



Jake Lyell for LWR

## TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

# Local Capacity Strengthening

## PARTNERSHIP AT CORUS INTERNATIONAL

Partnership is at the core of Corus International, a family of global leaders in international development and humanitarian assistance.<sup>1</sup> We collaborate with governments, businesses and local partners to grow inclusive economies, improve public health, and strengthen community resilience.

Since strong partnerships are key to the success of our work, we take distinctive approaches to local capacity strengthening that are tailored to the contexts, sectors and feats we strive to achieve with our fellow development actors. In this document, we will summarize the local capacity strengthening approach of Corus organizations Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health in our rural economic development and public health programming and how it contributes to the Corus family's overall ethos of partnership. For Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health, **strengthening local capacity means leveraging and elevating the existing capacity of local partners (community groups, civil society organizations, businesses, governments, networks) to advance mutual learning and to drive innovative, transformational change.**

**The local capacity strengthening approach guiding the Corus family of organizations is built upon the following key principles:**

- Holistic Partnership
- Local Ownership
- Mutual Learning
- Gender equity and social inclusion
- Sustainability



CORUSINTERNATIONAL.ORG

<sup>1</sup> Corus International is an ensemble of long-serving, global leaders in international development and humanitarian assistance committed to ending poverty and building healthy communities across Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Africa. The Corus family includes public health organization IMA World Health, international aid and development non-profit Lutheran World Relief, technology for development company CGA Technologies, impact investing fund Ground Up Investing, and direct trade coffee producer Farmers Market Brands.

# Defining Capacity Strengthening

The understanding of local capacity strengthening has evolved significantly as the development sector increasingly prioritizes localization and systems approaches for sustainable development. As we evaluate our prioritization of locally owned outcomes and performance measurement, Corus organizations Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health recognize that the traditional “capacity building” framework has too often valued Western models over the ideas, skills and resources of the Global South. To emphasize the value we place on the mutual learning, co-creation and leadership of our underrepresented colleagues within our holistic partnerships, we intentionally refer to our capacity strengthening approach as **accompaniment**.

Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health have long histories of working with partners to overcome global health challenges, develop productive and stable economies, improve resilience in the face of climate change, and respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises. As the two organizations became permanent partners through the Corus family, partner accompaniment has become foundational to our family’s ethos of partnership

## DEFINITIONS

**Capacity** is the combination of knowledge, skills, processes, relationships and commitment needed to produce sustainable development objectives.

**Capacity Strengthening** is a purposeful process where organizations strengthen and continuously improve their ability to achieve their mission and adapt to change.

**Accompaniment** is an intentional, collaborative and respectful process where Lutheran World Relief, IMA World Health and our partners support mutual effectiveness, learning and resilience.

The underlying logic of our capacity strengthening approach can be visualized through the following **results framework**.

Through **accompaniment**, Lutheran World Relief, IMA World Health and our partners develop the capacity (knowledge, skills, structures, relationships and commitment) to achieve our respective missions. By working and learning together, we ensure effectiveness and resilience by helping communities and markets sustainably meet needs well into the future.



## Local Capacity Strengthening Approach

One of the advantages of the Corus family is that our organizations are well-versed in working with a range of national and local stakeholders. The Corus family's ethos of partnership is exemplified by the commitment of Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health to diverse partnerships that champion rural economic development and public health across sectors, including:

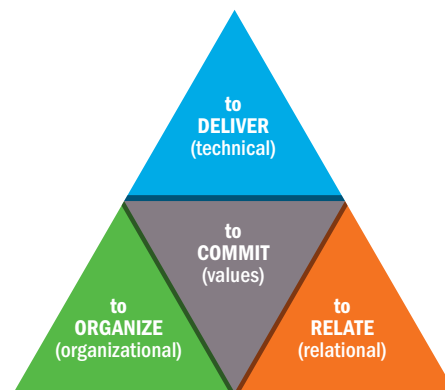
- **Civil society:** Community-based organizations (CBOs), local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), community groups and grassroots alliances
- **Private sector:** Cooperatives, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), agribusinesses, private clinics, banks and professional trade associations
- **Government:** Village councils, health care centers, agricultural offices and government ministries

We apply a **systems approach** to strengthen intersectoral relationships which link partners horizontally with peers or connect them vertically with communities and actors at district and national levels. For example, we can link farmer cooperatives to private sector suppliers in agricultural value chains, convene grassroots networks and lawmakers to shape the legal environment through advocacy, and strengthen healthcare systems through enhanced supervisory relationships between district health departments, local health facilities and Christian health associations (CHAs).

## Capacity Framework

The Corus family's holistic understanding of capacity reflects the elements and functions necessary for a local partner to be successful and sustainable. The capacity framework utilized by Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health includes both Capacity 1.0 and 2.0 perspectives and can be incorporated and adapted into all of Corus' accompaniment efforts.

This capacity framework divides capacity into four interrelated and interdependent areas — the ability to deliver, to organize, to relate and to commit. **To deliver** is at the top of the pyramid, given the partner's ability to successfully deliver results is a visible, primary goal. **To commit** is at the center, driving identity and organizational culture. **To organize** focuses on the processes and structures needed to manage work and implement projects. **To relate** reflects the partner's



ability to form connections with peers and networks.

Corus organizations Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health utilize a wide range of methodologies to support capacity strengthening, including:

- Resource Provision
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Training & Technical Assistance
- Strategic Direction
- Experimentation, Innovation and Learning
- Facilitating Connections
- Enabling Environment

Local capacity strengthening is a complex process. When evaluating our local capacity strengthening initiatives, we recognize that monitoring inputs and outputs alone is not a sufficient measure of impact. For example, knowing a technical skill is not the same as consistently applying it, nor does having a financial management manual guarantee that funding is appropriately managed. Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health prioritize **performance** through measures of *outcome* to tell the whole story of capacity strengthening for long-term resilience.

## Conclusion

Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health believe that strengthening and nurturing partnerships is critical to advancing transformational change. Partners ground our programming in national contexts and social systems, fostering greater sustainability. A critical premise across the Corus family is that no “one size fits all” approach exists. Local capacity strengthening needs and strategies are highly context-specific and will change and adapt over time. Therefore, continuous learning, innovation and flexibility remain at the core of our capacity strengthening approach. The groundwork is laid for the Corus family to continue to innovate on our strengths and to sustain a unique partner capacity strengthening niche guided by our ethos of partnership.



## History of Local Capacity Strengthening

The Corus family consists of organizations with extensive histories of commitment to partnership and capacity strengthening. We recognize that local institutions are best positioned to act on behalf of their communities and context. Corus organizations Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health drive the Corus ethos of partnership as they have long supported collaboration with civil society, the private sector and governments to advance mutual learning and promote sustainable solutions. The following section highlights some of our local capacity strengthening success stories.



### LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

**Union des Sociétés Coopératives des Eleveurs de Tamani (USCET) — Mali:** Lutheran World Relief first supported USCET formalizing into a union. We reinforced its management capabilities and facilitated its collaboration with government and private sector institutions to allow for USCET's exponential growth.

### Pathways to Prosperity in the Cocoa Value Chain —

**El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras:** Lutheran World Relief supported inclusive economic growth and natural resource conservation in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador by strengthening capacities of cocoa producer organizations and increasing market access for smallholder farmers implementing sustainable agriculture practices.



### IMA WORLD HEALTH

**SANRU Rural Health Program (Projet Santé Rurale) — Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):** Over more than 20 years, IMA World Health mentored SANRU staff and supported an integrated development approach to strengthen capacity for priority primary health care interventions. Now a nationally registered NGO, SANRU has transitioned to a direct awardee of USAID, the World Bank, and the Global Fund.

**Capacity Plus — Africa:** IMA World Health worked with Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) and its members to strengthen human resources for health (HRH) and successfully integrate faith-based organizations into national health systems and the HRH community.

