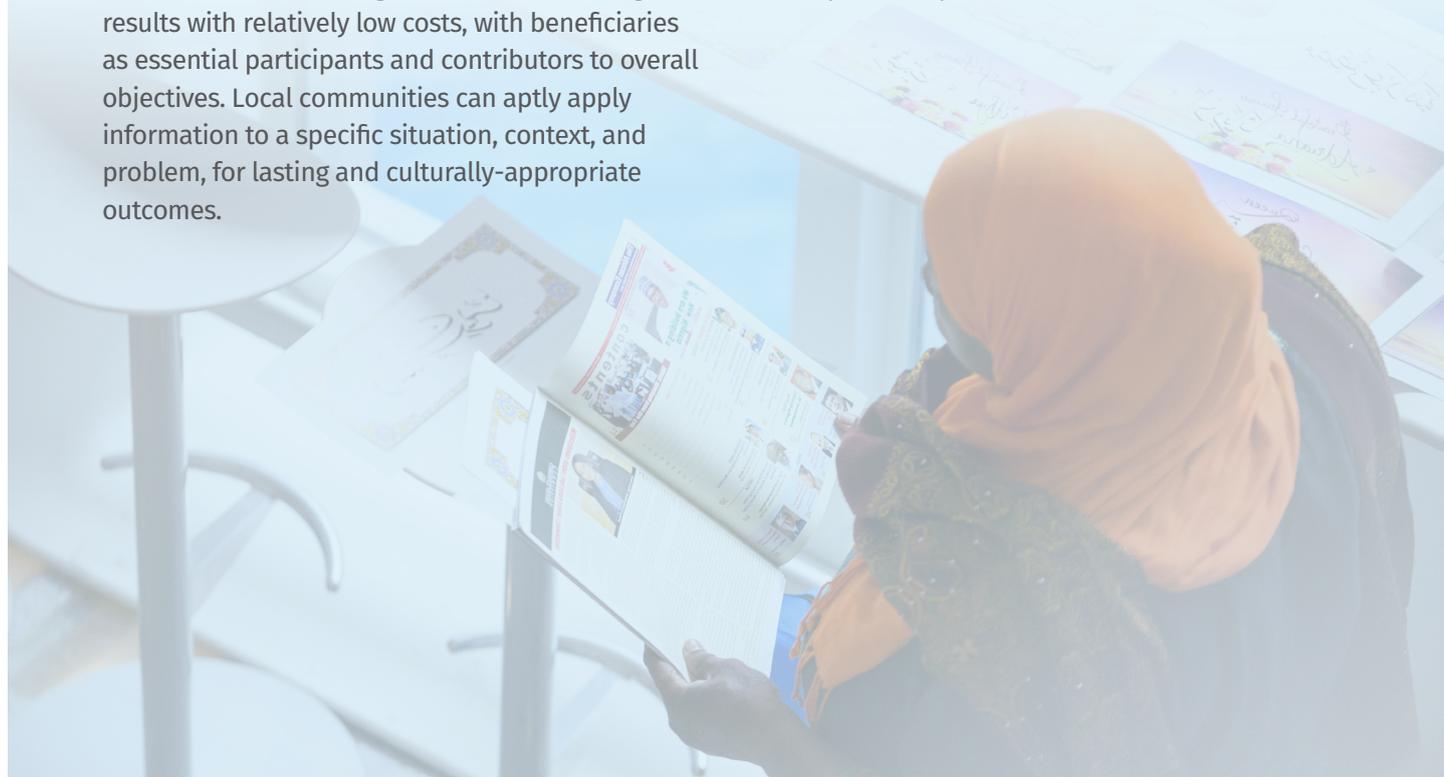
Achieving progress requires governments and development agencies to make sound, evidence-based programmatic investments. In pursuit of this aim, a significant level of development resources are now spent on monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

But investments must also be shaped by citizens' articulated needs. Shifting focus to empowering communities enables citizens to meaningfully co-create solutions for productive, sustainable, and healthy lives. The DCLI program, a partnership between PEPFAR and MCC has been examining how "front-end" attention to locally-generated and locally-used data can lead to better results.

Our experience indicates that data-driven subnational methodologies can achieve lasting results with relatively low costs, with beneficiaries as essential participants and contributors to overall objectives. Local communities can aptly apply information to a specific situation, context, and problem, for lasting and culturally-appropriate outcomes.

Finally, the increasing economic importance of data and digital skills – and the risk of widening social and gender divides – means that women, youth, and other marginalized groups must be intentionally included in subnational programming. This requires increasing funds for community-focused work, and identifying new and innovative approaches for accountability and achieving results.

Based on what DCLI has learned so far, we will continue to stretch our capabilities and improve work the U.S. Government and others are funding. Reducing poverty, eradicating HIV, and achieving the SDGs will benefit from changes to national and international systems – particularly systems that facilitate community-driven change and development impact.



Partners

