

Roadmap for Official Development Assistance



United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser
on Community Health and Aid Delivery

Support the public sector to do its job.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Design partnerships with national governments in a way that supports them to improve their ability to effectively deliver social services to their population for the long term.

Reapportion the official development assistance committed to addressing poverty and disease in the poorest countries so that a higher percentage is invested in public systems.

Whether invested directly in national systems or not, align investments with national, regional and/or municipal development plans.

Co-invest with recipient governments in creating a strong civil service, including salary support when needed. Ensuring consistent and fair salaries should be a top priority. Providing ongoing, high-level career training for civil servants is also important, but should not be considered a substitute for ensuring stable salaries.

Invest in technology and financial management systems and their maintenance.

Support governments to establish or strengthen regulatory bodies for registering and regulating all non-state providers, both international and national.

Support ministries of planning or finance in their efforts to track donor pledges and hold donors accountable. On-going maintenance and training should be integral components of these efforts.

SUPPORTING CONTEXT

The state is the only institution with the duty to provide services to its citizens. By sidestepping public institutions, donors effectively perpetuate the weakness of the one stakeholder that is both accountable to a nation's people and responsible for its development. As the ultimate goal is always a functioning state providing high quality services, efforts that unintentionally weaken state entities detract from any sustainable solution to service delivery and poverty reduction.

While the risks of investing in public institutions are much discussed, the harm caused by not doing so is often overlooked. This is particularly so for dependent on ODA countries where domestic resources are much smaller than those available externally, making development assistance essential to expanding access to services.

When donors give money to non-state providers that are not regulated by the state, there is no accountability, quality control and the deployment of resources may not be aligned with national priorities. This is particularly so where non-state providers' budgets – and thus their potential influence over service provision - are greater than those of the state.

It is understood that at certain moments, not all governments are the best providers of services to their populations, or to certain groups of people living in their countries. There are circumstances when it is not reasonable or even possible to disburse funds through or partner with governments. Under these circumstances, it may be necessary to find other local service providers with whom to work as partners, always keeping in mind that, in the long run, the goal is to return to working with it. It is always critical to partner with discernment.

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Prioritize access to high quality social services for the poor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Design programs to deliver services of the highest quality that evidence supports even if it will take time and additional resources or partners to reach your goal.

Base any program or project standards on evidence showing best outcomes rather than cost.

Always aspire to deliver the highest quality services that evidence supports. Set aspirational goals and commit to finding necessary resources over time.

Build a preferential option for the poor into every program.

SUPPORTING CONTEXT

If evidence-based standards exist that can improve people's lives, these standards should always be the aspiration of any development program. When budgetary limitations arise, creative partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms should be considered to fill gaps.

Applying a separate standard of care in resource-poor settings is often ineffective, and, in the long-term can be more costly.

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Prioritize stimulating the local economy when development funding is invested.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Design programs that use implementers from the country in which you are working. Build capacity of in-country partners and vendors; buy goods and services in-country and prioritize job creation.

Create long-term jobs with substantial career training appropriate for the specific role and ensure that those trained have well-paid positions with job security and opportunities for career advancement.

Buy and hire in-country.

Make long-term job creation a benchmark of success.

Support cash transfer programs, preferably those without conditionalities.

SUPPORTING CONTEXT

National and community investment is central to achieving broader development goals. Yet too often development funding that is intended to strengthen the delivery of basic services and infrastructure is spent without sufficient consideration of how it can be used to stimulate national economies. Donors can change this by purchasing goods and services in such a way that local individuals, families and small businesses benefit. For example, when international NGOs and/or UN entities receive funding from bilateral or multilateral sources, requests for proposals (RFPs) should indicate that the majority of funding should be spent through national or local businesses, non-profits, or individual contractors.

Overhead rates for international entities should be reviewed and reduced whenever possible, while those of national and local entities should be increased whenever possible.

Evidence has shown that cash transfers, particularly those that are unconditional, are among the most effective ways to address poverty.

Promote an accompaniment approach to implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Make common cause with those representing communities, institutions or countries that are the recipients of support.

Have recipient implementing partners (including national governments) define the terms and duration of the relationship.

RFPs for international non-state actors should define their role as one of support towards a national or local institution's strategy or plan.

Engage international experts when needed for specific expertise that is not available in-country.

Continue to work until the project is complete from the perspective of those running the program or institution in-country.

Find partners with different expertise, networks and resources whenever needed to achieve holistic goals that may include components that fall outside of the scope of the international organization's efforts.

SUPPORTING CONTEXT

In the context of international development assistance, accompaniment means supporting a society, its institutions and its citizens, on their own path toward eliminating poverty and disease. Like the aid effectiveness agenda, the accompaniment approach also calls for more resources to be invested directly in a country's institutions and aligned with their national plans.

Guided by a pragmatic solidarity with the poor, the accompaniment approach seeks to listen, rather than provide solutions, not only to the goals and plans of citizens and their institutions, but also to the challenges that they face in their day-to-day operations and their perspectives on how to meet them.

With a strong emphasis on implementation through partnership, accompaniment is specifically focused on guiding international partners to transfer more resources and assets directly to national and local institutions.