

# HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE GAP MAP LOCALIZATION AND WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Health system strengthening (HSS) interventions are most effective in supporting health system capacity, performance, and sustainability when they apply approaches that are evidence based. To promote such approaches, there is a global need to systematically capture the full spectrum of emerging evidence on the effects of HSS in improving health system outcomes. USAID’s HSS Learning Agenda frames efforts to continuously gather evidence, learn, and adapt by articulating six Learning Questions that reflect current HSS priorities across the programming cycle.

In support of that Learning Agenda, the USAID Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS) conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise to curate existing evidence for each of the six Learning Questions and identify opportunity areas for strengthening the evidence base. The project accessed the PubMed database and other targeted gray literature websites to identify, screen, review, and catalog relevant evidence from peer-reviewed and gray articles from the past five years. The curated evidence is presented in an interactive [Evidence Gap Map](#).

This two-pager is part of a series of six that summarizes LHSS’s findings from the evidence mapping process for USAID’s six Learning Agenda questions. The two-pager series does not aim to answer the Learning Questions, but rather provides a high-level characterization of the identified state of the evidence for each question. This two-pager focuses on USAID’s Learning Question 5, “What are effective and sustainable mechanisms or processes that enable the participation of private sector, civil society, and public organizations in developing locally-led solutions to improve high-performing health care, especially for poor and vulnerable populations? What enables the effective participation or leadership of marginalized populations themselves in the development and implementation of these solutions? Under what conditions is this participation different?”

## OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a snapshot of the type, range, and extent of identified evidence related to Localization and Whole-of-Society Engagement (Learning Agenda Question 5).
2. Provide a high-level summary of themes from the curated evidence as a starting point for users of the Learning Question 5 Evidence Gap Map.
3. Highlight gaps in the curated Learning Question 5 evidence to inform targeted HSS programming by governments, funders, and HSS practitioners.

## Health System Strengthening Evidence Gap Map

[About EGM](#) | [Methodology](#) | [How to Navigate](#) | [Q&A](#)

The Evidence Gap Map identifies existing literature examining the impact of health system strengthening on health outcomes. Evidence is organized around USAID’s Health System Strengthening Learning Agenda.

What are effective and sustainable mechanisms or processes that enable the participation of private sector, civil society, and public organizations in developing locally-led solutions to improve high-performing health care, especially for poor and vulnerable populations? What enables the effective participation or leadership of marginalized populations themselves in the development and implementation of these solutions? Under what conditions is this participation different?

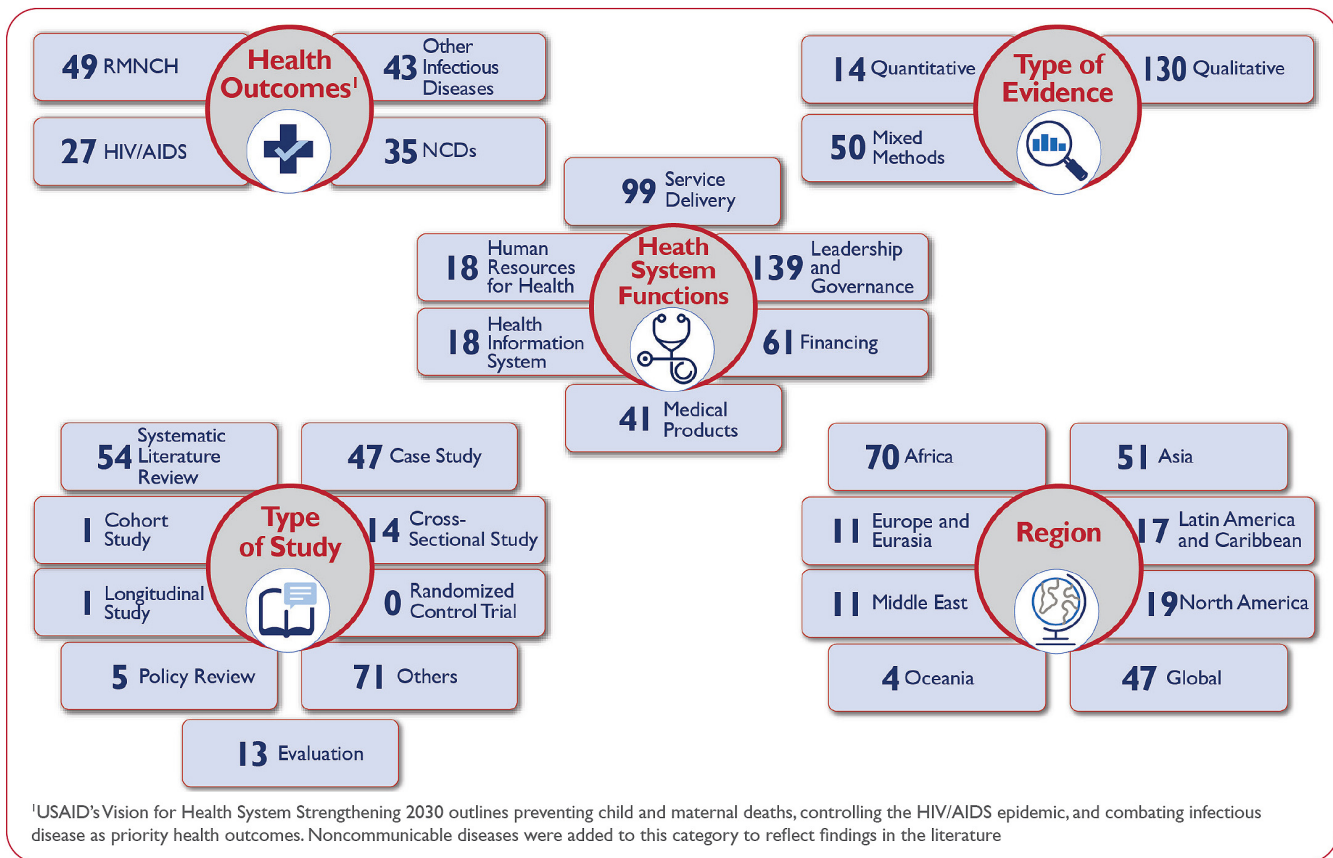
|                       | Methods and approaches for engagement of local society | Learnings and recommendations from country examples | Engagement of local society outside health sectors | Other |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|-------|
| Equity                | 87   | 84  | 28   | 10    |
| Quality               | 104  | 122   | 29   | 14    |
| Resource Optimization | 54   | 73  | 20   | 4     |
| Resilience            | 22   | 21  | 11   |       |

## KEY FINDINGS

### Descriptive Analysis

LHSS’s Evidence Gap Map is organized around seven categories that serve as filters: Health Outcomes, Health System Functions, Region, Country, Type of Evidence, Type of Study, and Date Range. The mapping for the Localization and Whole-of-Society Engagement Learning Question identified **197** relevant peer-reviewed and gray literature items published from 2017 to 2022. The figures below show the extent of findings in five of the categories.

Figure 1: Articles related to Localization and Whole-of-Society Engagement disaggregated by number and type for Health Outcomes, Health System Functions, Type of Evidence, Type of Study, and Region categories of the Evidence Gap Map



## Key Themes

- Successful efforts to implement and sustain locally-led health system strengthening activities require strong country leadership, active cross sectoral participation, and sufficient domestic financing.
- Prioritizing interventions that target social accountability, civic engagement, and community empowerment contributes to broader participation of stakeholders from outside the public sector.
- Power and gender dynamics are key considerations when engaging underserved populations in strengthening health services for improved equity and quality.
- Priority setting is often used as a key strategy for meaningfully involving disadvantaged and marginalized groups in health system planning.
- Comprehensive primary health care offers a foundational entry point to invest in and foster multisectoral action and community participation to address population health and social needs.

## Gap in the Literature

- There is a relative lack of articles on regulatory and sustainability frameworks for public-private partnerships.
- Establishing formal communication and coordination channels among community-based stakeholders enables unified advocacy and representation. However, the evidence base is limited in how health systems have been able to effectively institutionalize these platforms.
- There is limited evidence around the use of technology to drive innovative approaches to engage the private sector, civil society, and community stakeholders in health systems work.
- There is a need to integrate whole-of-society principles into evaluation frameworks to facilitate measurement and learning around developing and implementing locally-led activities.
- The need to integrate local communities in program and policy design and implementation is generally recognized, but evidence about operationalizing this approach while ensuring transparency and accountability is limited.

## Explore the Evidence Further

Click [here](#) to access the curated evidence around the topic of Localization and Whole-of-Society Engagement and learn more.

The LHSS Project wants to hear from you! If you are aware of relevant material that should be included in the Evidence Gap Map, please send it by filling out this [form](#).