2023 CLA CASE COMPETITION

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Case Title:

Weaving Juntanza

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Organization:

ACDI/VOCA Colombia - IPACE Activity

Summary:

USAID Colombia's Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Colombian Empowerment Activity (IPACE), called Juntanza Étnica by its partners, is implemented by ACDI/VOCA in 31 municipalities and works with 79 ethnic peoples. It seeks to strengthen governance, economic autonomy, identity, and development of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples in their own sustainable ways. The Activity is implemented in collaboration with 10 ethnic partner organizations. This process is based on an ethnic differential approach that fosters co-creation and adjusts to territorial and population particularities, respecting and promoting ethnic diversity.

In Colombia, prior consultation is the participatory mechanism through which ethnic peoples have the opportunity to participate effectively in decisions of measures or projects (public or private) that impact their communities. Cooperation programs such as USAID have appropriated mechanisms like Meaningful Consultation, which is based on the policy Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Its objective is to strengthen the participation of ethnic peoples to mitigate and protect them from possible damages or affectations, and to support their development priorities and self-determination with inclusion and respect.

In this context, the IPACE Meaningful Consultation pathway is discussed, as implemented in the case of the Consejo Territorial de Cabildos (CTC), and how the CLA approach is incorporated in the subcomponents of internal collaboration and adaptive management. Challenges in the relationship with partner organizations and the opportunity to build, implement, and systematize a replicable strategy for future programs with ethnic peoples will be described.

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?**

During the last 12 years of implementation of USAID ethnic programs in Colombia (ACIP - IPA - IPACE), ethnic organizations have significantly strengthened their capacities. Their role has gone from being beneficiaries to becoming true protagonists in the design and implementation of these programs. Therefore, collaborating with these organizations under new approaches has implied establishing new strategies of exchange and collaborative work agreements, in line with the CLA approach and the Meaningful Consultation model.In this context, IPACE has adopted and adapted USAID's Meaningful Consultation. Beyond being a procedural approach, it is an opportunity to leverage intercultural dialogue and build a shared and collective vision with ethnic communities. Its main objective is to strengthen the participation of ethnic peoples through their organizations and organizational platforms, to mitigate and protect them from damages and affectations, support their development priorities, and promote self-determination within a framework of inclusion and respect.
In the case of the CTC, the model has materialized from the negotiation phase, when the organization decided to join as partner in the proposal submitted to USAID; during the enlistment phase to define the Activity ' s vision for its five years of execution; and in the implementation phase with an agreement that established the organization be allowed to invest resources directly to develop projects in their communities. The approach is complemented by monitoring, evaluation, and transversal approaches (ethnic, gender, and intersectionality) and CLA. In this framework, the CLA approach has been included in Meaningful Consultation, through collaboration to respond to challenges in the relationships and permanent negotiation with partner organizations and, through adaptation in the adoption of specific actions for each organization under the ethnic differential approach. It is also an opportunity to build, implement, and systematize a replicable strategy for the implementation of future programs with ethnic peoples.

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

Internal Collaboration

Adaptive Management

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

The steps for applying the CLA approach throughout Meaningful Consultation follow the conceptual framework of the project management phases, highlighting the work with each partner organization in internal collaboration spaces and implementing adaptive management based on the characteristics (size, internal structure, technical, and negotiation capacity) of each one, with a differential-ethnic approach as the axis.To explain the process, the case of the Territorial Council of Cabildos (CTC), made up of four indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, will be used as an example.

1. Conceptualization

ACDI/VOCA held a meeting with the CTC with the purpose of receiving feedback and support for the proposal to be submitted to USAID to implement IPACE. As a result of these dialogues, CTC submitted a letter of support to the proposal as a partner organization of the Activity.

2. Planning/Enlistment

Spaces for dialogue, negotiation, and permanent horizontal relations were created in which ideas were shared and agreements reached through co-creation. The Activity has been jointly built based on the requirements and historical commitments of the CTC, which has allowed building trust between the parties where knowledge, history, and the commitment to address structural aspects of the struggles of the country's indigenous peoples prevail.

Likewise, instruments for collecting information were created collectively and applied by consultants from the organizations. The Meaningful Consultation protocol and decalogue of relationships with partner organizations were structured as guiding documents that establish the minimum requirements and agreements under which the Activity and organizations talk about partnerships.

Two key instances of internal collaboration were established: (a) the Board Council (Consejo de la Juntanza) - a consultative body integrated by ACDI/VOCA and representatives of the 10 partner organizations, in which strategic, programmatic, and territorial issues are analyzed and decisions made, so as to address challenging issues between parties, a natural space that guides execution and generates trust based on dialogue, and (b) the Technical Operational Committees, support entities for the execution of projects with each partner organization, where decisions are made to ensure proper execution.

3. Implementation

Implementation is developed on a case-by-case basis with each organization. With CTC, the agreement will be executed on an annual rotation among the four villages, with a five-year budget of USD 855,000. For this first year, 65% of the goals have been achieved, related to the inventory of heritage, training in communications, risk management and climate change, gender-based violence, and strengthening women's economic autonomy. All these activities have been prioritized according to tools such as the Territorial Ethnic Plan (co-created with each organization as a roadmap for joint implementation) and the Life Plan (a tool for ethnic peoples that reflects their vision of development).

From the CLA approach, progress has been made in adaptive management with Pause & Reflect spaces, highlighting achievements and challenges related to co-implementation, coordination with authorities, and adaptation of actions according to the interests of participants.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

This phase is carried out through the monitoring of indicators and the CTC work plan, which includes monitoring for each component and subcomponent of the CLA approach

Initially, IPACE's CLA approach was adapted according to USAID's CLA and ACDI/VOCA's previous experience. However, during the Meaningful Consultation, the need to adapt based on the ethnic differential approach has become relevant.

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

Among the main results of the incorporation of CLA in the implementation of Meaningful Consultations are the following:

I. Collaborating
- The signing of agreements with 80% of ethnic partner organizations that will execute an estimated value of USD 7,000,000 during the five years of the Activity
- The Board of Directors Council as the highest internal collaboration body, made up of representatives of partner organizations´ management
- In the specific case of CTC, the promotion of work of the four communities of the Sierra in a common agenda with a shared vision

II. Learning
- In the enlistment phase´s learning report, the need to form an ethnic team is highlighted as one of the main lessons learned. IPACE had a team with 70% ethnic staff and presence in Colombia ' s six regions, a strategy that is replicated during the implementation phase.
-With CTC, spaces for the exchange of knowledge aimed at generational integration to safeguard heritage, in which authorities, elders, and wise men and women participate with children and adolescents.

III. Adapting
-The Activity has been adapted during the Consultation´s four stages, responding to the customs and traditions of ethnic peoples, their languages, political positions, and concepts of time
-With CTC, and based on the particularities of each community, workshop methodologies have been adapted to respond to the population´s needs and characteristics

Based on Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning exercises, the Activity will conduct a performance evaluation with each organization that includes spaces for analysis of indicators and qualitative and quantitative progress to improve implementation.

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?**

The ethnic diversity of Activity staff and of partner organizations ’ consultants, who have experience and trustworthy links with authorities and presence in territory, as is the case with CTC, is a favorable enabling condition that has influenced results:
To foster partnerships; appointing an ethnic person to conduct negotiations is a great success, as they play a fundamental role in gathering organizations ’ perspectives and sustaining spaces for transparent dialogue in the territory uniquely and permanently.
The constant support of staff to the organizations through “ godparent ” figures enables generating and strengthening trust between parties, which is key in each phase of the Meaningful Consultation process.
Among the tips that can be shared from the experience, the following stand out:
- Meaningful Consultation is the most realistic and effective path for co-creation, which international cooperation should replicate in all its programs with ethnic communities
- The creation of internal collaboration instances for ethnic peoples (Juntanza Council) enhances dialogue, builds trust, and enables adaptation based on the program ’ s needs. These instances should be permanent.
- The aim of this type of program should be to strengthen capacities according to the priorities of each ethnic organization. In the case of CTC, it is to directly execute USAID resources, while others ’ interests include having more tools for advocacy and positioning ethnic issues in the national agenda
- In the development of Meaningful Consultation, the need to adapt the CLA approach for programs with an ethnic differential approach becomes relevant, which involves adapting the instruments to make them more culturally relevant (e.g., including whether persons being characterized are traditional authorities)