2023 CLA CASE COMPETITION

COLLABORATE • LEARN • ADAPT

Case Title:

Extending the frontiers of community engagement in conservation

Name:

Dr Jennifer Talbot

Organization:

USAID/Biodiversity for Resilience Activity

Summary:

USAID/Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience (B4R) Activity's goal is to assist communities, the Government of Uganda (GOU), and the private sector to conserve and manage biodiversity, specifically wildlife and forest ecosystems in the community areas bordering the Protected Areas in 6 target landscapes, including in Kidepo, in Karamoja region. The Activity seeks to bridge the gaps related to management of wildlife and forests in community areas and promotes a co-management arrangement with the Government of Uganda entities, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the National Forestry Authority (NFA). However, the absence of an overarching community structure was a large impediment in the efforts to facilitate community co-management of Protected Area resources.

Following a range of collaboration meetings, project consultations, pause and reflect sessions, and further stakeholder analysis in the Kidepo project area, B4R was able to identify and re-think its strategy for community collaboration with the objective to identify a strategic community-level partner with the structure, technical orientation, and potential to mobilize and coordinate community participation. KKAKKA, a community wildlife association with an extensive grass root structure, has since been identified and given new responsibilities and will act as a nexus around which community-level interventions will be pivoted. The adaptive management decisions were achieved through robust, systematic engagements including periodic quarterly pause & reflect, annual work planning /theory of change discussions with stakeholders, and parish-level collaboration meetings.

This was further facilitated by the strong culture of learning, technical excellence, and teamwork by B4R staff to achieve collaboration and adaptive management. In addition, B4R has established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), tools and templates for conducting stakeholder discussions, pause and reflect and annual work planning.

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?**

B4R Activity is being implemented in 6 target landscapes, including Kidepo in the Karamoja region. B4R is working with communities around the Protected Areas (PAs) on biodiversity protection, including supporting incentives for conservation and resilience of target communities. The key stakeholders are the Government of Uganda entities, UWA, NFA, the District Local governments and community-based stakeholders.

The Uganda wildlife act 2019 places the overall responsibility of managing wildlife in both PAs and community areas to UWA. However, due to budget and other operational constraints, UWA faces significant challenges in the management of wildlife outside of the PAs. B4R Activity goal, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap through co-management arrangements that prioritize greater involvement of the communities in the management of wildlife in their areas. The absence of an overarching community structure, however, was a big impediment in the efforts to facilitate community co-management of Protected Area resources.

Following a range of collaboration meetings, project consultations, pause and reflect sessions, and further stakeholder analysis in the Kidepo project area, B4R was able to identify and re-think its strategy for community collaboration with the objective to identify a strategic community-level partner with the structure, technical orientation, and potential to mobilize and coordinate community participation. KKAKKA, a community wildlife association with an extensive grass root structure, has since been identified and given new responsibilities and will act as a nexus around which community-level intervention will be pivoted.

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

External Collaboration

Adaptive Management

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

The CLA and program adaptation examples mentioned here were precipitated by a number of activities to identify the challenges and learnings. To address the absence of strong community structures for community co-management of Protected Area resources in Kidepo, B4R used the following external collaboration mechanisms to identify learnings and propose adaptations:

During the FY23 Work planning consultations, B4R reviewed the list of stakeholders, including the roles and responsibility matrix to achieve two aims: (i) identify new potential partners; (ii) ascertain how B4R could better exploit and leverage on existing partnership. Consultations with KKAKKA presented new opportunities and learnings for collaboration which B4R has since pursued and used to adapt its work plan. Some of the new areas of collaboration with KKAKKA that were adapted based on this learning include: Spearheading community conservation awareness at grass root level; streamlining community management of wildlife scouts; and establishing community-level linkages with private sector actors, targeting enterprise groups supported by B4R.

The issues of strengthening collaboration and additional responsibility for KKAKKA as the main community agency to facilitate co-management of wildlife resources were also discussed during the pause and reflect sessions and agreed on action areas for implementation. B4R conducts quarterly pause and reflect on a regular basis as integral part of work planning, and to reinforce collaboration, learning and adaptation to shape implementation decisions.

During the FY23 Theory of Change (TOC) reviews, B4R Activity identified new strategic opportunities and linkages within the Results chain for strategic collaboration with KKAKKA as an entry point to deliver a number of planned community-level outcomes, including conservation awareness, mobilizing community response to Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), and private sector linkages, in a more cost-effective and sustainable manner.

B4R Activity also utilized feedback sessions, during the Parish and Sub County coordination meetings with KKAKKA in the 6 Districts which constitute the greater Kidepo community wildlife area to reflect, identify and document different suggestions, including new opportunities for collaborations to drive the community agenda for the sustained achievement of conservation outcomes in the results chain.

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

B. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

B4R Activity has embedded a culture of intentional CLA to shape stakeholder-led planning processes, internal and external reflections, and conduct operational/ learning studies.

Over the past three years, B4R has consistently held extensive annual work planning consultations with stakeholders at different levels, designed to capture inputs from stakeholders in the target landscapes at the district/sub-national and national levels. Technical partners from the Government of Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), National Forestry Authority (NFA) and the District Local Governments were involved in the process to interrogate and update the Results chain and collaboratively deliver project work plan activities through a co-creation process.

Periodic pause & reflect sessions: Every quarter, B4R conducts pause and reflect meetings with stakeholders and has an established Standard Operating Procedures which have been systematically guiding this process. Standard templates for meeting agendas and content presentations for the pause and reflect sessions were developed and operationalized. The templates are used by B4R staff at project target locations and at National level pause and reflect sessions.

Adaptive management. Following each cycle of pause and reflect with stakeholders, B4R technical teams align the work plan to incorporate the needed adjustments based on the recommendations from the pause and reflect sessions.

Reporting: Quarterly reports submitted to USAID are finalized after the pause the reflect sessions. This is deliberate to ensure inclusive and quality reports that reflect input and action areas identified by stakeholders for the next implementation cycle (quarter).

4R Activity used these approaches to adapt activity implementation, with KKAKKA at the forefront and yielded key results such as: Scaling up HWC sensitizations, community management and coordination of wildlife scouts in the Kidepo community wildlife areas; coordination of block farming initiative as strategy to collectively secure and guard crops from wildlife damage; and coordination of revenue sharing arrangements with UWA to ensure communities neighboring the protected area receive share of benefit from the tourism gate collection fees.

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?**

B4R was able to exploit opportunities such as Parish level coordination meetings held by KKAKKA to improve partnership and involvement of KKAKKA in B4R Activity implementation. Other enabling conditions for successful engagements were:

Applicable policies and guidelines for community wildlife management: The Government of Uganda, through UWA has a range of policies and guidelines that reinforce management of wildlife and resource utilization at the community level. This has been a key decision point for why B4R found it important to engage KKAKKA as the lead community partner to mobilize community participation and coordinate with UWA on the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the policy outcomes.

The strong technical leadership and learning culture: B4R prioritizes stakeholder consultations in all spheres of planning, including during quarterly and annually planning at district/sub-national and national level. Theory of Change and landscape-specific Results chains are adapted on an annual basis to reflect new priorities solicited through the collaborative planning processes.

B4R senior leadership, through the COP, worked closely with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning & Adapting (MERLA) staff and the sector advisors to plan tasks around CLA. A task-team set up at the B4R head office designed and assembled the tools, templates, and overall protocol of how CLA activities, including work planning engagements, pause and reflect sessions, and quarterly coordination meetings should be conducted at the different levels (District, Sub-national & National). In addition, the field-based staff were oriented and prepared on how to apply these CLA tools, as well as document and rep