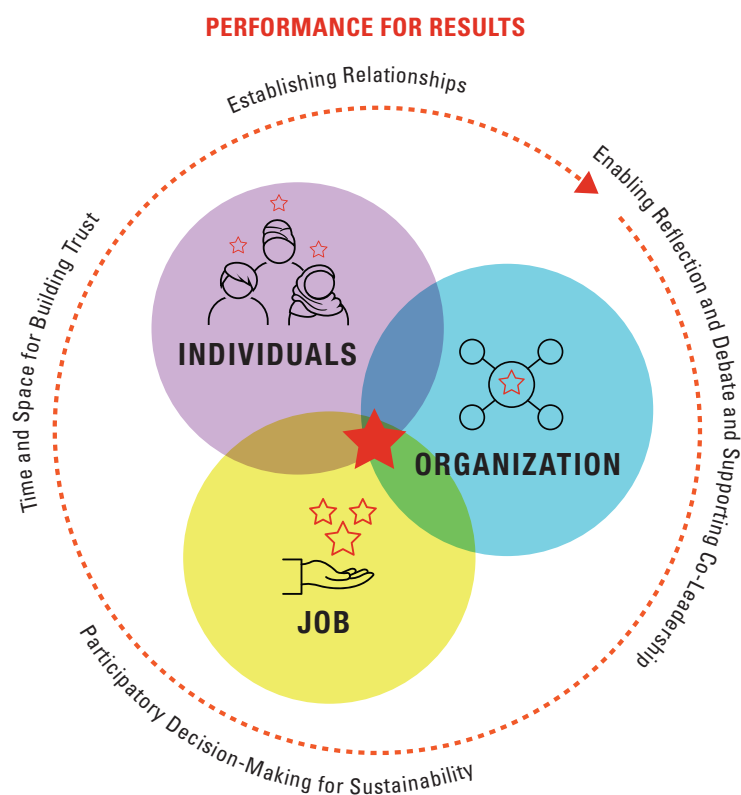


# Capacity Building vs. Performance Improvement: The Difference and Why it Matters



★ = Optimal performance | **PERFORMANCE** = Behaviour + Accomplishment

FHI 360 focuses on improving *performance* by addressing both 'human' and 'organizational' performance factors in an integrated way that includes a meaningful process for reflection and debate

Capacity building has been the cornerstone of international development for decades. Though capacity building has included some support to institutions and organizations, the overwhelming focus has been on individual technical capacity and training with the assumption that training individuals would lead to strengthened institutions and “spontaneous” organizational capacity. Unsurprisingly, this approach has not consistently led to effective, sustainable change. There is a need for a better approach—a performance improvement approach.

## APPROACH: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Recognizing these needs, FHI 360 focuses on improving *performance* by addressing both 'human' and 'organizational' performance factors in an integrated, systemic and systematic way. FHI 360 supports the interplay of leadership and individual skills and knowledge, as well as organizational structures and procedures. This is a complex but necessary approach to ensuring that barriers and obstacles to performance are removed so that organizations can deliver results and become *performing* organizations.

## PROCESS: TIME AND SPACE FOR REFLECTION & DEBATE

Performance improvement is not an activity or an event, it is a process that requires sufficient time and space to allow stakeholders to build relationships and establish trust. Performance improvement cannot be achieved or

*sustained* without an intentional change management approach. FHI 360's Performance Improvement approach consistently allows for stakeholder reflection and debate, co-leadership and participatory decision-making.

## PROCESS: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

Experience has shown that capacity building exercises often jump to developing and implementing human or organizational interventions with little attention to pre- and post-intervention planning. FHI 360's Six-Step Performance Improvement Process uses international best practices and intentionally targets the key stages of Assessment, Design and Support. When learning interventions are required, FHI 360 uses a blended learning model to support our program beneficiaries as they *apply* their new skills. Beneficiaries apply their learning with the support of peer learning, practicums, coaching, shadowing, and tools such as job aides, checklists, or rubrics as needed.

## OUTCOME: OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

The goal of our Performance Improvement approach is to go beyond technical training and cursory education systems strengthening and to, instead, develop performing education organizations that are capable of carrying out their long-term missions—namely to deliver better and more timely education services to students and parents.

**About FHI 360:** FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT IN ACTION

#### UNICEF MULTI-LEVEL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE) CAPACITY GAP ASSESSMENT AND INITIAL TARGETED CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

To identify the immediate training needs of Myanmar's MOE, FHI 360 conducted an assessment that identified human and institutional gaps across nine domains, including planning, leadership and teaming building, human resources management and financial management. Using UNDP's Capacity Assessment Framework as a conceptual foundation, FHI 360, in close collaboration with a Technical Reference Group of Ministry workers, developed the Myanmar Ministry of Education Capacity Assessment Tool (MMOE-CAT). This easy to use self-assessment tool—which collects qualitative and quantitative information—enabled the MOE to collect data on each domain. The MOE used this data as baseline markers to help identify priority areas for investing in capacity improvement and for tracking changes in capacity over time. FHI 360's collaborative approach to the assessment led to strong ownership by the MOE and a deep understanding of its value and potential for helping it improve its capacity to deliver quality education services in Myanmar.

#### USAID GHANA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION: *LEARNING*

In Ghana, FHI 360 is working closely with the Ministry of Education to improve the reading skills of 1.1 million primary students nationwide. To achieve and sustain results, we are using our Performance Improvement approach across all activities. To ensure consistency in the implementation of the approach, all project staff participated in a Performance for Results Workshop at the beginning of the project. At the workshop, staff learned the methodology of the approach and received support to develop performance improvement plans to operationalize the approach within each of the project's components. Now, all of the project's components are using this common approach to ensure performance for results.

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