

Principles of Facilitation

1

Ownership, Ownership, Ownership. At Every Step.

Work through local/permanent partners **only**. Look for explicit signs of those actors taking steps without you (for every one step you take with them, they should take 2 without you! They should be assuming risk and putting personal resources & effort into the change).
Don't be afraid to cut off partnerships.

2

No Free Lunch. Strings Always Attached.

Don't make it easy to get your time and resources. Actors need you more than you need them. No matter what the program's performance metrics tell you. Build in incentives for actors to perform & own the change.

3

Low - or no - visibility.

Tear off the stickers. Hide the land cruiser. Take down the donor signposts. Throw away the brochures and logos. These are marks and brands of dependency. The more the actors feel like they are in the driver's seat (as they should be), the better you are doing. The more decisions they get to make, the better. The quicker they forget about you, the more sustainable the change.

4

Lines in the Sand.

Have clear and agreed-on expectations with partners: on everything from ethical standards to roles & responsibilities of each party to benchmarks & terms of engagement.

5

Work with Influence Points + Early Adopters/Innovators.

Who will be the ones trying something new? Willing to take risks? Who can reach scale? What actors are looked up to by others and can be feasibly copied? Ultimately, the change needs to spread.

6

Make your offer clear and specific.

You don't need to propose a partnership in your first (or second or third) meeting, but when you do, make a credible and distinctive offer – why should they want to work with us? What could they expect? And what do we expect in return?

7

There is no 'right' way to do facilitation. But there is a wrong way (i.e., if you violate the principles above)

The approach varies by partner and context. Its success depends on your understanding, your analysis and you staying continuously informed about your partner and the operating environment.