2023 CLA CASE COMPETITION

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Case Title:

The Intersection of CLA & HDP-Coherence through Joint Work Planning

Name:

USAID-Resilience Learning Activity

Organization:

ACDI-VOCA

Summary:

The USAID-Resilience Learning Activity (RLA) is a program dedicated to facilitating collaboration among stakeholders to harmonize USAID resilience investments by acting as a secretariat for four USAID coordination platforms including: the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG in Northern Kenya), Southeastern Kenya Coordination Mechanism (SEK), Somalia Resilience Partnership (SRP) and the Horn of Africa Resilience Network (HoRN region). In Kenya, under the two USAID coordination platforms PREG and SEK, the Agency operates in nine counties through RLA as the secretariat and backbone support program responsible for coordinating stakeholders in resilience and economic growth initiatives.

The joint work planning efforts highlight co-creation, co-facilitation, and co-monitoring based on USAID's sequencing, layering, and integration principles. They incorporate over 100 Kenyan county officials, about 30 USAID implementing partners, and, where appropriate, the private sector stakeholders. Priority activities are identified based on the county government and USAID IPs' annual work plans, which are then integrated into a unified document dubbed as the Joint Work Plan (JWP), that uses both CLA and Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence (HDP) principles.

RLA has utilized the HDP coordination structure principles to optimize, support, monitor, and ensure the progress of these initiatives. Illustrative examples include: hiring local firms trained by RLA on CLA principles to manage the JWP process, utilizing over 169 community and national-level journalists trained by RLA to document and report about 20 success stories from the JWP/resilience activities, and sharing at least three best practices emanating from the media coverage into knowledge management (KM) repositories to promote learning and decision-making.

(Approximate Word Limit: 200-250)

1. **WHAT: What is the general context in which the case takes place? What organizational or development challenge(s) or opportunities prompted you to collaborate, learn, and/or adapt?**

The JWP is one of RLA's largest programmatic expenditures. Kenya's national elections in August 2022 resulted in a massive transition of the elected county officials and ushered in new leadership in eight out of the nine counties of RLA's operation. This altered our plans of leveraging funding from the county government to further invest in the co-creation process, given our engagement with previous county leaders.

Therefore, entering program FY23, RLA and our local partners tasked with managing the JWP process utilized the CLA principles learned from previous skills transfer sessions to track and map out resource harmonization across the county governments, USAID partners, and other donor activities to support resilience initiatives. USAID IPs through the PREG and SEK networks utilized their institutional knowledge within the county to create an enabling environment to expand on the CLA principles.

Using local partners to apply CLA approaches with new county administrations required adoption of lessons learned and for RLA to explain the USAID joint frameworks of measuring activity progress through indicator harmonization platform. RLA and partners also supported the knowledge management and development of communications tools to support county-level learning repositories, such as the Kenya Maarifa Center, that act as singular reference points for the new government leaders.

2. **What two CLA Sub-Components are most clearly reflected in your case?**

External Collaboration

Knowledge Management

3. **HOW: What steps did you take to apply CLA approaches to address the challenge or opportunity described above?**

The JWP process began with selecting local partner organizations that had participated in RLA's CLA training between FY20-FY21. This aimed at enhancing USAID's localization agenda by using teams with local knowledge and political economy to get local county government and stakeholders support. The JWP process evolved during the third phase to build in new initiatives that emphasized stakeholders across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors to build-in interventions at the local level for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

The RLA M&E team contributed to the evolution process by spearheading the indicator harmonization to inform JWP activity investment. Building off the CLA framework, RLA also further invested in local actors by working with county communication officials and local media to understand USAID Kenya's resilience strategy within to further inform their reporting to local communities and obtaining feedback. Additionally, RLA collaborated with the Recurrent Monitoring Survey (RMS) program to host a pause and reflect session to discuss USAID thematic investments trend analysis at each of the counties from the JWP. This complemented the JWP onboarding process for the new county staff on USAID's resilience investment and the challenges households face in response to prolonged drought and other shocks.

RLA's approach is that any activity should continually evolve with time. The JWP activity was initiated during COVID-19 and prior to RLA's CLA training. We worked with local consultants that ultimately did not have the bandwidth and local knowledge to provide the level of effort required for all the JWP phases. Additionally, as RLA learned more about the need to include all partners from humanitarian, development and peace sectors, we expanded the JWP to include quarterly pause and reflect sessions that aided in the shift and documentation and learning of JWP activities.

Consequently, we have achieved the following:
KM: Inclusion of trained local media on the reporting JWP activities (est. 100+ stories);
M&E Community for indicator harmonization reporting (60+ members).
Leveraging: PREG/SEK members' budget allocation for direct JWP logistics, reporting, and operational support (over 100k across all members).

4. RESULTS: Choose one of the following questions to answer.

We know you may have answers in mind for both questions; However please choose one to highlight as part of this case story

A. DEVELOPM ENT RESULTS

Conducting JWP interventions using the CLA and HDP principles have so far been effective and allowed us to evolve and expand on program impact. As the secretariat of a coordination program, the investments are done through collaboration to optimize mission and county resources. In Isiolo County, eight PREG members and county governments invested (est) USD 150,000 on borehole construction, water infrastructure (and protection), livelihood and agricultural management, and peacebuilding initiatives with each activity outlined in the JWP co-creation process. In Makueni County through the JWP process, SEK members, the private sector, and the county government, invested in the Kalamba Mango processing plant and with farmer groups that reduced post-harvest losses by 15% and increased domestic sales of Mangos while introducing new export markets for Makueni county. RLA completed a CLA/SLI video on both JWP activities.

County-led and county-owned joint work planning is evolving and becoming more inclusive of not only development partners but also other sector players—from civil society organizations and donors to private sector partners. However, a streamlined approach that assists in identifying a set of monitoring and evaluation indicators that align with each entities reporting structure, helps create a standard template. While monitoring and evaluating the process is extensively done, more must be done to ensure consultations are conducted in a way that uses the collective impact approach for the benefit of local communities by shaping priorities and tracking implementation. All participants need to focus on areas of mutual interest and have the joint work planning sessions be inclusive of all partners.

5. **ENABLING CONDITIONS: How have enabling conditions - resources (time/money/staff), organizational culture, or business/work processes - influenced your results? How would you advise others to navigate any challenges you may have faced?**

In managing coordination platforms, there is usually a challenge in the “buy-in” from USAID IPs partners and county governments. While RLA provides the backbone support as the secretariat, it should be noted that members (USAID IPs) are contractually not mandated to operate within these platforms. This can create challenges for partners to provide staff and financial commitments to optimize resources across the totality of USAID resilience investments. Gratefully, the USAID Kenya/East Africa resilience team works closely with RLA to ensure partner buy-in and to foster an enabling environment. The JWP process is recognized by the government on how resources are allocated, however, the funding commitment from the Kenyan national government to the local government units is often delayed thus affecting the JWP implementation cycle. The use of adaptive management and scenario planning are used effectively in the JWP quarterly pause and reflect forums to foresee such challenges. RLA will continually build on the program investments ensuring PREG/SEK and our work is retained in KM repositories ensuring other resilience actors who adopt a co-creation and localization approach can leverage our experience.
Two examples of how RLA will continue to use CLA approaches to integrate HDP through a co-creation approach include: Development of network mapping that compares and contrasts different backbone/mechanisms being used in Uganda, Kenya, and Somalia to further inform current and future HDP CLA co-creation initiatives. Guideline manuals shared with county government and PREG/SEK members along with new resilience entities that will include but are not limited to knowledge management repositories, key indicators align with GoK and USAID IPs, and other notes that identify other local entities that can further support and apply CLA and HDP principles.