

# Organizational Capacity Development

## Strategy

Andrea Ortiz, Ana Ragonesi, Camila Franco, Miguel Pulido, Julie Collins, Sofia Muñoz, Carlos Dinkel  
Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) Colombia (Programa Comunidades Saludables de USAID)



HEALTH SYSTEMS  
STRENGTHENING  
ACCELERATOR

### Context

The Colombian government has been confronting the challenge of responding to migratory flows coming from Venezuela and systematically integrating the migrant population, whose goal is achieving a state of permanence. This reality creates many hurdles for the healthcare system, which must respond and attend to the demands of a population with a variety of needs, while also working to move past a solely humanitarian approach centered only on addressing basic needs to one that achieves effective social inclusion in the system.

Within this context, USAID's Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) Colombia Activity has identified the need to strengthen the organizational capacity of local actors. Also, according to the study carried out by Professor Bossert to the program: "We found that organizational capacity, seems to predict inclusion of migrant population as well as the territorial entities who receiving technical assistance and vocational training, were more inclusive".

Through a systematic approach, LHSS supported Departments with technical assistance and co-creation processes to strengthen their role in directing and coordinating the health sector and the General Social Health System (SGSS) within their jurisdiction, specifically with the improvement of their capacity to integrate the migrant population into the healthcare system. As strategic agents in their territories, Municipalities have first-hand knowledge of the needs of the population and are responsible for formulating and implementing public policies. These policies must guarantee the population's rights and ensure that both the migrant and host communities are integrated into the healthcare system. Community-based organizations are also responsible parties and are active in encouraging integration into the healthcare system. Through working collaboratively with local territorial actors, the LHSS Colombia Activity uses a bottom-up approach to guide and promote sustainability through a capacity development process. This also considers the local contexts of each territory, the different focuses of the migratory population, and the adaptability that is implied by existing territorial and population differences.

### Activity Description

The LHSS Colombia Activity's goal is to integrate the migrant population into the healthcare system through capacity development at the individual, organizational, and system levels, using a systematic, sustainable, and collaborative approach to identify the appropriate type of intervention. Although an activity may be focused on one type of intervention, the relationship between different types of interventions is considered in all activities and services. For example, the development of individual capacities, whether it be through training or another form of support, is carried out with the goal of strengthening an individual's contribution, which, in turn, impacts organizational performance. Likewise, the strategy behind the implementation of capacity-development involves the identification of processes that could leave behind increased capabilities situated within the transition and sustainability strategy of the program. This vision would materialize through grants to local partners and providing technical assistance based on co-creation and collaboration methodologies.

The framework, based on LHSS's reference framework, starts measuring the organizational capacity in twelve managerial dimensions and to methodically organize contributions to sustainability (see figure). Supporting this process requires identifying key existing capabilities and any additional ones that would be necessary to strengthen the essential attention to health in the migrant population, returnees, and host community, taking as a reference the administrative directives and policies of the Ministry of Health.

A survey diagnosis of capacities established a vision regarding the dimensions of organizational management that are necessary to reach the development objectives of a territory. Proposed interventions were modeled taking these results into consideration.

Likewise, by implementing the theory of change, interventions were aligned with the program's transition and sustainability plans (quantifiable capacity-development interventions which allow the planning of basic resources to guarantee its implementation), so that while although the changes of a process of technical assistance only appreciate with time, traceability could occur at any time.

Although the diagnostic yielded some results already established in other studies, this process of co-creation allowed for the officials responsible for attending to the migrant population to clearly articulate the strengths and areas of improvement of their organizations (TEs or CBOs) and to define priorities alongside the program.



Figure 1. Managerial dimensions of the organizational capacity development framework.

The process also identifies that, although there are common strengths and problems in all territorial entities, the methods are not the same given the unique organizational conditions of each entity. These may include variables such as the leadership of the organization, the capacity to hire personnel, the structure of each entity, and their relationship with donors and community members that may have an influence on the proposed results.

We can emphasize effects including sustainability and the integral response to the migrant population, for which the areas of intervention were defined to be internalized by the TEs and CBOs and sustained over time. The premise of these interventions is that if the systems, procedures, and skills of the TEs and CBOs are strengthened, there will be a multiplier effect in the departmental and national systems.

The areas of intervention for organizational capacity-development include:

- Defining and locating attention to migrants within the different organizational structures of the territorial entities.
- Designing, implementing, and systemizing the analysis of the migrant population's situation in every territorial entity as a fundamental element for their integration into the SGSS.
- Methodological support in the formation of response plans to migration, aligned with departmental and national plans.
- Design and dissemination of portfolios of programs or initiatives from other sectors for the integration of migrants.
- The co-creation of intersectional coordination mechanisms for the inclusion of the migrant population in the SGSS.
- Establishing processes and systems for the strategy and management of donations in coordination with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health.

The implementation of these plans is realized in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MSPS), departmental authorities, and CBOs. Each plan determines the baseline based on the conducted diagnostic process, which will allow for better measurement of the improvement of organizational performance.

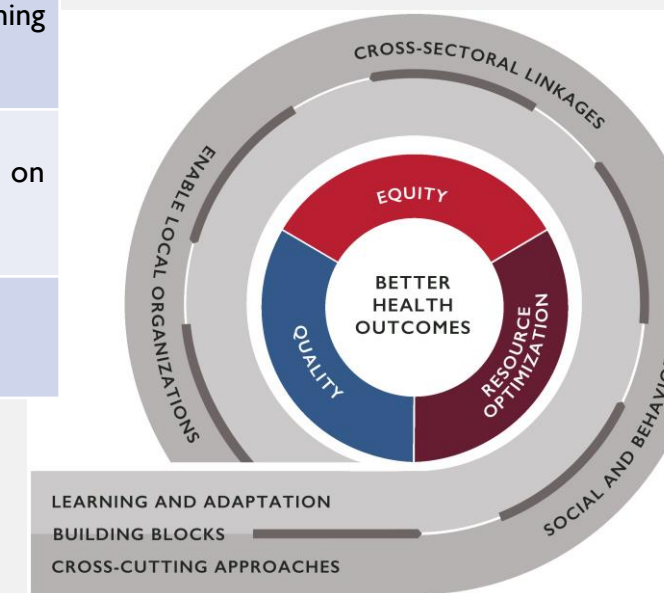
Every six months, there is the opportunity to pause and reflect to determine existing challenges and to propose adjustments to achieve the set objectives. Likewise, there is a measurement of capabilities to determine the progress in organizational performance with regards to the initial baseline.

### Activity Impact

Through this activity, the eleven territorial entities and six CBOs, prioritized by the program, improved various dimensions of their organizational capacity to **optimize resources** to provide more **equitable access** to better **quality health services**, implemented in a sustainable way through cross-sectoral coordination and local ownership.

Working alongside the municipalities and chosen CBOs has allowed the LHSS Colombia Activity to have **scalability** in this process, empower the territories, and promote mechanisms for dialogue with civil society. These are aimed at improving the relationship with the migrant population to strengthen their social and political presence in the participatory, decision, and policy-making processes of the health systems and other sectors, consequently strengthening overall governance.

DIMENSION	MAIN RESULTS
Strategy & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formulation and implementation of health sector response plans to the migratory phenomenon.</li><li>• Actions for the migrant population are included in the health planning documents of the territorial entities.</li><li>• Identification of the migrant population as a determinant of health.</li><li>• Improvement of knowledge about the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrant population through Health Situation Analysis.</li></ul>
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation and standardization of procedures to integrate the migrant population.</li><li>• Recognition and identification of regulatory frameworks and functions related to health care for the migrant population.</li></ul>
Leadership & Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization in leadership and change management for public servants of the Ministry of Health to promote the inclusion of the migrant population in its activities and programs.</li><li>• Positive effects on the dynamics, will, motivation, and organizational culture to recognize migration as a determinant of health.</li></ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of projects where logistical and in-kind resources are managed.</li><li>• Management capacity to obtain additional resources for the public budget.</li></ul>
Coordination & Stakeholder Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formalization of technical committees on health and migration to coordinate health interventions.</li><li>• Coordination at the intersectoral level, to promote collaboration and co-responsibility between different public, private and civil society actors in favor of improving the health of the migrant population.</li><li>• Identification of the grassroots organizations of the migrant population present in the territory to promote spaces for participation and co-creation between them and the institutional framework and maintaining communication.</li></ul>
Organizational Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide resources to strengthen information and institutional communication.</li><li>• Grassroots organizations, contribute their knowledge and experience in the communication processes on the supply of health services, with the migrant population.</li></ul>
Implementation Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inclusion of indicators to monitor public health actions aimed at the migrant population.</li></ul>



### Evidence

The results established in the previous section have materialized in circulars, resolutions, and administrative and policy guidelines formulated and developed by the territorial entities working with the LHSS Colombia program. These policy frameworks have made it possible to place the issue of health and migration on the public agenda of the territorial governments, and to show that structural integration of the migrant population is moving forward.

Members of grassroots organizations also participated in the formulation of Colombia's Ten-Year Public Health Plan, with the participation of nearly 80 migrants. This demonstrates the social and political integration of migrants in decision-making processes and public policy formulation.

Likewise, each of the prioritized public management dimensions to promote migrant integration into the health system are stronger than when the organizational capacity development strategy was introduced.

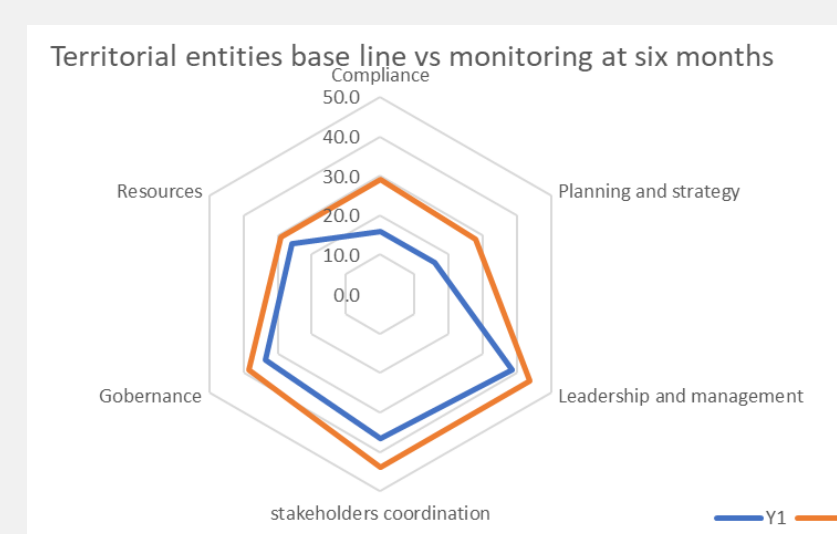


Figure 2. Territorial Entities Baseline vs. Monitoring at six months

Image 1. Ten-Year Public Health Plan participation meeting with migrant population



[Click here to go to the LHSS Project's Twitter to see Gisella Serrano of the Mahuampi Venezuelan Foundation speak eloquently about the importance of Venezuelan migrants' voices in shaping Colombia's 10-Year Health Plan. Video includes English translation.](#)

### Facilitators

- The commitment and empowerment of the people at the Ministry of Health and TEs, and their openness to change.
- Collaboration between the territorial entities, LHSS Colombia and other stakeholders led to optimal results and sustainability of the processes.
- Including the leaders of the migrant population and the CBOs in the design and validation of the activities.
- Documentation of processes for standardization.
- The identification, mapping, and articulation of other actors in a permanent and non-reactive way.
- Recognition from officials that the fundamental basis for organizational development is leadership and management processes.
- Formulating planning strategies in the medium and long term.

### Challenges

- Finalizing the processes due to high personnel turnover in the territorial entities.
- Identification of actions that generate public value without using economic resources.
- Ensuring gender and social inclusion cut across all areas; strategic and operational.
- Guaranteeing that all staff are empowered and committed, within the context where most of the population is vulnerable.
- Establishing the availability of public servants who are in charge.
- Having more assertive means of dissemination towards the migrant population.
- Coordinating the formulated plans with stakeholders in the health sector.
- Allocation of public resources for the emergency response to integrate migrants into the Colombian healthcare system.

### Lessons Learned

- Sustainability is a process that must be planned with a vision, but also with an established path, and must be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to changes in context.
- Capacity development is not a technical assistance methodology, it is a permanent state of co-creation with the prioritized stakeholders, which take four principles as reference: 1) achieve a collaborative mentality, 2) generate empathy, 3) apply a systematic approach during the implementation process, and 4) consider a focus on gender equality and social inclusion in the development of all activities. An important result of the diagnostic and co-creation processes of the development plans has been the direct and constant participation of employees from all territorial entities and the CBOs, and the agreement to work together to achieve the integration of the migrant population into the health system.
- The identification of key actors and their reference in the territory, has allowed the entities to know the availability of services and generate synergies to propose and execute projects, as well as making the migrant population aware of the benefits of international cooperation and the services they can access, either from a humanitarian perspective or from the full exercise of their rights.
- Although talk of sustainable actions is novel, when separated from the environmental sector, it induces a tacit commitment from public servants to identify and implement actions that add public value and therefore orient public management towards results. Additionally, it prompts entities to see international cooperation from a perspective of work between peers and not necessarily as pure assistance.

