

# LASER PULSE

Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER)  
Partners for University -Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

Possible Research and Evaluation Questions, and Candidate  
Indicators, to Consider When Attempting to Measure  
Commitment in a Ugandan Community

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## About LASER PULSE

LASER (Long-term SERVICES for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine) is a five-year, \$70M program funded through USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, that delivers research-driven solutions to field-sourced development challenges in USAID interest countries.

A consortium led by Purdue University, with core partners Indiana University, the University of Notre Dame, Makerere University, and Catholic Relief Services, implements the LASER PULSE program through a growing network of 2,300+ researchers and development practitioners in 56 countries.

LASER PULSE collaborates with USAID missions, bureaus, and independent offices and other local stakeholders to identify research needs for critical development challenges, and funds and strengthens capacity of researcher-practitioner teams to co-design solutions that translate into policy and practice. For more information, please visit [laserpulse.org](http://laserpulse.org).

## Possible Research and Evaluation Questions, and Candidate Indicators, to Consider When Attempting to Measure Commitment in a Ugandan Community

These research, evaluation, and learning questions, along with candidate indicators (in italics), emerged from a case study on developing participatory measures of commitment using a small purposive sample of community leaders and community members in Laredo, Uganda. Participants were program participants or stakeholders of a non-USAID funded NGO focused on girls' and women's empowerment in health and education.

### Presence of Bylaws

- What are the rules regarding the equal representation of marginalized groups in the organization? Is there a quota system for marginalized groups?  
Example indicator:
  - *Percentage of leadership positions occupied by women (or other marginalized group representatives) in your community*
- What are the rules related to decision making in the organization?
- How does the program ensure transparency between various actors of the organization?
- What are the service fees for the services provided to the clients?
- What are the guidelines regarding whom to provide health service to? Are these guidelines documented?
- Are there any government rules present to ensure transparency/equal representation? What are they? Are they used locally? Are there any checks and balances to ensure that they are implemented at local level?

### Committee Engagement

- Is there a committee?  
Example indicator:
  - *Frequency of committee meetings within a specific period of time*
- How inclusive is the committee?  
Example indicators:
  - *Are the meetings participatory i.e., bottom up or top down?*
  - *Degree to which community members report that their leadership provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas/opinions/beliefs/etc.*
  - *Degree to which community members report that their leadership regularly makes information about how diverse the representatives in leadership team(s) are available to the public.*
  - *Degree to which community members report that they/women/other special interest groups can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.*
  - *Level of engagement of different stakeholders in the organization or, how are they informed? (i.e., via meetings or quarterly reports?)*
  - *Number of community meetings*
  - *Number of participants in the meetings*

- *Number of participants in the decision-making process*
- *Number of participatory meetings*
- *Number of reports published and publicly available*
- *Number of readers*

## Planning

- How do organizations plan for activities? Is the planning process participatory? Who is involved in the planning process? How are the decisions made: collectively or individually?  
Example indicators:
  - *Degree to which community members perceive that their leaders meet the needs of women/marginalized individuals when planning community activities.*
  - *Degree to which community members perceive that their leaders seek feedback from women/marginalized groups when making decisions that affect the community.*
  - *Degree to which leaders engage community members in the process of implementing community activities.*
- What systems are in place to make the processes transparent and accountable, for example, budget transparency, information dissemination, etc.?
- Does the organization emphasize record keeping and what types of things do they track?
- During the planning process, what goals are important: short term or long run outcomes?
- Does the organization think about the sustainability of the outcomes? And what steps are taken to ensure sustainability?
- How are the budgets decided: collectively or individually by leaders?
  - *Number of participants (apart from leadership) in the planning process, budgeting, and decision-making process.*
  - *Number of records that are publicly available.*

## Feedback System

- Are there reports produced to track the progress of organizations?
- Are these reports publicly available?
- Are there annual/monthly meetings/open dialogues with stakeholders to get feedback on project progress?  
Example indicator:
  - *Degree to which leaders are transparent about how they intend to use the feedback information community members share with them.*
  - *Number of participatory meetings.*
  - *Number of records that are publicly available.*
- Are there participatory planning meetings?
- What does conflict resolution look like?

## Equal Representation

- Example indicator:
  - *Degree to which leaders support equal representation of women in leadership positions.*
  - *Number/percent of male and female candidates in the committee.*
  - *Number/percent of women in leadership roles.*
- Is there a quota system?

- How are resources distributed to marginalized sections of the population? Is there a preference for redistribution, like rationing?
- Do parents send both girls and boys to school?  
Example indicator:
  - *Percentage of boys vs girls in a given family that are sent to school.*
- Are there specific rules for serving older, disabled, and adolescent groups at health clinics?

## National-level Policies

- Government policies about the representation of marginalized members, for example, quotas.

## MEL Plan

- Does the organization have a MEL plan?
- What type of indicators are measured via the monitoring system?
- How frequently is it updated?
- Is there a budget allocated for the monitoring process?
- Do the community members participate in coming up with the MEL plan?  
Example indicator:
  - *Degree to which the program or organizational MEL plan is designed with participation from community members.*

## Community Based Organizations

- Are there self-help groups for women present?
- What is the participation rate of women in these groups?  
Example indicator:
  - *Number/Percentage of women participating in self-help groups.*
- Have women benefited from these SHGs?
- What types of benefits have they received?
- What does the past data tell us about the benefits of these SHGs to women?

## Women's Empowerment

- What types of women's empowerment activities is the community engaged in?  
Example indicator:
  - *Degree to which women participate in a self-help group*
- What type of policies does the government have to empower women?  
Example of financial policy measurement indicator (in relation to women's financial empowerment within community/family):
  - *Percentage/number of women that have savings/financial assets separate from their husbands*

## Community Engagement/Community Ownership

- Were the community members informed about the program, its goals, its community members, and its intended benefits and limitations?
- Are there frequent dialogues organized between organizations and communities?  
Example indicators:
  - *Frequency of organized dialogues with community members*
  - *Percentage/number of community members who participate in leadership meetings to discuss community related issues*
- Are the communities involved in the organization's decision-making process? What is their involvement type? What types of actors are present in the decision-making processes?
- Do the community members feel comfortable/safe voicing their opinions? Is there some protection provided to members of the community to facilitate this process?
- What do the young girls want? How can the programs deliver them? Is there a needs assessment conducted?
- Are the men involved in programs/activities related to women? What is their level of engagement?
- Do men accompany women to the health center?
- Are parents and teachers meeting at school? Do parents engage in school activities? What is the type of engagement?  
Example indicator:
  - *Percentage of time/number of hours parents spend on school activities*
- Are parents involved in the decision-making process for school activities?
- Are there training programs for parents to guide them? What type of training is provided? Are they free or paid? What is the participation level and the benefits?

## Community Leadership

- What is local leadership's level of engagement in community activities?  
Example indicator:
  - *Degree to which community leaders get involved in community activities*
- Are the community leaders informed about the various activities in the community?
- How does local leadership facilitate these activities?
- How are resources redistributed in communities? What are leaders' levels of engagement in this process?
- Do the local communities complain about corruption?
- Is the decision of resource distribution transparent to the locals?
- Do the locals think that the distribution of resources is conducted fairly by leaders?
- What is the level of corruption in the country?

## Capacity Building

- Are there training or workshops organized to improve skills?
- How do they improve the quality of service provided by the organization?  
Examples indicators:

- *Degree to which community members have access to training programs/activities to improve certain skills*
- *Percentage of time/number of hours per week individuals spend on learning a new skill*

## Needs Assessment

- Was there a needs assessment of the community?
- How did the organization decide upon the intervention- top down or bottom up?
- Was there an open dialogue between the local community and the organization regarding the interventions?
- Did that influence the intervention's design and planning?

## Benefits

- Are there any in-kind, cash benefits, or services provided to community members? Who provides this?
- Amount of cash benefit
- Type of in-kind benefit
- Types of services provided

## Trust

- Trust measures from [world value survey](#).