The case study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of VEGA and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.
This case study focuses on local capacity development for gender integration in the work of VEGA-member the Institute for International Education (IIE) through its management of the Emerging Markets Development Advisers Program (EMDAP). This research documents IIE’s experience with the assignment of EMDAP volunteers to women’s associations which serve women’s microenterprise and entrepreneurial needs. The EMDAP experience provides valuable lessons on what is needed for successful gender integration into USAID capacity development programs. The methodology was a review of reports and documents from IIE, EMDAP, and USAID, as well as interviews with key personnel of IIE.

The following seeks to contribute to USAID’s goal to serve as a thought leader on local capacity development (LCD) as well as gender integration, as embodied in the “Policy Framework 2011-2015”, the “USAID FORWARD” reform agenda, the “Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment”, and the October 2013 draft document “Local Systems: A Framework for Sustainable Development.”

The Emerging Markets Development Advisers Program (EMDAP)

The EMDAP is a fellowship program of USAID which places graduate students and recent graduates from programs in business or public administration, public policy, and international affairs with local organizations in USAID-assisted countries. The EMDAP volunteers provide technical assistance, supporting USAID’s strategy of building sustainable local capacity by transferring knowledge to local organizations. By targeting assistance to the requirements of micro-, small-, and medium-sized businesses and the organizations that serve them, EMDAP also supports USAID’s strategy of LCD as an essential element in broad-based, sustainable economic growth.
EMDAP is a demand driven program with placement based on requests from USAID field missions or bureaus to meet USAID development priorities. Through 12-month work assignments with new or existing local organizations, the aim is for EMDAP advisers to contribute to sustainability by providing capacity building in areas such as business planning, organizational operations, product marketing, financial systems and reporting, human resources, and internet technology.

The Institute for International Education (IIE) & EMDAP

IIE is among the world’s largest and most experienced international education organizations, providing international education and training programs since 1919. It designs and implements scholarship and fellowship programs and academic exchanges to meet education and economic goals in developing countries and to provide future public and private sector leaders with skills and leadership training. In addition to programs focused on developing individual capacity, IIE also works to build the capacity of local civil society and non-governmental organizations through programs such as EMDAP.

IIE has administered EMDAP since 2000, first through a cooperative agreement with USAID and since 2007 through USAID’s associate award to VEGA. Working with USAID and local partners, IIE designs host country placements to meet U.S. development priorities and local needs, and recruits and supports graduate students and recent masters-level graduates as volunteer advisers.

Current EMDAP advisers are working with organizations such as the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Employers Association of Indonesia, the American Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, the American Chamber of Commerce in Uzbekistan, the Lao Chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce, and USAID’s Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment/Office of Microfinance and Private Enterprise Promotion.

INNOVATION AND LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (LCD)

In collaboration with USAID missions in Jordan, Mexico, and Nepal, IIE placed eight EMDAP advisers with local women’s associations serving and supporting women’s small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These assignments aimed to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the host organizations while supporting USAID goals of economic growth and women’s empowerment. By building capacity of organizations which serve women’s small businesses, EMDAP advisers contributed to increasing women’s access to and control of economic assets while also advancing economic development and private sector growth objectives.

In Jordan the women’s organizations were: the Jordanian Women’s Development Society; the Jordan National Forum for Women; the Microfund for Women; and the Business Professional Women’s Association – Amman. In Mexico, the EMDAP adviser worked with Alternativa Solidaria (AlSol), a women’s microfinance institution in the southern highlands state of Chiapas. In Nepal the organization was the Jankpur Women’s Development Center.
IMPACT

USAID missions, host country partner organizations, and volunteer advisers give high marks to the value of EMDAP in meeting its three-fold goals of contributing to USAID development goals, host organization needs, and the advisers’ professional development.

“SMEs as well as business associations feel that EMDAPs (advisers) provide valuable assistance to build capacity of their organizations, and transfer their knowledge to the local staff. This contributes considerably to their sustainability.”
- USAID Mission Supervisor

EMDAP evaluations in 2006 and 2007 provide qualitative evidence of positive impact of the EMDAP program for years which included the adviser assignments to women’s associations, although these are not evaluated separately.

The 2006 impact report by IIE indicates that EMDAP volunteers provided local organizational strengthening in areas such as: a sustainability approach to conservation enterprise; business development services for communities; the introduction and marketing of standards; analysis of projects; and venture capital skills. EMDAP assistance to non-profits serving women-owned businesses during the period included technical assistance on management structures and operational systems. Host organizations indicated that they would recommend hosting an EMDAP advisor to another organization, and mission sponsors said that they think their missions should continue to sponsor advisors. The vast majority (83%) of the volunteer advisers reported that the program had met their goals and expectations.

In order to assess the benefit of the EMDAP program for microenterprise development (MD), USAID commissioned The QED Group (QED) to undertake an evaluation of the program’s MD impacts by disaggregating the types of advisers and host organizations. QED surveyed USAID officials, host organizations, and advisers and found the program to be very positive and cost-effective. EMDAP assignments met a variety of LCD needs including: enhancing the management capacity of the organization; designing and implementing training; assistance with market assessments; and funding opportunities. It also found that volunteer advisers reported a highly positive impact on their professional development. The report noted that the program’s monitoring and evaluation system is predominantly structured to collect data from the advisers rather than the host organizations, so assessment of impact is based on reports of the advisers.

Photo: Ana Luisa Pinto, EMDAP Adviser in Mexico
The following is a sample of the local women’s organizations in Jordan and Mexico in which IIE placed EMDAP advisers, and highlights of the EMDAP adviser’s capacity development impact (aside from technical assistance provided through specific tasks).

**Jordan**

**Jordan National Forum for Women (JNFW)**

JNFW was formed to promote Jordanian women in the political, legislative, educational, health, social, economic, and environmental fields through the implementation of national strategies for the benefit of women.

The EMDAP adviser worked in the Aqaba and Amman branches of JNFW to provide capacity development in marketing, strategic planning, public relations/external communications, and fundraising.

**Microfund for Women (MFW)**

MFW is a private Jordanian not-for-profit organization under the Ministry of Trade and Industry whose purpose is to empower underprivileged women as they become income earners and decision-makers in their households and communities. The MFW has approximately 250 employees located at headquarters and in branch locations.

The EMDAP adviser provided capacity development in communications and human resource policies according to non-governmental organization (NGO) and international non-governmental organization (INGO) best practices.

**Business Professional Women’s Association – Amman (BPW-A)**

BPW-A is a non-profit NGO established in 1976 by professional women in Jordan dedicated to building the capabilities and capacity of Jordanian women by providing services of professional women and business owners.

A first EMDAP adviser provided capacity development on fundraising and financial sustainability and contract management; program expansion; and the establishment of member committees. A second adviser, requested after the success of the first, helped the organization to develop a marketing strategy and a fundraising strategy, including building capacity of employees to implement the strategic tasks.

**Mexico**

**Alternativa Solidaria (AlSol)**

AlSol is a local microfinance institution serving 13,753 clients, all women, in rural and semi-urban areas of Chiapas. Using the Grameen solidarity group lending methodology, AlSol offers small loans and life insurance to women entrepreneurs of scarce means. In addition to financial services, AlSol offers its clients social programs in literacy and nutrition.

The EMDAP adviser provided capacity development on communications materials, training sessions, and focus groups with clients.
LESSONS LEARNED

EMDAP is a highly successful and cost-efficient program in providing synergies of local capacity development while strengthening the international professional experience of the volunteer advisers.

EMDAP also provides an important mechanism for advancing gender integration goals.

A key lesson, however, is that to assess and maximize impact, EMDAP indicators should include measures of the benefit to the host organization.

CONCLUSION

The examples of EMDAP volunteers placed by IIE with women’s associations, as described in this case study, indicate the tremendous potential for maximizing both economic development and gender equity goals through such assignments.

USAID and IIE should consider expansion of EMDAP assignments to women’s associations to advance economic development and gender goals. This expansion could be accompanied by the creation of coordinated goals for, and management of, the EMDAP-gender assignments, possibly with specialized training and supervision of these advisers by IIE. IIE has significant gender experience through its education and training programs for individual women, including the TechWomen program through its new Center for Women’s Leadership Initiatives. Expanding IIE’s gender work to include capacity development at the level of women’s organizations through EMDAP can build on its extensive gender expertise.

For greater effectiveness of the gender assignments and the EMDAP placements overall, monitoring and evaluation indicators should be established to measure impact on the host organization.
AUTHOR: KATHLEEN BARNETT

Dr. Kathleen Barnett is a consultant in gender and economic development. She has worked on gender assessments of economic and trade projects, policy reports, program design and management, technical assistance and training, and strategic business development in countries around the world, including USAID projects in Bulgaria, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, South Africa, and Indonesia. She has also worked for the African Development Bank in Tunisia, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Liberia, and the World Bank in Brazil. Previously she was senior vice president at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) for eight years. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics and an M.P.A. in Public Finance, both from New York University. She is fluent in Portuguese and conversant in Spanish and French.

ABOUT THE VEGA ALLIANCE

The Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) is the world’s largest member-directed consortium of nonprofit economic growth organizations that designs and delivers high impact programs, incorporating skilled volunteer professionals into its work with donors, philanthropic institutions, private enterprise, and developing country organizations. VEGA was established as a 501(c)3 organization in 2004 through a United States Agency for International Development’s Leader with Associate Award. When it began a decade ago, VEGA was established as a rapid and efficient mechanism that utilized a competitive process to award USAID funding to its member organizations. Now, VEGA continues to champion its model and its alliance members’ breadth of expertise to other partners.

VEGA supported the research and publication of this case study as part of its commitment to knowledge management and sharing lessons learned among its member organizations and the international development community.