LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (LEARN)

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT
APRIL 1, 2017 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

SUBMISSION DATE: October 31, 2017

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It was prepared by Dexis Consulting Group.
DEAR COLLEAGUES,

We are pleased to provide in this edition of our Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) a new format which we hope will be easier to read, digest and learn from. This document represents USAID LEARN’s PMR for our Work Plan 3.2, which covered the 6-month period April 1-September 30, 2017.

This PMR demonstrates continued progress in the LEARN contract’s efforts to support USAID’s Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL), and the Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) Team in the Bureau’s Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (LER). LEARN, which is implemented by Dexis Consulting Group in partnership with IRG (a subsidiary of RTI), has now completed 3 years of a 5-year effort to expand awareness, capacity and integration of CLA practices throughout USAID’s Program Cycle.

USAID LEARN is a positive example of how the Agency collaborates with an implementing partner, working together in a goal-oriented, learning-based, iterative approach to deliver results that improve development impact. While LEARN receives the majority of its funding from PPL/LER to support LER’s CLA Team, we continue to receive a growing share of obligations from missions and Washington-based Bureaus and Operating Units. This demand is a clear reflection of the Agency’s appreciation for CLA practices and approaches.

We hope you find this presentation of our performance monitoring helpful, interesting and actionable. We look forward to continued progress and collaboration for the next two years of the contract, building on the strong foundation that this PMR helps to reflect.

Sincerely,

Sarah Schmidt
Deputy Chief of Party, LEARN

Piers Bocock
Chief of Party, LEARN
LEARN’s results framework presents our theory on how USAID will become a more effective development agency by investing in systematic, intentional and resourced collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA). Our theory is that CLA champions, both at USAID and implementing partners, drive CLA integration. As a result, we invest in creating new champions and supporting existing champions by facilitating CLA processes and approaches so stakeholders can experience the value of CLA firsthand, building stakeholders’ skills in CLA, and providing evidence that CLA matters.

Over the past six months, LEARN has identified measures of success at each level of our results framework (see the white boxes in the results framework) to help us determine if we are progressing towards our goals. We have organized this report against the results framework and incorporated relevant measures of success throughout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Now (October 2017)</th>
<th>End of Contract Target (September 2019)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of distinct USAID missions and bureaus directly supported by LEARN</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary uptake of CLA practices is maintained throughout LEARN’s contract</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the number of new and existing champions supported by LEARN over time</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>350</td>
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LEARN Results Framework
AS OF OCTOBER 2017

BUREAU FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND LEARNING GOAL
Improve the effectiveness of USAID programs in achieving development results.

LEARN GOAL
Collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) are integrated into the Program Cycle (Organizational Change).

DIRECT CONTRIBUTION
- 75% of uptake of CLA practices is voluntary.
- PPL/LEARN contributed to 53% of the observed instances of CLA integration.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT
- 29% of champions have high levels of influence.
- 24% of champions are leaders in their organizations.

INDIRECT CONTRIBUTION
- USAID and implementing partner enabling conditions for CLA are improved.
- Between 2013 and 2016, CLA-related items in the FEVS showed an average increase of 9% across 37 missions.

CLA CHAMPIONS
- 143 new and existing champions supported by PPL/LEARN (25% increase over the past 6 months).

New CLA champions within USAID and at implementing partners have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to advance CLA integration in their work.

Existing CLA champions within USAID and at implementing partners have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve CLA integration in their work.

The case that CLA matters for better development built.

CLA processes, processes and approaches facilitated.

Target stakeholders’ skills in CLA built.

FOCUS AREA A
- CLA trainees had a 132% increase in confidence in their ability to articulate how CLA contributes to better development outcomes.
- The average number of unique pageviews for EB4CLA blogs is 11 times the average number of unique pageviews for blogs.
- The average number of downloads for EB4CLA resources is 5 times the average number of downloads across all Learning Lab resources.

FOCUS AREA B
- 100% of clients continue to rate LEARN’s buy-in performance as above average.
- 5 buy-ins over the past 6 months, all repeat buy-ins, demonstrates a growing demand for LEARN’s services.
- 8 missions and 6 bureaus supported over the past 6 months.
- 10 TDYs over the past 6 months.

FOCUS AREA C
- CLA trainees’ experience a 129% increase in confidence in their ability to develop a CLA action plan across 2 trainings. This suggests that they are likely to implement their CLA action plans.

LEARN
LEARN has made significant progress over the past six months against its goal of helping USAID integrate CLA throughout the Program Cycle. Since the start of the contract, we have engaged more than 50 individual missions through our various interventions (direct support, CLA Training, CLA Case Competition, CLA Community of Practice). Additionally, we have supported 6 bureaus and **143 new and existing CLA champions**. We have also documented over 200 instances of CLA integration at 15 of the 28 missions we have provided technical support to; 75% of these instances of integration have been voluntary in nature (not required by USAID’s guidance), indicating a more “grassroots” uptake of CLA at USAID missions.

Over the past six months, we have:

- **strengthened the case that CLA matters for organizational effectiveness and better development outcomes.** Three new evidence-based products were released on USAID Learning Lab and ProgramNet. Selected findings were integrated into the June 2017 CLA training, contributing to a 132% increase in trainees’ confidence to articulate how CLA contributes to better development results.

- **supported 8 missions and 6 Washington-based operating units to better integrate CLA into their work,** contributing to the creation of a Program Cycle learning agenda for the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, a CLA action plan for the Office of Food for Peace and a more robust approach to M&E for learning at USAID/Vietnam.

- **provided skills-based training for 50 USAID and implementing partner staff through two training sessions.** Trainees from Better Development through CLA saw a 129% increase in confidence to develop a personal CLA action plan.
Since the start of the LEARN contract, PPL/LEARN has provided technical assistance to 28 USAID missions in integrating CLA into their work. Of the 28, we have documented evidence of increased CLA integration at 15 missions. This integration is in part due to the context of the missions with which we engaged (enthusiasm for CLA, leadership support, resources, etc.), and the ability of our team to cultivate CLA champions, catalyze critical conversations and model CLA in our technical assistance delivery. For example, according to mission staff, our support to USAID staff in Cambodia sparked conversations about mission culture, openness and leadership which led to “CLA permeating the office” six months after our initial trip.

Of the 205 instances of CLA integration documented across missions, most are occurring in the components of learning, collaborating and culture. Some examples of CLA integration include: viewing the Performance Monitoring Plan as an organizing tool to drive learning, including CLA activities in staff roles/responsibilities, and using mission support mechanisms as a key resource for CLA integration.
The majority (75%) of instances of CLA integration we have observed were not explicitly required by the ADS, meaning they were taken up by mission staff voluntarily. This suggests that CLA champions are taking on CLA because they see value in the approach, not just because it is required of them. Our Evidence Base for CLA activities also corroborate this: we know from analyzing CLA Case Competition entries that CLA begets CLA.

PPL/LEARN has had a medium or high level of contribution to more than half (53%) of the instances of CLA. As CLA champions continue to receive the support they need from PPL/LEARN and each other, we anticipate that LEARN’s level of contribution to CLA integration will remain relatively the same, around 50%, in Year 5.

Within the larger context of USAID missions, there has been an average improvement of 9% on CLA-related items in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) across 37 missions between 2013 and 2016. Collaboration items had the largest mean percent increase (11.52%), followed by learning (9.7%) and adapting (5.9%). This provides helpful context for our CLA integration efforts and suggests that CLA is graining traction within the Agency.
CLA champions are integral to our work. We believe that if champions receive the support they need from PPL/LEARN and each other, they will be equipped to drive CLA integration across the Agency. Since the start of the LEARN contract, we have supported a total of 143 CLA champions (both USAID and non-USAID staff). CLA champions are those who promote, integrate and model CLA approaches in their work. Over the past 6 months, we have seen a **25% increase in the number of new and existing CLA champions**. This is in part because of our outreach, training and analysis activities. For example, in conducting a review of the **2017 CLA Case Competition entries**, we became aware of 84 potential champions who were integrating CLA in various missions and implementing partner organizations.
In analyzing CLA integration across missions, we have learned that champions with high influence are particularly powerful in integrating CLA across their organizations. A high influence champion is someone who is able to get others to integrate CLA into their work, either by promoting, integrating, or modeling CLA themselves. Based on our observations, of our 143 champions, 29% of them are high influence champions (41/143). PPL/LEARN has contributed to the development of only 5% of high influence champions (8/143 medium/high or 4/143 for high). 73% of high influence champions are USAID staff (30 of 41 high influence existing/new champions). In reflecting on our data, we also know that when champions are leaders in their organizations, they tend to have more impact. Of our 143 champions, 24% are USAID staff and in positions of leadership.
In order for champions to take on the work of integrating CLA, they need to experience the value of CLA firsthand. To this end, PPL/LEARN facilitates CLA processes and approaches. Over the past 6 months, LEARN has conducted **10 TDYs, supported 8 missions, and facilitated CLA processes for 6 bureaus**. For example, on the Program Cycle Learning Agenda buy-in, over the past 6 months, LEARN supported LER and SPP in narrowing down the number of learning questions from over 100 to 5. Additionally, four bureaus bought into LEARN for a second time through five distinct buy-ins (two offices/centers at the US Global Development Lab bought into LEARN).

Clients continue to positively rate LEARN’s buy-in performance. With a total number of over 40 buy-ins since the start of the contract, we continue to receive **100% satisfaction from our clients who buy-in to our services**.

To date, 40 buy-ins represent a 14.4 million investment from across the Agency. This demonstrates demand for LEARN’s services and is also an important indicator for LEARN to ensure that we can maintain our staffing structure through the end of the contract.
In order for champions to carry out the work of integrating CLA, they need to be confident in their CLA knowledge and skills. To this end, LEARN is facilitating a CLA Community of Practice, curating the CLA Toolkit, and hosting two quarterly training series: Better Development through CLA and the CLA Maturity Tool Training of Trainers (ToT).

Over the past 6 months, PPL/LEARN has facilitated two "Better Development through CLA" trainings for 50 participants, including our first week-long regional training. On average, trainees in the better development course experienced a **129% increase in confidence in their ability to develop a CLA action plan** across the 2 trainings.

"Great job matching content to facilitation techniques. Thank you for recognizing how adults learn.”
- March 2017 Better Development Through CLA trainee

Many of the participants in the trainings chose to join the CLA Community of Practice (CoP). There are currently **186 members in the CLA CoP, representing over 40 missions** and over 10 operating units. 8% (16) of CLA CoP members are new CLA champions. Over the past six months, two learning events were held by the CoP, which were attended by 45 members. Members also expressed their interest and need to work together on the topics of CLA in the Performance Management Plan and Scenario Planning, for which working groups were launched among 10-15 CoP members each. Additionally, since the launch of the CLA toolkit in May 2017, it is the **3rd most viewed page on USAID Learning Lab compared to other pages.**
Over this six month period, LEARN has made tremendous progress in building the case that CLA matters for both organizational effectiveness and development results. Specifically, LEARN has completed an update to the CLA literature review, an analysis of the 2015 CLA Case Competition entries and a study demonstrating a positive relationship between CLA and indicators of organizational effectiveness at USAID missions. These analyses have been shared widely via USAID Learning Lab and ProgramNet, and some of the findings were incorporated into the June 2017 CLA training.

EB4CLA content has been some of the most popular content on USAID Learning Lab. EB4CLA blogs have about 11 times as many unique page views than the average blog on the site. EB4CLA resources (briefs and full reports) have been downloaded about five times more than the average resource on Learning Lab.

Trainees from the June 2017 CLA training reported a 132% increase in their confidence to articulate how CLA contributes to better development outcomes.

LEARN’s work in this area supports new and existing champions by providing them with evidence they need to promote CLA with their colleagues.
Our team strongly believes that we must model the types of behaviors and approaches we promote with USAID staff and implementing partners. Over the past 6 months, LEARN has integrated CLA in the areas of learning, adapting and culture.

**LEARNING**

- LEARN’s mini-book club met several times during the past six months to expand our knowledge on deep work, making effective decisions and how psychological safety supports collaboration.
- LEARN meets monthly to share failures and to laugh and learn from our mistakes and apply lessons to our work moving forward.

**ADAPTING**

- LEARN adapted our engagement with the 2017 CLA Case Competition submitters to collect more data about the CLA approach used and the impact of CLA on organizational and development outcomes.
- When our data showed that our newsletters were not earning high open rates (averages around 15%) we switched to “featured content” emails and saw better open rates (averages around 23%).

**CULTURE**

- Professional development journaling was started by LEARN leadership to set aside time for reflection, intentional skills building, and career planning for LEARN staff. This exercise demonstrated our team’s commitment to continuous learning and improvement.
- LEARN conducted an after action review (AAR) on the team’s experience with staff performance evaluation process. The group brainstormed ways to make it more learning-focused, growth-oriented and collaborative.
"We really appreciate their **collaborative working style**—they are quick to reach out with questions, suggestions, and options for improving the project. They've been very accommodating and flexible and are a pleasure to work with." – *Internal client*

"Great job team! Lots of great learning methods. Passion of the training team. Applicability to my work. The **best training I've taken in my 5 years with USAID**." – *CLA training participant*

"I know, I know! **I want everyone to take it!**" - *CLA training participant*

"I was very impressed by how efficiently the team was able to respond to our requests, **understand and effectively incorporate complex content** and produce a very high-quality final product in a few short months." – *Internal client*

"The training was very **participatory and engaging** which enabled me to acquire knowledge and skills to effectively integrate CLA in our work at the mission." – *CLA training participant*