

Learning Lab Principles on Partner Engagement

Key principles integrated within our partnership include our commitment to –

- **Acknowledge and address the power dynamic.** WomenStrong acknowledges that there is an inherent power imbalance between us and the partners. We strive to be aware of how this presents itself in all aspects of our work, to actively cede power to our partners, and to foster relationships where partners can speak freely and honestly with the WomenStrong staff.
- **Address equity.** WomenStrong strives to uphold a lens of equity within all partner interactions, including in the language(s) spoken. We acknowledge the very real effects in everyday interactions of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, and the intersection of these and other systems, and we seek to provide a safe and brave space where partners can engage to their fullest potential.
- **Establish mutual respect and trust.**
- **Value context and culture.** We are here to learn from each other. WomenStrong values and centers ideas and solutions from the communities in which partners work. We are committed to carefully challenging ourselves and each other. We also understand that every language holds equal value. We will operate in English, Spanish, and French, whenever possible.
- **Amplify partners' voice and visibility.** Throughout a partner's time with the Learning Lab, the WomenStrong team will seek to amplify and disseminate partners' local solutions to policymakers, development practitioners, and the wider community. Our team will ensure that partners' voices, preferences, expertise, and styles are valued and respected.
- **Be community-led.** Learning Lab activities are responsive and tailored to their needs. There is no "one size fits all" for capacity-strengthening and knowledge-sharing. If partners would like to lead and/or organize an activity in a way that fits their needs, our team will support their work. WomenStrong takes partner feedback seriously, and we strive to develop the Learning Lab based on partners' recommendations (gathered via the Working Group, the anonymous feedback survey, etc.).
- **Partners set the pace.** Learning Lab activities are optional for partners. We trust that, whenever possible, partners will fully engage with the Lab activities they find valuable for their work.
- **Value partner leadership.** We strive to have partners lead and for partners to be the final decision-makers on partner-led activities (e.g., for Learning Lab calls and external (public) webinars), with WomenStrong supporting and making suggestions as appropriate. Partners will be encouraged to lead Learning Lab activities, such as calls, webinars, and peer mentoring.
- **Foster learning, not accountability.** We encourage partners to focus their efforts on answering questions that are valuable to them, not to WomenStrong. When anyone facilitates capacity-strengthening, we encourage partners to learn from each other.
- **Embrace imperfection.** It's ok to make mistakes! There is tremendous learning in mistakes, failure, and rethinking what works and what does not. Experimentation and learning are what we are all about!
- **Cultivate and sustain authentic relationships.** WomenStrong respects the boundaries of a professional funder-grantee relationship while working toward realizing gender justice for all, everywhere.

