

# IREX's Guide to Organizational Performance Improvement



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# Introduction

Focusing on organizations' ability to achieve outcomes, meet constituents' needs, and have greater impact is vital to IREX's mission to build just, prosperous, and inclusive societies. Over the past two decades, we have given a lot of thought to organizational capacity development. Organizational capacity development is the process through which organizations obtain, strengthen, and maintain capabilities to set and achieve their objectives over time. It is about growth broadly speaking: growth of the organization in skills and experience. **Organizational performance improvement is a specific approach to building the capacity of organizations that zeros in on achieving their intended outcomes more effectively.**

IREX believes that focusing on organizational performance — what an organization does, not just what it looks like — is central to strengthening organizations. Focusing on achieving outcomes serves as an important organizing principle to get all partners on board with organizational performance improvement. As partners see better outcomes, they will be encouraged to improve, be more effective and stronger, and ultimately have more impact.

This document describes the performance improvement process and IREX's principles that underlie performance improvement. It offers guidance on the performance improvement process itself, starting with identifying

performance outcomes, conducting performance gap assessments and analyses, developing and implementing performance improvement solutions, and continuing to evaluate organizational performance.

This document provides guidance for IREX staff on how to go through a performance improvement process with partners that is genuinely participatory, inclusive of a broad range of perspectives, and driven by the partner. This ensures that the partner organization achieves its outcomes and meets the needs of all constituents, particularly historically marginalized groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities.

**Inclusion** is fundamental to performance improvement. IREX recognizes that to build just, prosperous, and inclusive societies, we need to have high performing institutions that can reach and engage all constituents. Inclusive and genuinely participatory approaches ensure commitment from all stakeholders to the performance improvement process, build trust, and result in performance solutions that make sense for all involved. To that end, this guide offers tips on how to mainstream gender considerations, youth-friendly approaches, and inclusion more generally throughout the organizational performance improvement process.

## Capacity Development Performance Improvement

*This guide uses the term **performance improvement** instead of **capacity development**.*

**Capacity development** suggests a narrow and generic focus on organizational capacities, which if strengthened in isolation of other important influencing factors, may not be sufficient to help the partner achieve its mission and serve its constituents.

**Performance improvement** suggests helping organizations achieve better results and do their work better, which could entail examining factors such as the local political economy, the strength of the organization's relationships with key stakeholders, the ability of the organization to adapt to its environment, along with developing staff and other organizational capacities.

## Purpose of the Guide .....

This guide to performance improvement provides a conceptual framework for applying a performance improvement approach to IREX's organizational strengthening work and consolidates best practices based on IREX's experience working with a variety of institutional partners along with the latest thinking in the capacity

development field. To that end, this is a living document that will need to be updated based on IREX staff feedback, data, and information collected from implementing a performance improvement processes.

## Target Audience .....

This guide is geared towards IREX staff who are designing organizational strengthening programs or activities, helping organizations achieve desired outcomes, and

participating in a performance improvement process.

## How to Use this Guide .....

This document is meant to serve as a guide, not an instructional manual, for those designing, implementing, and participating in performance improvement activities with partner organizations. IREX staff should use this guide to frame performance improvement activities, but activities need to be tailored to specific operating environments and organizations. Use the guide as a basis for discussion with partner organizations to define what the performance improvement process could look like for their organization. Context is key.

Additionally, this guide can apply to organizations at various stages of development. IREX's performance improvement approach is designed to help organizations — regardless of their maturity or level of development — understand how to more effectively achieve their stated outcomes.

Performance improvement partnerships are most successful when they are based on trust and partner ownership of the organizational strengthening process to ensure sustained outcomes. The guidance provided in this document is therefore meant to foster trust and partner ownership throughout the performance improvement process.

It is also important to remember that the performance improvement partnership is a two-way street. Both the provider and recipient of support need to continuously learn from one another and adapt the process as new findings and learning emerge.

Finally, in addition to involving individuals across the partner organization in the performance improvement process, consider having a team of performance improvement support providers who can offer different types of expertise and insights on how the partner organization can achieve better outcomes.



## Tip: Foster a "Culture of Curiosity"

Diagnostic tools and processes can only capture a certain amount of data about an organization or a snapshot of an organization at a particular time. IREX encourages staff to create a "culture of curiosity" whereby IREX and its partners ask each other broader questions about each other's aspirations, obstacles, and strengths, even beyond the focus of the performance improvement exercise, to better understand the context in which we operate and factors that might affect the organization's performance that don't emerge through formal processes.

For example, when first engaging a partner organization in the performance improvement process, talk to various team members to understand what motivates them to do their work, their values, and individual aspirations. This information, for instance, can then be used to inform the design of performance solutions.

# Performance Improvement Principles

The following principles underlie IREX's approach to strengthening organizational performance. The next section of this guide will provide guidance on how to operationalize these principles into the performance improvement process. The icons are used as references to the principles throughout the document.



## Results

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It is paramount to focus on achieving outcomes aligned with an organization's mission, not just on how an organization is structured or how well it functions internally, to strengthen organizational performance. Traditional capacity assessment tools often look at dozens of capacities without examining the question, "capacity to what end?" Performance improvement focuses first and foremost on examining an organization's mission and theory of change, selecting specific performance outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess related to their mission and theory of change, designing assessment tools centered on those performance outcomes, and testing and adapting performance solutions to help the partner organization better achieve those outcomes.



## Sustainability

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Achieving results is critical to organizational sustainability. Ensuring that the performance improvement process aligns with the partner organization's values and context, and maximizes locally-available resources will help partner organizations continue the process beyond IREX's involvement. Acknowledge our limits and work with the partner organization to establish connections and networks with peers and other stakeholders to sustain performance improvement efforts.



## Trust

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Organizational performance improvement is successful when partnerships are based on trust to build ownership and when all are committed to the process. Be sure to engage staff across the partner organization — not just the director or a few key staff — in the performance assessment and solution development process. Looking at qualities like motivation, interest in learning, and willingness to take on a performance improvement process will be essential to the success of the process.



## Inclusion

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Greater inclusivity results in better outcomes for all organizations.<sup>1</sup> Since achieving better outcomes is central to organizational performance improvement, it is vital to work with partners to find ways to more effectively serve all constituents, particularly historically marginalized groups.



## Multi-Level Lens

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When looking at organizational performance improvement, it is important to analyze performance and develop performance solutions at multiple levels, including the operating environment, the organization, organizational processes, and individuals' performance. This multi-level lens not only looks at what an organization achieves, but also under what conditions (both external and internal), in what contexts (systems, organization, processes, and individual), for what groups of people, what ways, and to what extent it was achieved.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/7-myth-busting-reasons-we-should-be-investing-in-women/>



## Flexibility

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Flexible partnership designs provide space for organizations to be creative, test, and adapt performance solutions and approaches. Encouraging partner organizations to be open to new ideas and learning will allow the organization to respond to issues that may not have emerged during the initial assessment process.



## Learning and Adaptation

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Finding effective performance solutions requires continuous testing, evaluation, learning, and adaptation. Examine the partner organization's culture to understand whether or not there is space for people to provide constructive feedback and new ideas, willingness to operationalize learning that helps the organization better achieve its outcomes, and willingness to adapt and change.

# Performance Improvement Phases

The performance improvement process can be scaled up or down depending on the needs of the partner organization and available resources. The performance improvement process can also take place for organizations at various points of development. For example, if an organization already has a well-defined mission, you can devote much less time on mission reflection and setting performance outcomes. If a partner organization only has a limited period of time to undergo this process, consider only looking at a few factors at each of the levels for the current state analysis.

For any performance improvement process, however, it is essential to observe all the phases below, starting with defining the specific outcome(s) and the change the organization would like to see along with KPIs.

**1. Define Mission and Desired Outcomes:** Determine the goal of the performance improvement process. What do we want to change? Where do we want to be at the end of this?

**2. Analyze and Assess Performance Gaps:** Collect data to determine the organization's current state of performance.

**3. Develop and Implement Performance Improvement Solutions:** Once the main barriers and enablers to achieve the desired outcome have been determined, brainstorm, assess, and prioritize potential performance solutions based on their ability to close the gap between the current state of performance and desired state of performance.

**4. Continued Performance Evaluation:** Use structured systems to continuously evaluate progress using KPIs, if performance solutions are working, and adjust based on experience. When designing performance solution feedback loops, ensure that partners have ways to safely provide feedback, particularly in complex environments.





# Mission Reflection & Performance Outcome Setting



## Spotlight: Start By Building Trust

Building trust and a strong relationship with the partner organization is paramount to the organizational performance improvement process. In a partnership based on trust and mutual respect, partners are more likely to be honest about the challenges and successes they have encountered, be willing to devote the resources needed to engage in the performance improvement process, be open to change and adaptation, and feel connected to and more likely replicate the learning process. As much as possible, engage staff who are representative of the whole partner organization in the performance improvement process to collect viewpoints from staff, such as youth and those who are not normally part of decision-making processes or involved in such discussions but could offer valuable insights and support for the performance improvement process. The Transforming Agency, Access, and Power (TAAP) initiative's [inclusive design toolkit](#) suggests beginning any inclusive design or assessment process with inclusive inquiry and reflection, and provides an entry point for discussing difficult issues around diversity and inclusion. This process allows those involved to examine their own identities and biases, and provides an opportunity for IREX and partner organizations to understand the norms and practices that either support or inhibit inclusion within their organizations.

## Mission Reflection & Performance Outcome Setting - Key Steps

- Identify organizational theory of change related to its mission
- Map key outcomes related to the theory of change
- Determine how you will measure those outcomes by developing KPIs
- Reflect on the change that the organization wants to see



# Mission Reflection

The first and most crucial step in a performance improvement process is to reflect on an organization's mission. Consensus around what the organization wants to achieve at the highest levels provides a foundation for performance outcome setting and the overall performance improvement process.

[Theories of change](#) can help organizations identify the series of events that produce certain results. While theory of change reflection is not a required component

of the performance improvement process, it can help organizations identify key factors that lead to the type of change they want to see, as well as assumptions that might impact those factors.

For performance improvement, having an organizational theory of change can help organizations develop realistic outcomes that they want to achieve. Here are some helpful tools to facilitate an organizational theory of change process:

- The Aspen Institute's [The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change](#) includes an explanation of what a theory of change is and provides guidance and resources on how to facilitate a theory of change process with a community group.
- Annie E. Casey's [Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results, and Learning](#) offers concrete suggestions for the kinds of changes to map and provides several examples of theories of change.

Next, it is important that partners have the opportunity to define performance outcomes based on the organization's theory of change. Use an appreciative inquiry approach<sup>2</sup> to focus on what has worked for the organization and to find out what people in the organization care about.

The following provides guidance on how to initiate outcome-setting conversations and create a shared set of performance outcomes.

## Identify Outcomes of Performance Improvement Process

While defining the outcomes of the performance improvement effort, it is important that the partner organization understands that the process needs to be a participatory, inclusive, and iterative process, and that

the outcomes of the process are meant to inform the performance improvement process and to produce better outcomes — not to rate or score themselves.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/more-on-ai/the-generic-processes-of-appreciative-inquiry/>

Performance improvement first and foremost focuses on outcomes since they are fundamental to achieving organizational missions. Work with the partner organization to identify the main outcome(s) that they want to achieve. All outcomes should be measurable. For example, community radio stations could cite producing original programming that addresses critical information gaps as an outcome it wants to achieve. An educational institution could identify producing work-ready graduates who are able to find meaningful employment opportunities as a performance outcome for its institution.

After selecting specific outcomes, work with the partner organization to develop KPIs that will help them measure progress towards their selected outcomes. In addition to identifying indicators to measure progress on achieving the stated outcome(s), work with partners to reflect on the change they want to see. For example, if a library partner seeks to become a modern library that offers services for all community members, consider asking them the following questions to get a better picture of the change they want to achieve:

- What are the characteristics of a modern library?
- What should a library user's experience be like when s/he visits your library? Is someone there to greet that person? What services are available to this person? How does s/he learn about and access those services?



## Tip: Conduct Partner Reflection Exercises

Gather partner organization staff periodically to reflect on how they have come together around key decision points and discuss how they have been able to react and respond to challenges they've faced.

**IREX Case Study:** The Mozambique Media Strengthening Program (MSP) hosts annual leadership conferences for all community radio coordinators for refresher trainings related to community radio development, and collecting best practices. Coordinators present on something their community radio station is doing well and participate in experience exchanges with staff from other community radios on topics such as administration and human resources, gender and gender-based violence, and disaster preparedness, among others.

To make MSP's activity a performance improvement exercise, the team would connect each of the discussion topics to the missions and/or primary outcomes of the community radios, highlighting how administration and human resources or gender-based violence impacts the effectiveness of the community radio station's work.



## Tip: What Are Key Performance Indicators?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are quantifiable measures of an organization's performance related to particular organizational outcomes/goals. KPIs are critical to the performance improvement process as they allow partner organizations to measure their performance and the effectiveness of performance solutions.

# Current State Assessment, Gap Analysis, & Performance Solution Selection



After defining performance outcomes and KPIs, the next phase is to collect data to determine the organization's current state of performance. Performance improvement theory is based on the notion that everything in an organization's internal and external ecosystem is connected and impacts an organization's ability to achieve outcomes. Successful assessments capture a variety of perspectives across the partner organization and external stakeholders, who identify trends and needs to inform performance improvement plans.

**The goal of the current state assessment process is to have a holistic sense of the partner's performance related to specific performance outcomes.** The assessment should not just focus on an assessment tool, but should engage the partner in a broader self-reflection process centered on the organization's performance — a process they could continue in the future on their own.

This section outlines a participatory reflection process through which partners identify the key attributes and systems needed to achieve their stated outcome(s); analyze their organization's current state of performance at the performer, process, organizational, and systems level; and identify a set of performance solutions to test, adapt, and iterate. Piloting and adapting tools is key — if a performance analysis tool isn't quite right, tailor it so that it better meets your needs. With each tool, be sure to create a glossary of terms and clear methodology that has been tested and adjusted based on partner staff feedback so that all involved are clear about what they are examining.



## Tip: Examples of How to Build Trust with Partner Organizations

- **Hold site visits to observe and listen:** Conduct site visit to partner organizations, and listen and observe the partners' day-to-day operations, systems, and organizational dynamics. Consider allowing the partner organization to conduct similar visits to the IREX office to understand IREX's culture and build broader relationships with other IREX team members.
- **Be open about our challenges to encourage genuine participation:** Be honest about IREX's assets and challenges and encourage partners to do the same. Tools such as quarterly learning meetings and fail fairs that engage staff across the partner organization provide concrete opportunities for IREX and partner staff to focus on what's working, what's not working, and what needs further improvement.
- **Engage as many viewpoints as possible:** As much as possible, engage staff representative of the whole partner organization in the performance improvement process to collect viewpoints from staff, such as from youth, women, people with disabilities, and others who do not normally make decisions.
- **Create safe feedback channels:** Create multiple ways and safe spaces for receiving feedback, and train partner organization staff in offering and receiving feedback in constructive ways. Think carefully about tools used for feedback channels. Who has access to these tools? Are they anonymous?



## Current State Assessments & Gap Analyses - Key Steps

- Identify and gather data needed at the following four levels to understand the organization's current performance **related to the outcome at hand**:
  - Systems-level (e.g. operating environment, influential stakeholders, etc.)
  - Organizational-level (e.g. organizational strategy, leadership capacity, etc.)
  - Process-level (e.g. workflow processes, decision-making structures, etc.)
  - Individual performer-level (e.g. hiring and retention, comparison of job descriptions vs. actual workload, etc.)
- Conduct participatory gap assessment to identify and prioritize performance gaps
- Analyze priority gaps



## Performance Solution Selection - Key Steps

- Identify potential performance solutions using "if...then..." statements
- Select, test, and evaluate performance solutions

# Assessment of the Current State of Performance

The **first step** in a performance improvement assessment is to examine the four levels of performance that impact an organization's ability to achieve outcomes: (1) systems, (2) organization, (3) processes, and (4) individual. It is critical that the current state assessment tools are tailored to the partner organization's values, culture, context, and resources. Allow partner organizations to collaboratively develop the tools to build ownership over the process, coach partners through the process of developing diagnostic tools, and to increase the likelihood of the partner organization using the tool on their own in the future.

**At all these levels, it is critical to examine systems, organizational, process, and individual-level factors relevant to the organizational outcome you're examining.** In other words, if you are assessing the strength of an organization's relationships, focus on the relationships that are most important and relevant to the stated outcome — not necessarily all the relationships that the organization has.



## Spotlight: Capacity...To What End?


In contrast to traditional organizational capacity assessments, organizational performance current state and gap analyses focus on understanding what an organization needs to achieve specific outcomes. Answering the question, "capacity strengthening to what end?" is integral to the performance improvement approach. Strengthening organizational capabilities without understanding *why* or *for what purpose* you're strengthening those skills may not necessarily help the partner achieve the outcomes it desires.

**The *systems level* represents the operating environment and key external stakeholders, and influencing factors including political, environmental, and economic factors. At this level, it is important to examine:**


- Funding environment: Who are potential donors? What are their interests? What is the organization's relationships with potential and/or current donors?
- Relevant policies and legislation: Are there particular national or local-level policies that are related to and could influence the mission and sustainability of the partner organization?
- Primary and secondary influencers: Work with partner organizations to understand the political and economic factors that influence their organization's future. For example, some community radio staff in Mozambique have challenges getting money owed to them by local governments, and are therefore at the mercy of the local district administrators to operate. It is therefore important to work with partners to help them understand these factors and how they might impact their organization now and in the future, and come up with tactics to influence these factors so that partners can most effectively achieve their outcomes.
- Key partnerships relevant to the identified outcome(s).

**The *organizational level* represents the organization's basic functions. At this level, it is important to examine:**

- Organizational leadership capacity
- Organizational structure
- Organization's ability to adapt and change
- Organizational mission
- Resources available
- Position among peer organizations
- Ability to innovate

 The **process level** represents the flow of work as it cuts across the functional and technical areas of the organization. At this level, it is important to examine the following processes:

- Workflow (for both organizational operations and programs/technical areas)
- Technical and managerial capacities of relevant units/departments
- Resources allocated for relevant workflow processes

 The **performer level** describes who is using the processes and managing the processes to conduct the organization's work. At this level, it is important to examine:

- Hiring and retention
  - » What are the organization's hiring practices? Who's conducting the hiring? Where's the job being advertised?
  - » How are women being engaged? How are youth being engaged? How are other marginalized groups such as people with disabilities being engaged?
  - » Are you holding professional development activities when all people can actually participate? Does the organization have adequate facilities for women, young people, and people with disabilities?
  - » Who's participating in decision-making meetings?
- Relevant job descriptions
- Relevant individuals' performance goals
  - » Are all leadership positions held by men? Are women doing the majority of the desk work behind the scenes?
- Feedback and coaching policies and practices
  - » How is this done? Is the organization making concerted efforts to engage both men and women? What type of language are they using to engage staff?
  - » Who's leading professional development training? Is that person creating a safe and comfortable environment for both men and women?
  - » How is feedback delivered? Is there a difference in how feedback is delivered towards men and women? Are male and female staff able to provide feedback to the organization's leadership in equal ways?
  - » How is staff feedback taken into consideration?
- Support and rewards
  - » Who gets to go to trainings? Why?
  - » Look at attendance lists for trainings and professional development opportunities — is there a difference in the attendance among men, women, youth, and or other marginalized groups?



## Tip: How to mainstream inclusion into current state assessments

### Systems Level:

- How does the organization engage community members from marginalized communities? How strongly are its relationships with partners representing those groups?

### Organizational Level:

- Who comprises the leadership of the organization? Is the leadership reflective of the community that it serves?
- Does the organization collect gender/age-disaggregated data? How does it use this data to inform its work?
- Who is involved in organizational decision-making? Are young people and women consulted, actively engaged, or leading these processes?
- Who has access to and control over organizational resources?
- What are institutional norms about open and transparent communication?
- Is the leadership of the organization communicating the importance of inclusion?

### Process Level:

- How is feedback delivered and received? Is there a difference in how feedback is delivered towards men and women?

### Performer Level:

- Who gets to go to trainings and professional development opportunities? Why?
- Are men, women, youth, and other marginalized groups such as people with disabilities equally engaged? Or are those from marginalized groups doing the majority of desk work behind the scenes?



The table below outlines examples of data collection tools and data sources IREX staff and partner organizations can use to assess the partner organization’s current state of performance towards the identified outcome(s).

Level	Examples of Factors to Examine	Examples of Data Collection Tools and Data Sources
<b>Systems level</b>	Funding environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of potential donors</li> </ul>
	Policies and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of policies and legislation relevant to identified performance outcome</li> </ul>
	Primary and secondary influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of organizational stakeholders, including but not limited to primary constituents/beneficiaries, donors, partners</li> <li>• Map of external and internal stakeholders that can be champions or spoilers for the organization’s survival</li> </ul>
	Key partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network analysis or stakeholder mapping to measure the strength of an organization’s relationships and ability and willingness to collaborate with peers, government, and the private sector to achieve the identified outcome</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational level</b>	Organizational leadership capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of interview data with relevant staff of leadership performance, ability to motivate and empower, trust in leadership</li> </ul>
	Organizational structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational chart</li> </ul>
	Organization’s ability to adapt and change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">FSG’s Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE) Instrument</a></li> </ul>
	Organizational mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational mission statement</li> </ul>
	Resources available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget relevant to identified outcome</li> </ul>
	Position among peer organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational competitor analysis</li> </ul>
	Ability to innovate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Nesta’s Open Innovation 100% Readiness Test</a></li> </ul>

Level	Examples of Factors to Examine	Examples of Data Collection Tools and Data Sources
<b>Process level</b>	Workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workflow process diagram/map of what is supposed to happen</li> <li>• Workflow process diagram/map of what happens in reality</li> </ul>
	Technical and managerial capacity of relevant units/ departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with relevant technical staff and managers</li> <li>• Data from performance evaluations</li> </ul>
	Resources allocated for relevant workflow processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of interview data with relevant staff to determine what resources (e.g. time, human resources, funds, etc.) they need to complete their tasks</li> <li>• Compilation of interview data with relevant staff to determine what resources (e.g. time, human resources, funds, etc.) they have to complete their tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Performer level</b>	Hiring and retention policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational hiring policies and practices</li> </ul>
	Relevant job descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions of relevant staff members</li> </ul>
	Relevant individuals' performance goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance goals of relevant staff members</li> </ul>
	Feedback and coaching policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of interview data with relevant staff on how coaching and feedback is given/delivered to relevant staff</li> </ul>
	Support and rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational professional development policy</li> <li>• List of staff who take part in professional development opportunities</li> </ul>



## Tip: Collect Data at All Levels — Systems, Organizational, Process, and Performer – To Get a Comprehensive Understanding of Organizational Performance

### IREX Case Study:

To analyze whether the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) should become an independent organization or remain a part of IREX, the IREX team outlined a series of organizational factors related to SJAC's independence and sustainability, and chose related data collection tools or sources to analyze SJAC's current state of performance:

**Outcome:** SJAC operates effectively as a mission-driven and independent organization

**Systems:** Analysis of fundraising environment, donor relations

**Organizational:** Analysis of board development, viability of SJAC's mission, financial viability

**Process:** SJAC operations in its field office and Washington, D.C.

**Performer:** Team structure and individual job descriptions versus day-to-day responsibilities

The IREX team used a variety of methods to collect this data, including facilitated group discussions, analysis of existing documents, and one-on-one interviews with SJAC team members and external stakeholders, among others. Following the data collection process, the IREX team gathered the SJAC team together for a half-day workshop analyzing the data collected to prioritize gaps in their transition to becoming an independent organization. Following the workshop, the SJAC and IREX teams compiled a list of key areas for improvement with actionable items, and checks in each of those items during a separate weekly meeting.

See Annex A and Annex B for sample IREX tools used to analyze the current state of organizations' performance: 1) MSP's Performance Coaching Matrix and 2) Partnerships With Youth Positive Youth Development Coaching Tool. When gathering data

using any tool, it is important to triangulate the information that you receive, and to get a broad range of perspectives, particularly from women, youth, and other marginalized groups.



## Tip: Use Current State Performance Analysis Tools as Coaching Tools

### IREX Case Study:

The Partnerships With Youth (PWY) program's Positive Youth Development (PYD) Coaching tool consists of a rubric that examines the organization's environment, supportive relationships, policies, results, and outcomes. PWY staff use this tool as a basis for conversation when working with participating youth serving organizations and improving their ability to serve youth in their communities using PYD principles.

# Gap Analysis

After collecting data on the partner organization's current state of performance, the next step is to formulate and test hypotheses on why performance gaps exist and what the root causes of these performance gaps are.

Participatory gap analysis starts with *identification and prioritization* of current performance gaps, then an *analysis of the priority gaps* by organization staff who have a role or perspective related to each gap. Consider factors including accessibility and timing of gap analysis conversations to make sure that all involved, particularly historically marginalized groups, can participate.

**Identification and prioritization:** Through a facilitated process with staff who have different roles or perspectives related to the area of the performance gap, a series of questions to identify gaps are addressed: What are current performance gaps? What's the scale of each gap? What is the history — when did it start and what factors were involved? What is the impact of the gap (currently, medium-term, long-term)? Which gaps are the highest

priority to address? The output of this discussion is a prioritized list of performance gaps.

**Analysis of prioritized gaps:** Again with staff who have a role or perspective related to each gap, the gaps are analyzed bringing multiple perspectives together to examine factors at the contextual/systems, organizational, process, and performer/relationship levels. A critical element of this process is listening to and capturing the understanding of the gap from different perspectives involved in the area of the gap.

- Causal: What factors created or added to the gap? What evidence is there for this?
- Supportive: What factors mitigated or narrowed the gap? What evidence is there for this?
- What assets and solutions could reduce the causal factors and increase the supportive factors?

# Performance Solution Selection

Selecting, implementing, and adapting performance solutions is perhaps the most critical piece of the performance improvement process, as this will help the partner organization achieve their intended outcomes. Once you have identified the main barriers and enablers to achieve the desired outcome, brainstorm, assess, and prioritize potential performance solutions based on their ability to close the gap between the current state of performance and desired state of performance.

Potential solutions can be brainstormed through if-then statements that describe a pathway of change that could address the gap. "If we did x, then y would happen. If y happens, then z will happen." This process would again

involve the array of perspectives and roles related to the gap. The potential pathways of change for addressing each gap can be mapped and then discussed and prioritized in terms of the following questions:

- Have we considered a full range of potential solutions and the pathway to those solutions?
- Do our proposed solutions directly relate to the cause of the performance gap?
- What are the costs, timelines, and risks associated with each proposed solution?



## Tip: Use ORID Framework To Make Gap Analysis & Performance Solution Selection Processes as Collaborative as Possible

The [ORID framework](#) has four consecutive stages: objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional. It is a logical series of questions that probes the natural sequence humans use to think about an issue. While facilitating a gap analysis and/or performance solution selection discussion, consider using this approach to help participants explore their common understanding and experience. Open-ended questions that require specific examples and illustrations work best.

- Objective Discussion: draws out the facts about the experience or event.
  - What were your organization's primary outputs this past year?
  - What were your organization's planned outputs for this past year?
- Reflective Discussion: enables the group to discuss how they felt about the event.
  - What was the most surprising result of the gap analysis for you?
- Interpretive Discussion: enables the group to consider the meaning and value of the event, its significance, and usefulness to the group.
  - What are strategies we can use to overcome the main barriers to organizational performance?
- Decisional Discussion: enables the group to make a decision or respond to the experience.
  - What metrics should we use to determine whether or not the performance solution we select is working?

# Solution Implementation, Adaptation, and Continued Evaluation

## Solution Implementation & Adaptation - Key Step

- Use Agile or other adaptive management approaches to evaluate performance solutions

## Continued Evaluation of Organizational Performance - Key Steps

- Embed learning practices for reflection, dialogue, asking questions, examining assumptions, and seeking feedback and evidence
- Collect data on KPIs to determine partner organization performance related to stated outcome(s)



Given performance improvement's focus on helping organizations achieve their stated outcomes, producing a realistic solution action plan that integrates into the organization's operational plans is critical.

Consider using Agile management approaches while implementing action plans, through which staff and partners continually pilot, test, evaluate, and iterate solutions to ensure that performance solutions are actually helping organizations achieve their outcomes. Agile approaches systematize feedback loops through tools such as scrums and sprint plans/reviews. When designing performance solution feedback loops, ensure that partners have ways to safely provide feedback, particularly in complex environments.

Agile or adaptive management approaches support continuous testing and evaluation of performance solutions. It is critical that those involved in the evaluation process provide a variety of perspectives. For example, if you're implementing a strategic plan with a partner organization, be sure to gather data from all levels of the organization seeking a gender and age balance, as well as data from external stakeholders (partners, beneficiaries, donors, etc.).

When implementing performance solutions, think about approaches beyond the normal suite of trainings that may only address one facet of organizational or individual performer-level performance. Tools such as training and

mentoring opportunities or professional exchanges may address performer-level gaps, mapping out organizational decision-making and workflow processes may address process-level gaps, strategic plans may address organization-level gaps, and political economy analyses may address systemic-level gaps/challenges. When building a set of performance solution tools, think about what's available locally so that the partner organization can continue to replicate this process in the future and build relationships with valuable local stakeholders who can help the organization continue to come up with new ideas, learn, and adapt.



### Tip: Entry Points for Inclusive Performance Solution Implementation, Adaptation, and Evaluation

Are youth, women, people with disabilities, or members of other historically marginalized groups:

- Meaningfully engaged in the solution selection process?
- Able to exercise voice and agency as leaders or partners in the implementation of the performance solution?
- Actively engaged in designing and conducting the evaluation of the performance solution?

# Tools to Help Evaluate Organizational Performance

## Stakeholder Mapping Guide:

Helps organizations evaluate the strength of their relationships with important stakeholders.

## FSG's Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation (ROLE) Instrument:

Diagnoses areas of organizational strength and weakness and willingness/ability to adapt to an environment.

## Developmental Evaluation:

Michael Quinn Patton applies complexity concepts to enhance innovation. In a chapter on The Adaptive Cycle, he outlines a set of "ecosystem resilience criteria" for evaluating adaptability and responsiveness:

- Awareness of current and emerging needs
- Ability to address emergent needs within the organization's mission and priorities
- Capacity to adjust to changing contexts
- Flexibility to adjust to unanticipated negative impacts and side effects (e.g. environmental degradation)
- Continuous adaptation to optimize benefits and minimize harm

## Networked Planet's Data and Learning Strategy:

Useful to understand how an organization can use data to improve its performance. Key questions include:

- What evidence do you use for improving your performance?
- How many of the staff at the organization have use of evidence in decision-making as a required skill in their job descriptions?
- Who do you talk to about evidence you have reviewed? When? Where?
- When are employees required to review new evidence or look for new sources of pertinent data?

**Other sources:** Assess against criteria defined for adaptive capacity

- Adaptive capacity is defined as the ability of an enterprise to alter its "strategy, operations, management systems, governance structure, and decision-support capabilities" to withstand perturbations and disruptions (Starr et al., 2004)
- [Characteristics of an innovation organization](#)
- Important to define ecosystem vulnerabilities/ disruptions that an organization must adapt to

# Conclusion



## Performance... To What End?

A performance improvement approach is meant to build upon and enhance the organizational strengthening work that IREX does across its programs with media organizations, civil society organizations, higher education institutions, and youth serving organizations. The essence of a performance improvement approach to organizational strengthening is looking at organization performance with a specific outcome in mind. In contrast to traditional approaches to capacity strengthening, performance improvement identifies specific performance outcomes and seeks to improve organizations' ability to achieve those outcomes.



## Sustainability

Plug into partner organizations' existing networks before engaging in a performance improvement partnership to avoid redundancies and build upon existing resources. Source performance improvement support locally where possible, ideally from within the partner organization, then from within the community around the partner organization, and then finally from international sources. Performance improvement can be a low-resource process or as extensive and resource-intensive as desired. When working with partner organizations, it is more important to instill the outcome-based and learning-oriented process for organizational strengthening.



## Pilot, Pilot, Pilot!

Context matters. A performance improvement process is only as effective as the process, tools, and learning fit the needs of the partner organization, its culture, values, and context. Ensuring that the process best meets the needs of the partner organization requires constant piloting, testing, learning, and adaptation. Cyclical by design, performance improvement is inherently a learning-driven process.



## Feedback Needed!

This guide to organizational performance improvement is a living document. We seek to continually update this document based on information and learning we will gain from using this approach in different contexts, along with the latest information in the organizational strengthening field.





# Annex A

## Mozambique Media Strengthening Program's Performance Coaching Matrix

Número do Documento			
Nome d@ Coordenador/a de Campo			
Nome da Rádio			
Data de Visita			
Pontuação anterior	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica

### Programa Para Fortalecimento da Mídia- Community Radio Performance Matrix Checklist

Critérios	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
Nível 1	<p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tem alvará/licença de funcionamento</li> <li>2. A rádio não tem parcerias com outras organizações/entidades.</li> <li>3. A gestão de pessoal não está regida por nenhum documento regulador.</li> <li>4. Não tem missão/visão/objectivos definidos.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Tabela de preços é elaborada de forma generalizada, independentemente do potencial económico dos utentes dos critérios do Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável.</li> <li>6. A rádio não tem anunciantes que publicitem os seus produtos/serviços durante as emissões.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O Coordenador da rádio recebeu formação em Jornalismo Básico há mais de 5 anos</li> <li>2. Os novos voluntários são inseridos na grelha sem nenhuma formação ou período de estágio.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A Grelha é definida pelos doadores e não pela comunidade alvo.</li> <li>4. A rádio não conhece ao seu público alvo.</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Tem programas musicais com participação via chamada</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O material radiofónico e informático está fora do acesso da equipa, quem desconhece a sua existência.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Não tem equipamento (radiofónico e informático) para garantir o seu funcionamento (emissor com dificuldades técnicas, dipolos com problemas, misturador com só dois canais em funcionamento, s/computador no estúdio, dois microfones, s/gravador digital)</li> <li>3. Não tem acesso à internet.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Depende do apoio externo para manutenção e avarias</li> </ol>

Critérios	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.</li> </ol>
<p align="center"><b>Nível 2</b></p>	<p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regulamento interno discutido e aprovado pelo Comité de Gestão.</li> <li>2. Draft Plano de negócios, em espera de ser discutido pela Associação</li> <li>3. Estabelece parcerias se for contactada e não negocia as condições da parceria.</li> <li>4. A missão/visão/objectivos são conhecidos pelo gestor.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Tabela de preços é elaborada de forma generalizada, independentemente do potencial económico dos utentes e dos critérios do Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável.</li> <li>6. Busca aleatória de anunciantes</li> </ol>	<p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O Gestor, o chefe da redacção e pelo menos 2 jornalistas têm formação em Jornalismo Básico</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Programa de Género/VBG/ Criança</li> <li>3. A rádio faz inquéritos entre os ouvintes só sobre alguns programas</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Programas participativos com chamadas e sms</li> <li>5. Pelo menos 1 programa com convidados no estúdio</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O uso dos materiais disponíveis é condicionado a presença do gestor da rádio</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Não tem equipamento (radiofónico e informático) suficiente para garantir as emissões e trabalhos radiofónicos (problemas técnicos com o emissor, pelo menos um gravador digital, pelo menos 1 computador mais não no estúdio)</li> <li>3. Tem só 1 modem para aceder à internet e é de uso limitado.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A rádio faz manutenção preventiva de equipamento informático periodicamente.</li> </ol>

Critérios	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.</li> </ol>
<p align="center"><b>Nível 3</b></p>	<p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manual de políticas internas da rádio, desenhado e aprovado pelo Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável, parcialmente implementado</li> <li>2. Plano de negócios finalizado</li> <li>3. Estabelece parcerias autonomamente, de acordo com os parâmetros estabelecidos pela linha editorial.</li> <li>4. A missão/visão/objectivos estão expostos em lugar público</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Tabela de preços actualizada, aprovada pelo Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável</li> <li>6. Iniciativas de marketing implementadas com conhecimento do Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável</li> </ol>	<p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O Chefe de redação e das demais áreas programáticas tem formação em Jornalismo Básico</li> <li>2. A rádio faz réplica das formações recebidas e compartilha materiais recebidos</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Programa de Género/VBG/ Criança</li> <li>4. Pelo menos uma vez ao ano fazem sondagem sobre os interesses da audiência</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Pelo menos 1 programa usando Frontline na interacção com os ouvintes</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O uso dos materiais disponíveis é regulado por um registo de material e precisa da autorização do gestor e/ou responsável da área técnica.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Tem equipamento em bom estado (radiofónico e informático) suficiente para garantir as emissões e trabalhos radiofónicos, mas não tem material sobressalente.</li> <li>3. Tem mais de um modem/conexão fixa e várias pessoas têm acesso.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A rádio faz manutenção preventiva do equipamento informático e radiofónico periodicamente e consegue resolver avarias menores.</li> </ol>

Critérios	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.</li> </ol>
<p align="center">Nível 4</p>	<p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manual de políticas internas da rádio, desenhado e aprovado pelo Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável, em implementação.</li> <li>2. A missão/visão/objectivos da rádio são conhecidos pela equipa e influenciam nas decisões de gestão e programação</li> <li>3. Tem linha editorial e ângulos de abordagem definidos</li> <li>4. A rádio estabelece parcerias autonomamente e negocia os termos dessas parcerias, de acordo com os parâmetros estabelecidos pela linha editorial.</li> </ol> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Tabela de preços actualizada e diversificada de acordo com os clientes, aprovada pelo Comité de Gestão ou autoridade responsável</li> <li>6. Plano de marketing da emissora</li> </ol>	<p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O Chefe de redacção e mais do que 50 % dos colaboradores formados em Jornalismo Básico</li> <li>2. Curso de reciclagem interna em diferentes áreas de conteúdos</li> </ol> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A temática de género está presente na grelha através da escolha de temas e fontes, é discutida por todos e é de carácter prioritário.</li> <li>4. Faz pesquisas de audiência regularmente</li> </ol> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Um 30% da programação são programas interativos usando todo tipo de meios: dedicatórias, chamadas, sms, Frontline e Facebook.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. O uso dos materiais disponíveis é liberal, obedecendo as normas de utilização prevista no manual de políticas internas da rádio</li> </ol> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Tem equipamento em bom estado (radiofónico e informático) e suficiente para garantir as emissões e trabalhos radiofónicos e conta com material sobressalente (ex. emissor de reserva, cabos, computadores, gravadores)</li> <li>3. Tem mais de um modem/conexão fixa conectado a um router wireless e todos os membros da rádio têm acesso.</li> </ol> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A rádio tem pessoal com noções avançadas em manutenção e reparação de equipamento informático e radiofónico</li> </ol>

Critérios	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
	<p><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Gestão organizacional</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p><b>Gestão Financeira</b></p> <p>5.</p> <p>6.</p>	<p><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Capacidade da equipa da rádio</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p><b>Conteúdo programático</b></p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p><b>Participação comunitária</b></p> <p>5.</p>	<p><b>Comentários</b></p> <p><b>Uso do equipamento radiofónico e informático</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p><b>Tipo de equipamento</b></p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p><b>Manutenção</b></p> <p>4.</p>

Outras observações:

Seguimento:

<b>Nova Pontuação:</b>	Capacidade operacional	Capacidade programática	Nível tecnológico e capacidade de gestão técnica
<b>Data:</b>			



## Annex B Partnerships With Youth Positive Youth Development Coaching Tool

### Introduction:

According to the U.N., almost two billion people are between the ages of 10-24. In its IREX 2020 strategy, IREX recognizes the need to harness the tremendous potential of young people across its programs to benefit not only youth themselves but also the future of their communities. As the USAID Youth in Development Policy highlights, “Development can be accelerated when the majority of youth in any country are able to make significant contributions to economic, social, and political life in a way that lifts countries out of poverty, ensures greater stability, and promotes healthier societies. Alternatively, peace, progress, and prosperity are held back when countries are unable to meet the basic needs of their youth.” The institutions that IREX works with including but not limited to educational institutions, civil society groups, community radio and other media outlets, libraries, and career centers, should therefore have the capacity to embrace young people and provide them the support needed to benefit from their potential. This tool serves as a guide for IREX staff and partners to assess their organization’s environment, programs, relationships with beneficiaries, policies, and outcomes to assess strengths and growth areas related to serving and engaging youth.

**What is positive youth development? Positive youth development (PYD)** is a comprehensive and intentional approach to working with or on behalf of youth to increase opportunities for learning, development, leadership, positive relationships, and community engagement so that youth grow to their fullest potential. While prevention or intervention programs may target only certain youth (for example, those engaged in risky or unhealthy behaviors), positive youth development is an approach that works for all youth. And while some approaches to youth work or youth policy may focus only on a certain aspect of a young person’s development (for example, their physical health), a positive youth development approach integrates the needs and opportunities of a young person’s social, emotional, physical and intellectual development.

### How to Use This Tool:

This coaching tool is geared towards IREX programs that serve and/or engage youth in some capacity. IREX programs should consider their program’s goals and objectives, and the types of partners they work with, and decide if this tool is appropriate. Teams should consult the youth practice and members of the CALL team for input and help tailoring the tool.

This coaching tool is meant to inform partner organizations’ capacity building processes and activities specifically around their capacity to serve and engage youth. This tool is meant to be a guide and needs to be contextualized in collaboration with the partner organization(s) to ensure that the assessment process and outcomes best reflect the needs of the partner(s). IREX staff and partners are encouraged to make the assessment process as highly participatory as possible, and involve as many partner organization staff and stakeholders, particularly youth, as possible to gain insights into organizational performance from multiple

perspectives and to build trust and buy-in for the capacity building process. This coaching tool consists of a scoring matrix followed by a rubric that describes ratings for the criteria scored.

This tool is meant to be used in combination with other assessment tools, such as interviews and focus groups with key staff and stakeholders. Outcomes from this tool and others are meant to serve as building blocks for capacity building plans. Recognizing that any type of capacity development is non-linear and complex process, this coaching tool is meant to be conducted on an iterative basis to encourage continuous reflection and learning, and to revisit assessment results and capacity building plans.

### **Additional Resources:**

[USAID's Youth in Development Policy](#) (USAID, October 2012)

[Scan and Review of Youth Development Measurement Tools](#) (USAID, December 2013)

[Youth Engagement in Development: Effective Approaches and Action-Oriented Recommendations for the Field](#) (USAID, January 2014)

[Aiming High: 10 Strategies for Meaningful Youth Engagement](#) (Athena Network)

[Putting Positive Youth Development into Practice](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007)

[The Role of Youth Engagement in Positive Youth Development and Social Justice Youth Development for High-Risk, Marginalized Youth](#) (International Journal for Adolescents and Youth, April 2015)

## Scoring Matrix:

Organization/Institution Name:

Staff name/title:

Date:

Other staff present:

Standard	Rating 1 = Undeveloped 2 = Developing 3 = Developed 4 = Well-developed 5 = Excellent	Comments/Recommendations
THE ENVIRONMENT: What I see when I walk in...		
Youth feel welcome at the organization	1 2 3 4 5	
A diverse group of youth is represented at the organization and in activities (by gender, age geographic location, ability)	1 2 3 4 5	
Youth take part in meaningful functions at the organization	1 2 3 4 5	
The organization has set and regularly used norms that ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all youth	1 2 3 4 5	
PROGRAMS: What I see when I observe youth programs, and what happens when youth programs are planned...		
A diverse set of programs is implemented on a regular basis	1 2 3 4 5	
All youth programs and activities have a participatory delivery, real-life/practical application and community connection	1 2 3 4 5	
Youth are a part of planning programs and activities	1 2 3 4 5	



Standard	Rating 1 = Undeveloped 2 = Developing 3 = Developed 4 = Well-developed 5 = Excellent	Comments/Recommendations
Staff/volunteers ensure that activities build on youth strengths, knowledge and interests and allow youth to develop new skills	1 2 3 4 5	
Staff/volunteers support and encourage one another and create a space where youth feel safe to express their opinions and try new things	1 2 3 4 5	
In trainings, learning objectives are communicated clearly and the experiential learning cycle (action/reflection/action) is implemented	1 2 3 4 5	
All youth, regardless of gender, geographic location, age, ability, etc., participate actively, including generating ideas, leading programs, implementing activities	1 2 3 4 5	
The organization links youth to information, opportunities and services that serve their needs outside of the organization's scope, vision, and mission	1 2 3 4 5	
SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS: What I see when I coach staff/volunteers/interns at the organization...		
Staff/volunteers display positive and supportive attitudes about ALL youth and speak positively about youth	1 2 3 4 5	
Staff/volunteers can talk about youth "assets", and can explain how they engage youth around the assets each youth brings to the center	1 2 3 4 5	
Staff/volunteers communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully with youth; establish caring relationships with youth; provide advice, support and expertise	1 2 3 4 5	

Standard	Rating 1 = Undeveloped 2 = Developing 3 = Developed 4 = Well-developed 5 = Excellent	Comments/Recommendations
Staff/volunteers promote supportive youth/adult relationships with parents and community members.	1 2 3 4 5	
Staff/volunteers ensure that youth communicate respectfully and productively with each other	1 2 3 4 5	
POLICIES: What I see when I look at the organization's systems and policies...		
Policies ensure that youth participate meaningfully in leadership at the organizational and board levels	1 2 3 4 5	
Policies ensure that the organization provides access to opportunities and caring relationships for all youth through programming and partnerships	1 2 3 4 5	
Policies ensure organization partners with other service providers to provide youth with a wide variety of programming, knowledge and opportunities	1 2 3 4 5	
Policies include standards for program quality and real-life application of youth programming	1 2 3 4 5	
RESULTS & OUTCOMES: What I observe as a result of the organization's work...		
Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, and independence	1 2 3 4 5	
Community members have an improved perception of youth as a result of the organization's work	1 2 3 4 5	
Youth are actively engaged in the evaluation of the organization's work	1 2 3 4 5	

**Rubric:**

The scenarios below are examples of what PYD might look like at an organization. Users of the coaching tool should use this rubric to score the organization on this tool.

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>THE ENVIRONMENT: What I see when I walk in...</b>					
<b>Youth feel welcome at the organization</b>	Youth are not greeted  Youth do not spend time at the organization outside of specific activities	Youth are greeted as they enter  Youth interact briefly before and after activities	Youth are greeted as they enter  Youth and staff interact before and after activities  Some youth report feeling welcome	Youth converse with staff and peers when they enter  Youth and staff interact outside of activities connected to the organization  All youth report feeling welcome	New youth are greeted and invited into social interactions  Youth and staff interact collegially  Youth and staff spend time at the organization interacting with staff and peers outside of activities  All youth enthusiastically report feeling welcome
<b>A diverse group of youth is represented at the organization and in activities (by gender, age, geographic location, ability)</b>	A non-diverse group of youth is represented (all same gender, location, age, etc.; or only minimal diversity)	Youth from a predominant group are represented, with a few from other groups  Youth from different groups do not interact	Youth of different ages, geographic locations, genders and abilities are represented at the center  All youth interact during programming	Youth of different ages, geographic locations, genders and abilities participate actively at the center.  All youth readily interact in and outside of the organization's activities; the organization works to ensure interaction between groups	Youth of different ages, geographic locations, genders and abilities participate actively and lead at the organization.  Diverse youth interact readily and form tight bonds as a result of the organization's programming and efforts

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>Diverse youth take part in meaningful functions at the organization</b>	Youth do not participate in the functions of the organization; youth are used at the organization	Some youth have assigned tasks at the organization	Youth carry out regular responsibilities at the organization  Youth regularly give feedback to staff on programming and operations	Diverse youth (by age, gender, etc.) carry out assigned and essential organizational responsibilities  Youth are consulted about issues at the organization in an official capacity and regularly give valued feedback on programming and operations	Diverse youth enthusiastically carry out assigned responsibilities and lead action on tasks or initiatives at the organization; youth display commitment to the organization's success  Youth are represented on the board and on the staff and their opinions weighted equally in all decision making
<b>The organization has set and regularly used norms that ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all youth</b>	The organization has no norms for behavior and treatment of youth	The organization has some set rules on behavior to encourage positive treatment of all youth	The organization has worked with youth to set written norms for behavior that encourage positive treatment of youth to allow for a physically and psychologically safe learning environment.  Norms are mentioned by staff	The organization has worked with youth to set written norms for behavior that encourage positive treatment of all youth to allow for a physically and psychologically safe learning environment.  Norms are visible at the organization  The organization's staff/volunteers regularly refer to these norms in and outside of activities	The organization has youth-chosen norms in place that ensure that all youth, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, etc., have a physically and psychologically protected environment in which to convene, to learn, and to access opportunities  Norms are posted in writing at the organization  The organization's staff/volunteers regularly refer to these norms and strive to create a safe environment for youth

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
THE PROGRAMS: When I observe youth programs, and what happens when youth programs are planned...					
<b>Programs of interest to the youth population of the governorate, appropriate to different ages, genders, abilities, geographic location, are implemented regularly</b>	One type of programming is implemented, which attracts one group of youth	A few types of programming are implemented, which attracts varied youth	Various programs and activities are implemented regularly to attract youth	Programs and activities are planned/implemented based on youth demographics and attract a representative sample of youth in the target area, according to ages, genders, abilities, geographic location	Programs and activities are planned/implemented based on target youth demographics and work to attract diverse youth from throughout the target area
<b>All youth programs and activities have a participatory delivery, real-life application and community connection</b>	Youth do not have the opportunity to participate in learning or practice learning during most activities	Staff ask questions to elicit youth participation;  Learning is vaguely connected to needs and contribution	Staff create various opportunities for youth to participate in different ways.  Youth think about how to apply learning overall and to improve their community through the organization's work	Staff/trainers create opportunities for youth to participate in and lead activities  Youth practice their learning and/or complete a project or exercise their learned skills in the organization's activities  Learning is connected to community needs and contribution; the organization's activities allow youth to think about possible positive future activities as a result of their learning/activity	Staff create significant opportunities for youth to lead in delivery and application of learning  Youth plan and complete projects that allow them to exercise knowledge, interests, and learned skills to contribute to positive outcomes as a result of the activity

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>Youth are a part of planning programs and activities</b>	Activities are planned without gauging youth interest	A few youth give feedback on organizational activities and activities informally	Staff/volunteers consult youth on interest and availability for future organizational activities  Youth assist in planning of programs and activities	Staff/volunteers consult diverse youth on interest and availability for future programs and activities, capturing opinions from different genders, age groups, geographic locations, etc.  Youth take an active role in planning of programs and activities	Staff/volunteers have a formal process to consult a wide variety of youth on interest and availability for future programs and activities, capturing opinions from different genders, age groups, geographic locations, etc.  Youth take an active role and lead some planning of programs and activities
<b>Staff/volunteers ensure that activities build on youth strengths, knowledge, and interests and allow youth to learn new skills</b>	Staff do not reference previous youth learning or current interests in activities and programming  Staff do not allow youth the opportunity to learn new skills.	Staff mention previous youth learning or current interests in the course of activities  Staff allow youth to attempt to demonstrate learning in activities	Staff ask youth to share previous learning or current interests in the course of activities  Staff allow youth to practice learning in activities	Staff plan and implement activities to connect to previous youth learning, experience and interests  Staff assist youth in learning new skills during activities or allow them to apply learning in an activity	Staff ask youth to contribute to learning using their strengths, knowledge and interests  Staff support youth in learning and building new skills, by allowing space for youth to repeat attempts at learning, to apply their learning, and/or by coaching youth through the application of learning

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<p><b>Staff/volunteers support and encourage one another and create a space where youth feel safe to express their opinions and try new things</b></p>	<p>Staff/volunteers communicate knowledge and do not interact with youth</p> <p>Youth do not express support of peers in expressing themselves</p> <p>Youth do not openly share thoughts and opinions</p>	<p>Staff /volunteers give youth opportunities to participate in activities</p> <p>Youth express thoughts and opinions when prompted</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers encourage youth to participate in new activities and youth do so</p> <p>Staff /volunteers encourage youth to express their thoughts and opinions openly; and youth report feeling comfortable to do so</p> <p>Staff /volunteers use each other as resources to better serve youth</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers encourage youth to try new things, participate in activities and challenge themselves</p> <p>Staff/ volunteers often encourage youth to express their opinions openly; youth openly express their thoughts and opinions with prompting</p> <p>Staff/ volunteers use each other and youth as resources</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers/youth encourage youth to try new things, participate in activities and challenge themselves; youth actively do so</p> <p>Staff/volunteers often encourage youth to express their opinions openly; all youth openly express their thoughts and opinions</p> <p>Staff/volunteers regularly report ways that they learn from youth and from each other</p> <p>Staff/ volunteers encourage youth to use each other as resources</p>
<p><b>All youth, regardless of gender, geographic location, age, ability, etc., participate actively, including generating ideas, leading programming, implementing activities</b></p>	<p>Youth watch staff/volunteers lead activities</p> <p>Youth answer questions posed by staff/volunteers</p> <p>Only extroverts in group answer questions</p>	<p>Staff /volunteers give youth opportunities to participate in activities</p> <p>Youth express thoughts and opinions when prompted</p> <p>Most youth participate in conversations at organization</p> <p>Youth offer ideas about the organization's activities</p>	<p>Youth readily participate in activities</p> <p>Youth lead some programming</p> <p>Youth readily offer ideas about all programming and activities</p>	<p>All youth readily contribute to and participate in activities</p> <p>Youth generate ideas to improve activities and programs</p>	<p>Youth lead sections of programming, implement activities</p> <p>All youth participate in activities, regardless of gender, geographic/ socioeconomic background, age, etc.</p> <p>Youth generate ideas to improve activities and programs and work toward implementing them</p>

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<p><b>The organization links youth to information, opportunities and services that serve their needs outside of the organization's scope, vision and mission</b></p>	<p>The organization only provides and has access to information on its own programming</p>	<p>The organization occasionally links youth to opportunities and services that serve their needs and that are not a part of the services provided by the organization.</p>	<p>Staff has information for youth on services and opportunities for youth and offers it to youth regularly</p> <p>The organization links youth to opportunities and services that serve their needs that are outside of the organization's scope, vision, and mission</p> <p>The organization has relationships with other youth service providers</p>	<p>The organization keeps information and shares with youth on opportunities locally and nationally in different areas (i.e. health, employment, etc.)</p> <p>Youth know how to access information the organization has on opportunities and services locally</p> <p>The organization has relationships and regular communication with other youth service providers locally on opportunities and services for youth</p>	<p>The organization has a clear repository of information for youth on other services and opportunities for them in their community, regionally, and nationally, including in the areas of health, finance, employment, education, community service, etc.</p> <p>The organization links youth to opportunities and services that serve their needs outside of the organization's scope, vision, and mission</p> <p>Youth know how to access organizational information on opportunities and services available to them.</p> <p>The organization maintains close relationships and regular communication with youth service providers locally and nationally</p>



Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS: When I coach staff/volunteers/interns at the organization...					
<b>Staff/volunteers display positive and supportive attitudes about ALL youth and speak positively about youth</b>	Staff/volunteers/interns speak about youth noting the problems of working with them.	Staff/volunteers/interns speak about youth, individually and collectively, noting problems but also noting possible solutions	Staff/volunteers/interns display positive and supportive attitudes about youth; speak positively about youth; address issues with a positive approach	Staff/volunteers/interns display positive and supportive attitudes; speak positively about young people, recognizing youth for the assets they bring to the group  Staff/volunteers/interns work to positively resolve problems with youth	Staff/volunteers/interns display positive and supportive attitudes toward ALL youth (regardless of age, gender, background, etc.); speak positively about young people, recognizing each individual for the assets they bring to the group  Staff/volunteers/interns work to positively resolve problems and offer growth opportunities to ALL youth
<b>Staff/volunteers talk about youth “assets,” and can explain how they engage youth around the assets each young person brings to the organization</b>	Staff/volunteers do not seek out youth assets  Staff/volunteers focus on youth deficits or problems to be solved	Staff/volunteers try to identify youth potential, or assets of specific youth	Staff/volunteers identify assets youth in general bring to the organization  Staff/volunteers engage natural leaders’ assets into activities	Staff/volunteers identify assets different youth bring to the organization  Staff/volunteers seek to incorporate assets of various youth into programs (not just natural leaders)	Staff/volunteers readily identify individual youth’s assets  Staff/volunteers creatively seeks to work with ALL youth to use their assets in the organization’s programming

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>Staff/volunteers communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully with youth; establish caring relationships with youth; provide advice, support and expertise</b>	<p>Staff/volunteers speak to youth in a different way than they would speak to adults; in a condescending tone</p> <p>Staff/volunteers do not work to establish caring relationships with youth</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers speak to youth in a collegial way</p> <p>Staff/volunteers establish caring relationships with a few youth</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers communicate openly and respectfully with youth</p> <p>Staff/volunteers create caring relationships with youth</p> <p>Staff/volunteers share from their experience/expertise and offer advice to youth</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers communicate frequently, openly and respectfully with youth; creating a sense of caring among youth at the organization</p> <p>Staff/volunteers readily share from their experience/expertise and offer advice to youth as they ask</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully with youth</p> <p>Staff/volunteers work to create caring relationships with all youth at the organization, regardless of gender, age, etc., and model this for other staff and youth</p> <p>Youth seek out advice, support and expertise from staff/volunteers</p>
<b>Staff/volunteers promote supportive youth/adult relationships</b>	<p>Staff/volunteers downplay relationships with adults; speak negatively of relationships with adults</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers speak positively about adults</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers promote supportive youth/adult relationships</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers promote supportive youth/adult relationships by creating opportunities for youth to interact with adults</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers promote supportive youth/adult relationships by creating opportunities for youth to build caring relationships with adults</p>
<b>Staff/volunteers ensure that youth communicate respectfully and productively with each other</b>	<p>Staff/volunteers do not ensure positive youth communication, allowing youth to speak to each other negatively</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers call attention to the issue when youth communicate negatively with each other</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers attempt to communicate positively and respectfully in and outside of the organization's activities</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers model respectful and productive communication with each other and youth</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers model and openly encourage respectful and productive communication with each other and youth</p> <p>Staff/volunteers regularly emphasize respectful communication and address any communication issues immediately</p>

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
THE POLICIES: What I see when I look at the organization's systems and policies					
<b>Policies ensure that youth participate meaningfully in leadership at the organizational and board levels</b>	Policies do not provide for youth participation in the governance of the organization	Policies provide for youth point of view to be taken into account in board decisions	Policies provide for youth participate in decision-making at organizational and board levels	Policies provide for youth to be key contributors to decision-making at the organizational and board levels	Policies ensure that youth are a part of the board and staff of the organization
<b>Policies ensure the organization provides access to opportunities and caring relationships for all youth through programming and partnerships</b>	Policies do not address access to activities or to caring adults relationships for youth  Policies do not address creating additional community partnerships	Policies include reference to access to activities for youth  Policies mention partnerships as desirable	Policies include provisions for youth access to activities  Policies address creating additional community partnerships  Policies mention importance of building strong youth-adult partnerships	Policies include provisions for greater youth access to activities  Policies address creating additional community partnerships  Policies identify concrete ways to build strong youth-adult partnerships	Policies include provisions for greater accessibility for youth, based on time, location and physical access  Policies provide for creation of additional community partnerships for increased opportunities for programming, learning, and strong youth-adult partnerships
<b>Policies ensure the organization's partners with other service providers, private sector partners, and youth-serving organizations to provide youth with a wide variety of programming, knowledge, and opportunity</b>	Policies do not mention partnering with other youth-serving organizations or service providers	Policies mention partnering with governmental organizations or other community partners	Policies refer to partnerships between service providers and other youth serving organizations	Policies define the kinds of partners the organization should seek to cultivate to better serve youth	Policies ensure that the organization continually works to develop partnerships with service providers, youth-serving organizations, private sector partners, etc. to provide youth with a wide variety of programming, knowledge, and opportunity

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>Policies include standards for program quality, youth focus, and real-life application of programming</b>	The organization's policies do not reference programming for youth	Policies mention engaging youth in planning activities, implementing on-going activities	Policies have references to quality youth programming and real-life application of youth learning	Policies contain standards to quality training and real-life application of programming.  Policies refer to youth-orientation of programming instead of funder orientation	Policies contain specific descriptions of quality training for youth and real-life application of programming  Policies ensure that programming is youth-oriented instead of funder-oriented
<b>RESULTS &amp; OUTCOMES: What I observe as a result of the organization's work...</b>					
<b>Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, and independence</b>	Youth report a sense of isolation, low confidence, and dependency	Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, and independence	Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, independence, having positive relationships with adults, and increased competence/knowledge/skills	Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, independence, having positive relationships with adults, and increased competence/knowledge/skills  Youth report engaging in team work, leading activities, working positively with adults, and applying new competence/knowledge/skills	Youth report a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, independence, having positive relationships with adults, and increased competence/knowledge/skills  Youth report engaging in team work, leading activities, working positively with adults, and applying new competence/knowledge/skills  Youth report coaching and mentoring other young people, helping them have a greater sense of belonging, self-worth, and independence

Subject	Undeveloped (1)	Developing (2)	Developed (3)	Well-developed (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>Community members have an improved perception of youth as a result of the organization's work</b>	Community members report negative perceptions of youth as a result of the organization's work	Community members report unchanged perceptions of youth as a result of the organization's work	Community members report an improved perception of youth as a result of the organization's work	Community members report an improved perception of youth as a result of the organization's work and can cite specific examples of positive interactions with youth	Community members report an improved perception of youth as a result of the organization's work and can cite specific examples of positive interactions with youth  Community members report that as a result of the organization's work, they have been relating to and/or working with youth in more positive ways
<b>Youth are actively engaged in the evaluation of the organization's work</b>	Youth are not engaged in any way in the evaluation of the organization's work	Youth are used to carry out pieces of evaluations of the organization's work but not consulted on the design, implementation, or analysis of findings	Youth are consulted on the design, implementation, and analysis of findings  Youth carry out pieces of the evaluation	Youth lead the design, implementation, and analysis of evaluations	Youth lead the design, implementation, and analysis of evaluations  Youth lead incorporating evaluation findings into future programming