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# Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

AN ANALYSIS OF WHAT CLA LOOKS LIKE IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

**Disclaimer:** This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by the LEARN mechanism out of the USAID Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (LER) in the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL). LEARN is managed by Dexis Consulting Group.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	3
Background about Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting at USAID	3
About the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Framework	3
<b>Executive Summary</b>	5
Methods	5
Key Findings	6
Implications and Considerations	7
Endnotes (Executive Summary only)	8
<b>I. Introduction</b>	9
<b>II. Methods</b>	10
Guiding Questions	10
About the Research Team	10
Case Selection and Description of Dataset	10
Data Analysis	11
Verification and Limitations	13
<b>III. Key Findings</b>	14
CLA Practices and Approaches	14
How do CLA approaches map to the CLA framework?	14
What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?	18
What resources are needed for CLA?	20
Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes	21
Finding 1: Collaboration Leverages Resources for Collective Benefit	21
Finding 2: Local Engagement Leads to Local Ownership and, Ultimately, Improved Development Outcomes	25
Finding 3: Intentional Knowledge Management Generates Standard Good Practices for Broader Application	27
Finding 4: Feedback Loops Increase the Likelihood that Evidence Will Inform Decision-Making	30
Finding 5: CLA Begets CLA and Sometimes Leads to Scale-Up.	32
<b>IV. Implications and Considerations</b>	37
For USAID and Implementing Partner Staff	37
For Future Case Competition Analyses and Areas of Research	38
<b>Endnotes</b>	39
<b>Web Resources</b> (in order of appearance)	40
<b>Annex 1: Case Competition Judging Rubric</b>	41
<b>Annex 2: CLA Case Competition Form</b>	42
<b>Annex 3: Detailed Case Coding</b>	44
<b>Annex 4: Emergent Findings Coding</b>	45

# PREFACE

## Background About Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting at USAID

In 2012, USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) introduced the concept of collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) at USAID to operationalize adaptive management throughout USAID's Program Cycle. CLA—USAID's approach to improving organizational learning—is intended to help development partners address challenges that pervade international development assistance:

- Coordination among donors and implementers is lacking, resulting in missed opportunities for greater impact
- Development is donor-driven, rather than country-led or community-owned
- Data and evidence that could inform programming are not utilized
- Outdated practices are used despite evidence of ineffectiveness
- Programming is not relevant to the local context
- Donors and implementing partners stick to existing plans and implementation approaches even as the context changes

While these challenges are widely acknowledged, USAID staff and implementing partners face significant demands on time, limited resources, and a need to show immediate results; collaborating, learning, and adapting thus can be difficult to integrate into how we design and manage development assistance.

The CLA framework promotes the use of key practices throughout the Program Cycle to overcome these challenges:

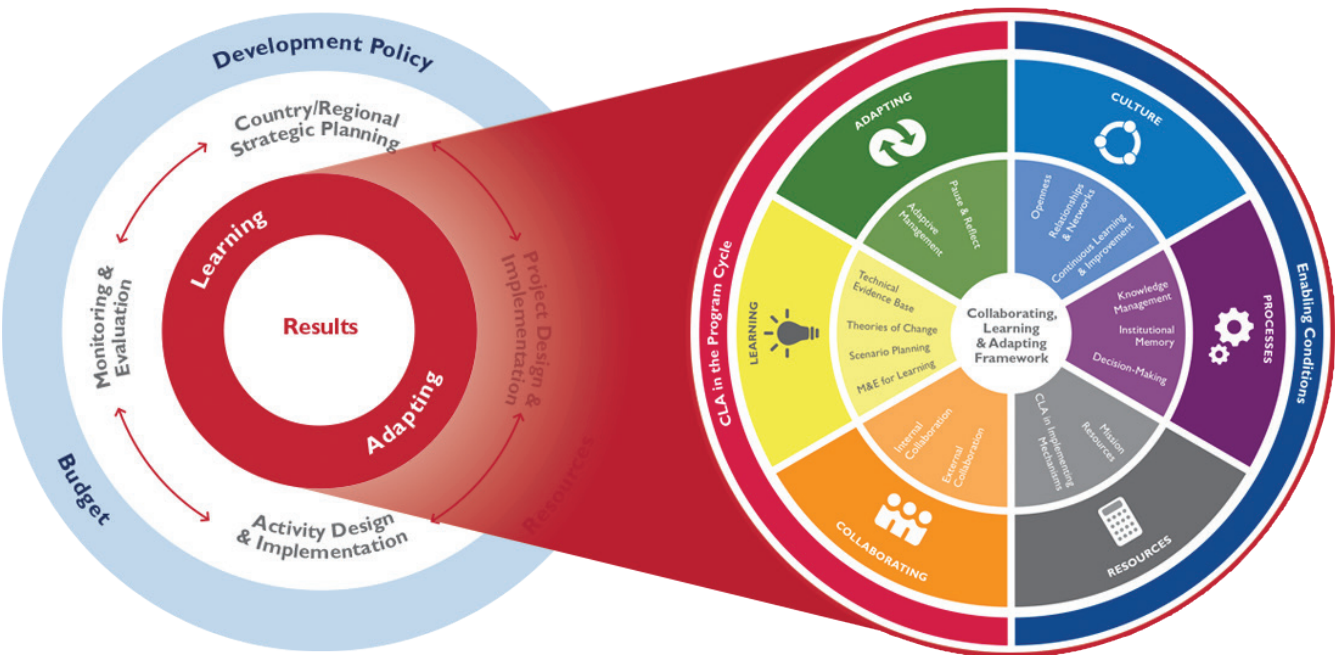
- **Collaborating:** Are we collaborating with the right partners at the right time to promote synergy over siloed efforts?
- **Learning:** Are we asking the most important questions and finding answers that are relevant to decision-making?
- **Adapting:** Are we using the information that we gather through collaboration and learning activities to make better decisions and adjustments?
- **Enabling Conditions:** Are we working in an organizational environment that supports our collaborating, learning, and adapting efforts?

## About the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Framework

While the practices of collaborating, learning, and adapting have long been valued by USAID and international development partners, they often do not happen regularly or systematically and are not intentionally resourced. To address this, USAID's Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) and its support mechanism, The Learning and Knowledge Management mechanism ([LEARN](#)), developed a [Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting \(CLA\) framework](#) to help USAID missions and implementing partners think more deliberately about how to plan for and implement CLA approaches that fit their context and assist them in achieving their development objectives.



**FIGURE 1.** CLA framework supports implementation of USAID’s Program Cycle.



The CLA framework (above, right; see also [USAID Learning Lab](#) for a larger version) identifies components and subcomponents to help USAID staff and partners think more deliberately about what approach to CLA might be best tailored to organizational or programming contexts. The framework recognizes the diversity of what CLA can look like in various organizations and projects while also giving CLA structure, clarity, and coherence across two key dimensions:

- **CLA in the Program Cycle** (portion shaded in red): how CLA is incorporated throughout the Program Cycle, including strategy, project, and activity design and implementation.
- **Enabling Conditions** (portion shaded in dark blue): how an organization’s culture, business processes, and resource allocation can support CLA integration.

Organizations need both integrated CLA practices appropriate for their context and conducive enabling conditions to become stronger learning organizations capable of managing adaptively. The framework stresses the holistic and integrated nature of the various components of CLA to reinforce the principle that CLA is not a separate work stream—it should be integrated into existing processes to strengthen the discipline of development and improve aid effectiveness.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis is part of a broader area of work known as the Evidence Base for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (EB4CLA) effort spearheaded by USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) and its support mechanism, The Learning and Knowledge Management mechanism ([LEARN](#)). Each year, through the CLA [Case Competition](#), PPL and LEARN invite USAID missions and implementing partners from across the globe to submit examples of collaborating, learning, and adapting approaches that add value to development programming. In 2015, 60 USAID missions and implementing partners sent in case stories for review. Judges from PPL and LEARN selected 6 winners, but also recognized that the collection provided an exciting opportunity to look across cases and synthesize patterns of learning about CLA that would be applicable to wider USAID, implementing partner, and donor audiences.

This CLA Case Competition Analysis explores examples of CLA in action, among USAID and its implementing partners, and provides answers to these key questions:

- Does an intentional, systematic, and resourced approach to collaborating, learning, and adapting contribute to development outcomes?
- If so, how? And under what conditions?<sup>1</sup>

To answer those questions, we looked to the case stories and asked the following:

- What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?
- How did those practices and approaches contribute to organizational change or development outcomes?
- What are the implications of learning for USAID staff, implementing partners, and development practitioners?

## Methods

The research team consisted of three LEARN staff with extensive experience in evaluation, applied research, and CLA practice in development programs. The team designed the qualitative analysis to highlight common themes and patterns of CLA in action across the 32 highest rated cases in the 2015 CLA case competition. The 32 cases each received ratings of 12 points or higher (out of a possible 18 points) by the judges' panel and scored at least two out of three possible points on criteria of clarity, analysis, completeness, creativity, and replicability. Nine cases came from USAID missions and 23 from implementing partners. The majority of submissions focused on livelihoods (28 percent) and health (25 percent) sector projects and represented CLA approaches in more than 21 countries in 4 regions (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and South Asia).

The researchers used two data analysis approaches in this study. First, to address the question, "What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?" they thematically coded CLA practices and approaches based on the CLA framework. Second, to identify and describe patterns and themes related to, "How did CLA approaches contribute to organizational change and development outcomes?" they conducted inductive coding of the sequence of events leading to the specific outcomes for each case.

Reliability was enhanced through independent coding and analysis among the three researchers and the transparency afforded by using computer-assisted qualitative analysis software (NVivo). However, the researchers could not control

for potential biases in the self-reported cases, or the uneven quality and quantity of information provided. Despite these significant limitations five significant findings emerged.

## Key Findings

Our analysis found key findings for each of the research questions.

What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?

The cases showed that applicants took a holistic approach to launching their CLA initiatives. In each case, practitioners incorporated CLA in some aspect of the Program Cycle, including strategy, project, activity design, and implementation as well as organizational culture, business processes, and/or resource allocation to support CLA integration. This nascent finding corroborates the intent behind the CLA framework: organizations need both CLA practices appropriate for their context and conducive enabling conditions to become stronger learning organizations capable of managing adaptively.

How did those practices and approaches contribute to organizational change or development outcomes?

The analysis revealed five overarching patterns that demonstrate how CLA practices and approaches can contribute to specific development or organizational outcomes. The first four of these key findings are consistent with evidence from a [review of academic and gray literature](#). Additional research, including further CLA case analyses and triangulated data sources and methods, can help test and refine each of these findings.

1. **Finding 1: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.** The cases shaping this finding articulate how collaboration helps development actors to identify their respective comparative advantages and jointly achieve a mutual, targeted outcome. This is consistent with evidence from studies of private sector and philanthropic organizations that highlight the collective benefits that collaboration and strategic partnerships can have both for participating organizations and the community issues they address.<sup>2</sup>
2. **Finding 2: Local engagement leads to local ownership and, ultimately, improved development outcomes.** When implementing partners invite local stakeholders to actively participate in development processes, they become agents of their own change process and are motivated to achieve the desired development outcomes. This is consistent with literature on “thinking politically,” “politically smart,” and “locally driven development.”<sup>3</sup>
3. **Finding 3: Intentional knowledge management generates standard good practices for broader application.** The cases comprising this finding underline how capturing knowledge and sharing best practices derived from that knowledge can contribute to improvements at the organizational level. This is consistent with literature that shows that organizations that can maintain and transfer knowledge are more likely to be successful.<sup>4</sup>
4. **Finding 4: Feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making.** Teams and organizations analyze learning, make decisions based on that learning and then follow through on decisions reached. The cases illustrating this finding also describe how specific tools and processes for creating feedback loops provide continuous learning to inform decision-making. This is consistent with literature that finds that adaptive management requires an agile and enabling culture that helps organizations use rapid feedback loops to continuously and efficiently process and build on new information to achieve overall goals.<sup>5</sup>
5. **Finding 5: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale-up:** Some cases highlight how personally experiencing a CLA approach can lead to increased CLA uptake among staff within an organization and thereby lead to potentially improved organizational and/or development outcomes. Other cases show that there is a “demonstration effect” when development stakeholders learn about the benefits of a successful CLA approach implemented by another actor, and they then adapt this approach and scale it up in their own context. Currently, the literature review has not uncovered evidence corroborating this finding, but the research team feels this finding is promising as ten cases share the same pattern.

## Implications and Considerations

Findings from this analysis have important implications for decision-making and project management for both USAID staff and implementing partners.

1. **Start with key priorities, but work toward establishing a more balanced approach to integrating CLA within programs and organizations.** The consistent finding across cases that effective CLA was integrated into both the Program Cycle side of the framework (i.e., design and implementation of strategies, projects, activities) as well as the Enabling Conditions side (i.e., organizational culture, business processes, resource allocation) suggests that CLA components overlap, work together, and mutually reinforce one another. In establishing their CLA practices, USAID staff and implementing partners should start where they are and focus on key priorities, with a view over time to building toward a CLA approach that integrates both sides of the framework.
2. **Investing in CLA bears results. But are we willing to invest?** The cases clearly illustrate how investing in CLA practices and approaches provides a range of valuable contributions to organizational change and development outcomes and suggests that USAID staff and implementing partners should protect and in many cases, expand investments in CLA integration.
3. **Work with local actors to facilitate, rather than create, development.** The cases showcase how CLA promotes local engagement and ownership and ultimately affects the success of development programming. These findings indicate the value of integrating CLA as part of a facilitative approach with local actors to enhance the sustainability of development results.
4. **Create opportunities for others to experience and learn about effective collaborating, learning, and adapting, at the individual, team, and organizational levels.** Cases in Finding #5 above suggest that “experiencing is believing” - meaning those who experience CLA are more likely to integrate CLA into how they operate. If this finding holds true, current CLA champions who create effective collaborating, learning, and adapting opportunities may be able to attract others to try these approaches. Other cases from Finding #5 show that when stakeholders learn about positive outcomes linked to a CLA approach in another organization, they adapted the approach to their context. This means that by effectively modeling CLA, organizations may more credibly share their benefits with other development actors and inspire them to integrate CLA into their own work.



## Endnotes (Executive Summary only)

1. For more information on EB4CLA deliverables, please see this resource: <https://usaidlearninglab.org/lab-notes/what-difference-does-collaborating-learning-and-adapting-make-development-key-findings>
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# I. INTRODUCTION

While the CLA framework and associated [CLA Maturity](#) tool have helped further explain what collaborating, learning, and adapting are and look like in a USAID context, USAID/PPL and LEARN are often asked by stakeholders, “but what does CLA look like on the ground?” The question is particularly relevant in the wake of USAID’s [2016 Program Cycle Operational Policy \(ADS Chapter 201\)](#), which emphasizes the importance of CLA to operationalizing adaptive management through the Program Cycle. The policy requires USAID missions to establish CLA plans and encourages missions to think more systematically and intentionally about how CLA can support the achievement of development results.

To help answer the question of what CLA “looks like,” USAID/PPL and LEARN established the annual CLA [Case Competition](#), which invites USAID staff and implementing partners to share their experiences applying CLA approaches in their programming. In 2015, 60 USAID missions and implementing partners sent in case stories for review (three were disqualified). Judges from PPL and [LEARN](#) selected 6 winners and 19 additional finalists from the 57 entries.

Many of these cases provide excellent examples of CLA in action, showcasing approaches that added value to team and organizational performance and development outcomes. This study offers an exciting opportunity to look across cases to identify patterns and synthesize learning about CLA to help inform practice within the wider USAID, implementing partner, and donor communities.

This analysis was designed to look across cases in the 2015 case competition and synthesize learning about CLA practices and approaches, as well as their contributions to organizational change and development outcomes. It was designed to help USAID staff and implementing partners who may be curious about the range and effects of CLA practices and approaches as well as those who seek better understandings of how CLA can support their work.

The analysis is also part of a broader area of work known as the evidence base for CLA (EB4CLA) spearheaded by USAID/PPL and LEARN. The purpose of EB4CLA is to answer key learning questions: *Does an intentional, systematic and resourced approach to collaborating, learning, and adapting contribute to development outcomes? If so, how? And under what conditions?* See [this resource](#) for additional information on other EB4CLA deliverables.

## II. METHODS

### Guiding Questions

This analysis asked the following questions:

- What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?
- How did those practices and approaches contribute to organizational change or development outcomes?
- What are the implications for USAID staff, implementing partners, and development practitioners?

### About the Research Team

The research team consisted of three LEARN staff with extensive experience in evaluation, applied research, and CLA practice in development programs. Team leader Kristin Lindell, a monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning specialist with expertise in evaluating development programming and field experience integrating CLA into development activities, designed the analysis and oversaw all phases of the coding, analysis, and writing. Monalisa Salib, co-creator of the CLA Maturity Tool and Organizational Learning Manager, also conducted coding and analysis for all phases of the study and advised on the application of the CLA Maturity Tool to cases, determining findings, and research implications. Ilana Shapiro, senior research advisor with considerable experience in applied research and evaluation, advised on research methods and participated in coding and analysis.

### Case Selection and Description of Dataset

A panel of seven PPL and LEARN judges reviewed and assigned each case a score of up to 18 points based on clarity, analysis, completeness, creativity, and replicability.<sup>1</sup>

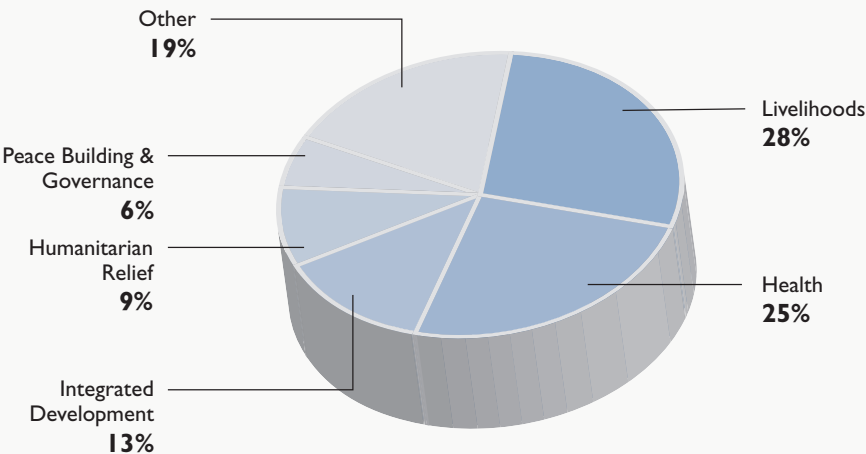
For this analysis, the researchers initially selected the 36 highest-rated cases, representing slightly more than the top half of the competition dataset. These cases all received ratings of 12 points or higher by the judges' panel and scored at least two out of three possible points in each of the rating criteria. In a preliminary review for this analysis, however, the researchers realized that four of the 36 cases had to be dropped because they did not contain sufficient information to assess their CLA approach (they were storyboards designed for videos and contained less detail than the written submissions). A total of 32 cases were included in the final case competition analysis.

All cases were self-reports written by USAID staff or implementing partners. In 2,700 words or less, each case addressed the following questions:

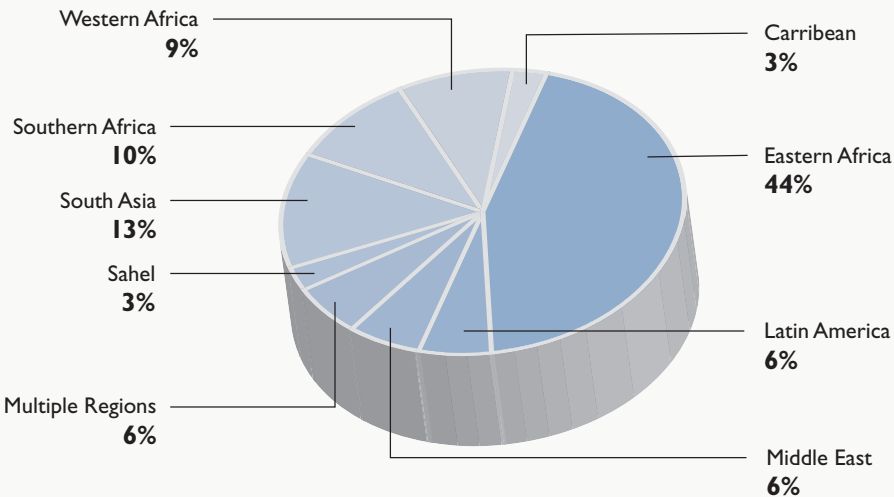
- What is the general context in which the story takes place?
- What was the main challenge/opportunity you were addressing with this CLA approach or activity?
- Please describe the CLA approach or activity employed.
- Were there any special considerations during implementation (e.g., necessary resources or enabling factors)?
- What have been the outcomes, results, or impacts of the activity or approach to date?
- What were the most important lessons learned?
- Is there any other critical information you'd like to share?

Of the 32 cases, 9 cases (28 percent) came from missions and 23 cases (72 percent) came from implementing partners. The majority of submissions focused on livelihoods (28 percent) and health (25 percent) sector projects (Figure 2). They included projects using CLA approaches in more than 21 countries in 4 regions (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and South Asia). Uganda sent in the most cases (6 cases), followed by Ethiopia (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2.** Health and Livelihoods sectors account for more than 50 percent of case submissions.



**FIGURE 3.** This analysis included CLA cases from over 21 countries.



## Data Analysis

To address the study’s questions, the researchers used two data analysis approaches:

- Thematic coding of CLA practices and approaches based on the CLA framework
- Inductive coding of key findings and events chains for each case to identify how CLA approaches contributed to organizational change and development outcomes.

**Thematic Coding to CLA Framework:** In the first round of analysis, the researchers applied the CLA framework to assess, “*what CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?*” They uploaded the 32 case competition narratives into NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software and thematically coded case activities by the 6 components and 16 subcomponents of the CLA framework (version 7).

**FIGURE 4.** CLA framework, including components, subcomponents, and key concepts.



For example, in [USAID/Malawi's Experiment in Integration to Foster Collaboration and Improve Programmatic Decision-Making](#), the mission convened stakeholders to reflect on whether or not their updated work plans were maximally integrated. To code this portion of the case, the researchers highlighted the section documenting the action and labeled it as "Pause & Reflect" (subcomponent) within the "Adapting" component of the CLA framework. This narrative was also coded as "External Collaboration" as various stakeholders convened to revisit work plans.

Case activities often included multiple CLA components and subcomponents. To improve accuracy and reliability in coding, two researchers with expertise and experience using the CLA framework coded and reviewed each case.



Finally, codes were converted and imported into STATA, a quantitative data analysis program, to determine frequency counts and explore relationships among subcomponents in the CLA framework. Findings about the most commonly occurring subcomponents, as well as patterns of use among implementing partners and missions, technical sectors, impact level, and resources, are described in Section III.

**Inductive Coding for Emerging Findings:** To better understand how CLA practices and approaches contributed to organizational change or development outcomes, researchers used a general inductive analysis approach to examine the emerging findings and events chains in each case.<sup>2</sup> Because few case authors articulated clear results chains related to CLA, the researchers coded each case narrative to develop an activity and results chain that identified underlying assumptions about how change happened.<sup>3</sup> Three researchers then independently looked across case patterns and chains to identify and describe emerging patterns and themes of how CLA contributed to organizational and development outcomes. Finally, they worked together to compare identified patterns across their respective analyses, and combined, modified, and refined the findings to best represent agreed upon findings (see Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes section below.)

## Verification and Limitations

While each CLA case was context specific, the analysis across multiple cases supported analytical generalizations about how CLA was used and its contributions to organizational or development outcomes. Independent coding and analysis of data by 2–3 researchers helped offset researcher bias and improve reliability. In addition, the use of a qualitative data analysis program (NVivo) helped enhance reliability by supporting more transparent and consistent coding, careful record-keeping, and a clear decision trail of interpretation.

The robustness of this analysis, however, ultimately relies on the accuracy and detail provided in the cases. Uneven reporting; authors' diverse understandings of collaborating, learning, and adapting; and the wide range of activities/projects and contexts included created limitations in cross-case comparisons. In addition, this study was a secondary analysis of cases written for a different purpose (i.e., the case competition) that addressed questions different from those posed by this analysis. For example, the research team used the CLA framework for analysis, but the case narratives did not address the framework.

In addition, the researchers did not have access to data beyond the self-reported cases for this analysis and could not verify claims about CLA practices or activity/project outcomes in the cases. The competition may have created incentives for authors to exaggerate or overemphasize their CLA approaches or contributions to organizational or development outcomes. Further, all cases showcased the positive effects of CLA (no cases reported on negative outcomes for CLA), so the sample analyzed in this report may represent a biased view of CLA approaches and their benefits. Finally, very few of the cases had baseline data, counterfactuals (e.g., comparison cases where CLA approaches were not used), or meaningful data related to impact on broader development outcomes. The researchers could not control for these biases and data limitations.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this analysis provide useful examples of the range of CLA practices and approaches and offer important insights about how CLA contributes to organizational change and development outcomes. The findings and subsequent implications can help support USAID staff, implementing partners, and others in the fields of organizational learning and international development as they integrate CLA approaches into their work.

# III. KEY FINDINGS

## CLA Practices and Approaches

This section answers the key question: What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases? It starts by providing examples of CLA approaches from the cases mapped to the CLA framework and then concludes with a discussion of common patterns found in the CLA approaches and concludes with a discussion of what resources are needed for CLA.

## How do CLA approaches map to the CLA framework?

The 14 cases summarized below illustrate concrete and exemplary examples of how the 2015 submissions incorporated CLA into their work. These examples aim to underscore the connection between one specific CLA subcomponent and the development or management challenge it helped solve. However, due to the holistic nature of the framework, each case could potentially be mapped to multiple subcomponents.<sup>4</sup>

**FIGURE 5.** CLA Framework.



## COLLABORATING

**COLLABORATING:** USAID encourages development actors to collaborate with the right partners at the right time to promote synergy over stove piping. The aim is not merely more collaboration. Rather, the goal is to think more strategically about collaboration—who should we be collaborating with, why, and what form should it take? These cases illustrate systematic, intentional, and resourced approaches to collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders.

### EXTERNAL COLLABORATION: Cross-Border Vaccinations in the Horn of Africa (Case #41)

Collaborating with external actors in a systematic and intentional way means working with other donors, local governments, organizations, communities, and individuals that we support share a similar goal. External collaboration also requires us to take a **facilitative approach**, which focuses on creating broad, systemic change without a direct intervention.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** A polio outbreak occurred in 2013 in unstable border areas of the Horn of Africa plagued by regional conflicts, terrorist activities, and subsequent displacement. The CORE Group Polio Project (CGPP), identified cross-border transmission as a significant risk and set out to tackle the spread of polio in the region.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** CGPP convened civil society, in-country, and such international actors as UNICEF and the World Health Organization to coordinate efforts to stop the spread of cross-border poliovirus. At regular meetings, partners discussed needs, identified possible responses, and worked to implement the activities.

### INTERNAL (AND EXTERNAL) COLLABORATION: USAID/Malawi's Experiment in Integration (Case #28)

Internal collaboration asks us to identify and prioritize other teams or offices within our organizations for strategic collaboration, decide how to engage with these teams or offices, and work together with these teams/offices based on decisions reached.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** After nearly a half-century of foreign aid in Malawi, traditional, siloed approaches to development have yielded limited positive impact. USAID/Malawi realized a change in approach was necessary and asked itself, "if the mission changed the way it worked, could it achieve better, more sustainable results?"

**CLA APPROACH USED:** USAID/Malawi piloted an integrated approach that included both technical and operational integration. It was operationalized via the "3 Cs" approach—co-location, Coordination, and Collaboration—which established systems to better share information across technical offices and implementing partners and developed processes for joint planning, monitoring, and implementation of activities.

## LEARNING

**LEARNING:** USAID's focus on learning looks at the extent to which development actors are asking the most important questions and finding answers that are relevant to decision making. Strategic learning within the CLA framework focuses on: (1) Tracking, using, and contributing to the technical evidence base; (2) Testing and exploring our theories of change; (3) Scenario planning; and (4) Ensuring our monitoring and evaluation supports learning. These case competition examples from 2015 illustrate systematic, intentional, and resourced approaches to learning:

### TECHNICAL EVIDENCE BASE: USAID/Colombia Introduces Political Economy Analysis (Case #25)

Our technical evidence base includes all relevant knowledge—USAID-specific, academic, or other local and international research, studies, and reports—that is available on a given topic or context. Effective learning happens when we consistently track and use relevant, technical knowledge to inform planning and implementation.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** Aware that residents hold the richest knowledge about their communities and countries, USAID/Colombia still lacked a standard process to gather information about the country's political economy. To allocate resources more effectively and ultimately increase impact in their programs, USAID/Colombia needed to engage and gather information from local and regional actors in a more systematic way.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** USAID/Colombia performed a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) to identify local actors and their incentives as well as to inform peacebuilding initiatives and other activities implemented through the mission.

### THEORIES OF CHANGE: Realigning Strategy to Respond to Market Realities: Agricultural Inputs in Uganda (Case #53)

Our theories of change dictate our program design and provide the rationale for why and what we implement. Effective learning happens when we consistently test and explore clearly articulated, high-quality theories of change that are based on evidence, logical, and relevant to the context in which we operate. We can test and explore our theories of change through a variety of learning activities, including assessments, evaluations, collecting monitoring data, and by gathering the experiential knowledge of our staff, partners, and communities affected by our work.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** Halfway through the Feed the Future Uganda Agriculture Inputs Activity, management commissioned a strategic assessment to understand whether the activity was progressing toward the goal of improving the country's agriculture inputs system. The assessment revealed flaws in the activity's assumptions.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** After reviewing the assessment and comparing it with program assumptions, leaders of the activity developed a new theory of change. The updated theory of change then fed into a collaborative process of strategic, tactical, and organizational realignment to test and explore the updated theory of change.

### M&E FOR LEARNING: Putting Communities at the Heart of Learning and Adapting (Case #22)

Effective learning requires effective monitoring and evaluation that provides high-quality, timely, and relevant information to decision-makers.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** To increase food supply and nutrition for farmers, CARE worked to change farmer behaviors in rural Bangladesh through its Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain activity. The success and long-term sustainability of their intervention partially depended on CARE's ability to monitor progress in a population of tens of thousands of rural farmers. CARE decided to re-examine its approaches and develop a better system to track and incentivize greater adoption of healthy behaviors.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** CARE created a **Participatory Performance Tracker** (PPT). This tool enabled program beneficiaries to track and discuss data relevant to their objectives. It also resolved some operational challenges: use of PPT required community groups to hold regular meetings to review their behaviors. This made data available to staff, who could analyze them and suggest course corrections. Assessing their own progress also motivated the community groups to become more engaged in adopting healthy behaviors.

## ADAPTING

**ADAPTING:** Adapting refers to intentionally and systematically learning from relevant knowledge and then leveraging that knowledge in service of decision-making and ultimately implementing changes. Adapting includes 1) taking time to pause and reflect and 2) using learnings from these reflections to inform programming and practice adaptive management.

**PAUSE & REFLECT:** Developing Country-Specific Gender Monitoring Indicators for Men and Women (Case #26)

Building in systematic opportunities to pause and reflect creates an environment where candid conversations become the norm and ideas surface that promote informed design and implementation decisions.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** Through its work in the agriculture sector, CARE aims to challenge traditional gender norms. Findings from a qualitative midterm assessment provided a unique opportunity for multiple CARE country offices to reflect on how best to measure whether their work was impacting gender roles and relations in the agriculture sector.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** CARE brought together five country offices in a one-week workshop to focus on measuring changes in gender relations and roles. Through a participatory, iterative process, staff refined a series of behavior change indicators that had come from the midterm assessment. Methods used during the workshop included **Outcome Mapping**. After the teams established their indicators, they refined their monitoring systems to track and report changes in gender and social norms.

**ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT:** Health Workers at the Forefront of Improving Medical Male Circumcision (Case #31)

After pausing and reflecting, practitioners need to decide upon next steps and implement those changes—the essence of adaptive management.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** After an external assessment revealed inconsistencies in Uganda's quality of service provision for voluntary male circumcision, the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems project (ASSIST), with other implementing partners, was asked to help address these gaps in 30 health facilities.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** USAID ASSIST established a process to continuously identify gaps in the health system and then co-create local solutions to address them. To implement this process, the program trained health workers on managing adaptively: they learned how to regularly monitor the quality of service provision and develop and test solutions when challenges arose.

## CULTURE

**CULTURE:** A culture that values 1) openness, 2) building and leveraging relationships and networks, and 3) continuous learning will be more likely to create opportunities for collaboration and ongoing improvement to support adaptive management.

**OPENNESS:** Learning and Collaboration: DNA for Next-Generation Agricultural Research (Case #38)

Openness in organizations allows for ideas to flow freely, which in turn motivates staff to continue expressing ideas.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** Almost 80 million farmers in Ethiopia are struggling to escape poverty. To create context-specific and demand-driven solutions for these small-holder farmers, the Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) promotes a research-for-development approach; however, these initiatives require careful management of power dynamics between researchers and farmers for the farmers to change behaviors.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** To build a sense of comfort in sharing opinions and ideas, Africa RISING invited all stakeholders to provide input throughout key phases of the project lifecycle—design, planning, and implementation. Additionally, Africa RISING hosted learning and reflection activities that used a variety of strategies to encourage openness to hearing alternative ideas from all stakeholders, including both farmers and researchers.

**RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS:** Community Collaboration Powers Solution for Batoulay Water Pumping Station (Case #33)

**Relationships and Networks:** By building trusting relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, practitioners can exchange up-to-date information, expand awareness, and ultimately improve their ability to act strategically.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** The water infrastructure in Lebanon is inefficient and poorly maintained, leaving many residents without water. The Lebanon Water and Wastewater Sector Support Program (LWWSS) aimed to repair the system—not simply react to emergency repairs—and position the local agency to independently manage it in the future. But progress was impossible without funds to pay for a comprehensive solution.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** Fortunately, the implementing partner had developed trusting relationships with community stakeholders and acted quickly to exchange up-to-date information with their network, notably a series of meetings that revealed the extent of water pump damage and proposals for possible solutions. These meetings resulted in three other partners securing additional funds and materials for the necessary repairs.

**CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT:** Embracing CLA to Drive Technology Adoption in Kenya: AflaSTOP's Experience (Case #69)

A culture that encourages, learning and improvement provides opportunities to continuously iterate and adaptively manage.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** To significantly reduce the incidence of aflatoxin contamination in Kenyan farmers' maize, the Storage and Drying for Aflatoxin Prevention activity (AflaSTOP) needed to design new technology, introduce it to the market, and facilitate scale-up within a limited time frame. The activity team would need to continuously fail fast and adapt accordingly.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** AflaSTOP worked to design a culture that motivated staff to learn. They established a process for teams to frequently test and re-assess their hypotheses and assumptions about aflatoxin technology, market entry, and scale-up. All teams shared the assumption that their ideas might fail, which provided staff with regular opportunities to learn and continuously improve and adapt.

## PROCESSES

**PROCESSES:** CLA-related processes focus on helping practitioners manage knowledge, maintain institutional memory, and create decision-making processes that support learning and adaptive management.

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:** Mapping a Crisis: AidData Students Respond to Nepal Earthquake (Case #71)

Knowledge management means we source various types of knowledge from stakeholders, distill knowledge received into digestible pieces based on our intended audiences, and share knowledge with those who are best positioned to apply what has been learned.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** After the 2015 earthquake in Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, partners on the ground needed rapid, up-to-date maps of the destruction to best allocate resources.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** Students crowdsourced data from a variety of online sources to create maps with critical information about damage. To respond to the humanitarian crisis, this data was shared with partners on the ground via AidData.

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AND DECISION-MAKING:** PRIME Time for Mercy Corps Ethiopia's Concept Note and Reporting System (Case #24)

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY:** Having processes in place to support CLA means that we use knowledge management platforms and systems to document and access up-to-date information and knowledge in a timely manner. These processes should also help transfer institutional knowledge, understanding of the local context, and key relationships between outgoing/current and incoming staff. And lastly, we need to ensure that local staff have opportunities to contribute to institutional memory and personnel onboarding and transition processes (in addition to accessing their extensive technical and local knowledge).

**DECISION-MAKING:** Decision-making processes that are transparent and clear to staff and external stakeholders enable more efficient and effective adaptive management.

**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** In Ethiopia, the Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) faced significant management challenges. PRIME involved ten local and international partners in nine offices across three regions. Additionally, these partners had never implemented PRIME's market facilitation approach. PRIME's ability to achieve its goal of increasing pastoralist household incomes depended upon the ability of the prime awardee to effectively coordinate the work of all 10 partners.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** PRIME developed a system to build its institutional memory, allowing all staff to upload and access the concept note and reporting database. The processes Mercy Corps created around the concept note and reporting system also made staff at all levels feeling empowered to generate ideas. Then, once management approved their activity, successful implementation rested in the hands of field staff. This gave autonomy to staff closest to the action.

## RESOURCES

**RESOURCES:** Collaborating, learning, and adapting takes resources, including financial resources for facilitation support, travel, staff time. It also requires having staff and consultants with the skills necessary to help us collaborate intentionally, learn systematically, and manage adaptively.

**RESOURCES IN IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:** Fostering Reflective Practice in Complex Development Programming (Case #21)



**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** To help vulnerable small-holder farmers adopt farming technologies and techniques that would improve crop yields and mitigate risk, the implementing partner first needed to make improvements in its ability to position its staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reflect on learning and manage adaptively.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** The organization leveraged resources to design and implement a series of professional development trainings aimed to build a culture of continuous reflection and learning through evaluative thinking (ET). The approach taught staff to remain curious, question assumptions, and rely on evidence to make decisions. Staff had opportunities to practice new techniques for constructively questioning underlying assumptions to make better decisions.

**RESOURCES IN MISSIONS:** Cultivating the CLA Enabling Environment: USAID Uganda's Mission of Leaders Program (Case #62)

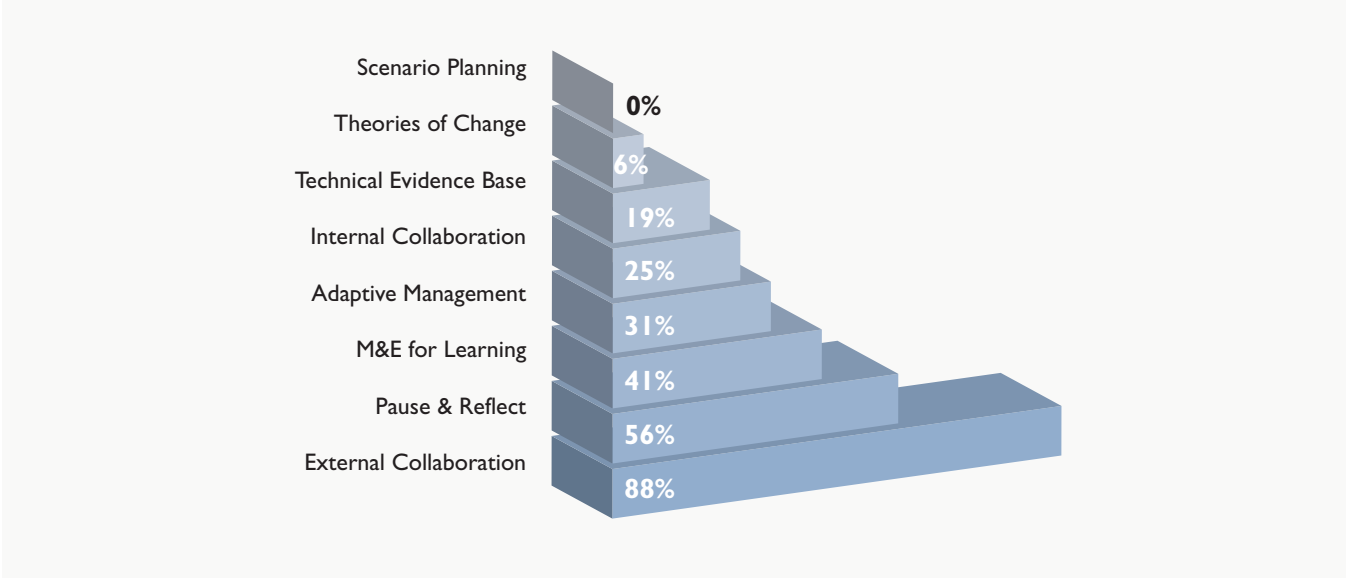
**WHY A CLA APPROACH WAS NEEDED:** Uganda continues to face myriad multi-faceted development challenges despite decades of foreign aid. Conditions at USAID/Uganda, such as the high rate of Foreign Service Officer and leadership turnover, do not necessarily lend themselves to easily navigating such complex environments.

**CLA APPROACH USED:** The Uganda mission institutionalized a "Mission of Leaders" approach that equipped staff with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to use CLA to achieve better development outcomes. Activities included executive coaching, leadership training, and external CLA support—all of which were well-resourced.

## What CLA practices and approaches are found in the cases?

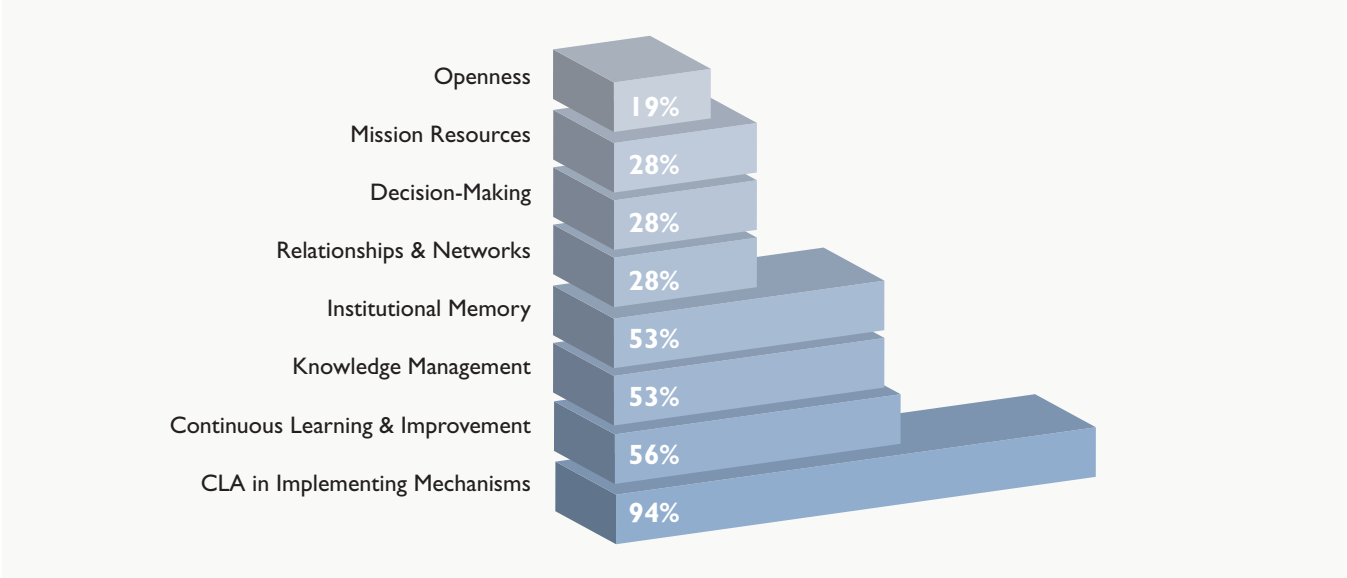
What CLA approaches appeared the most and least frequently among the CLA subcomponents in the Program Cycle? Collaboration with external stakeholders appeared most often (28 cases), followed by pause and reflect (18 cases), and M&E for learning (13). Scenario planning was the only approach not mentioned in any case to solve a development or management challenge. These findings lend themselves to a variety of interpretations: perhaps external collaboration is the easiest to accomplish and confirms the well-understood value of local partnerships to successful development interventions. Similarly, scenario planning may not be a common practice across the international development industry. A deeper understanding of these issues would require additional research.

**FIGURE 6.** CLA in the Program Cycle: Nearly all the cases referenced External Collaboration in their CLA approach. None of the cases mentioned Scenario Planning.



What appeared most and least among the Enabling Conditions (culture, processes, and resources)? A total of 25 cases mentioned CLA in implementing mechanisms, where budgeting as well as staff composition and skills supported a CLA approach. A few of the other most commonly referenced subcomponents include continuous learning and improvement (18 cases), institutional memory (17 cases), and knowledge management (17 cases). Openness, noted by just 6 cases, received the fewest mentions. Again, these patterns could be interpreted in a variety of ways. Operationalizing CLA requires resources, which could explain why most cases mentioned CLA in implementing mechanisms. Additionally, knowledge management and institutional memory, which reinforce one another in the CLA framework, seem to be fundamental components to integrating CLA for more than half of the cases. Likewise, continuous learning and improvement, also present in at least half of the cases analyzed, can be considered a key factor for enabling CLA in action. Another variable in the frequency of the subcomponents in the cases might be that the oft-mentioned items are easier to write about.

**FIGURE 7.** Cases noted CLA in Implementing Mechanisms and Continuous Learning and Improvement the most frequently.



When analyzing all subcomponents across all 32 cases, it becomes evident that each case addressed at least one part of the Program Cycle and one part of the Enabling Conditions. In other words, each case incorporated CLA in some aspect of the Program Cycle processes, including strategy, project, and activity design and implementation as well as organizational culture, business processes, and/or resource allocation. This suggests that applicants took a holistic approach to launching their CLA initiatives. This finding exemplifies the intent behind the CLA framework: to become stronger learning organizations capable of managing adaptively, organizations need both integrated CLA practices appropriate for their context and conducive enabling conditions.

## What resources are needed for CLA?

What resources are necessary to integrate a CLA approach? Systematically integrating CLA requires resources—human, material, and financial. Missions and implementing partners report needing increased staff time most frequently (29 cases) followed by staff expertise (22 cases), and knowledge management platforms (11 cases) for launching CLA into action.

What do these data mean for CLA implementation? Budgets need to adequately support CLA. When staff intentionally collaborate with key stakeholders, for example, they need to have their time covered in work plans and budgets. Building a culture of continuous learning and improvement might necessitate hiring staff with adult learning and facilitation skills. Appropriate management of institutional knowledge requires a platform where staff can upload and access relevant information.

Below, a few examples from the 2015 cases demonstrate how resources facilitated the implementation of a CLA approach:

**FIGURE 8.** Examples of resources commonly mentioned in cases.

RESOURCE TYPE	QUOTE FROM THE FIELD
<b>STAFF TIME APPEARED IN 29 CASES:</b> Intentionally and systematically integrating collaborating, learning, and adapting into our work requires that we set aside time to do so, which reflects why most cases reported an increase in staff time to perform CLA.	<b><u>Embracing CLA to Drive Technology Adoption in Kenya: AflaSTOP's Experience (Case #69):</u></b> AflaSTOP's development intervention approach required collaboration:  <i>"Collaboration is time-intensive, and time is money [...] Unlike many 'normal' projects, AflaSTOP has required multiple post-award approvals from government departments covering environment, science, and ethics, as well as buy-in from county governments for some activities. Taking the time to sit and explain the aim of the program and reaching out to people for their help in moving the processes forward is an important part of collaboration."</i>  — Anna Garloch, ACDI/VOCA
<b>STAFF EXPERTISE APPEARED IN 22 CASES:</b> Integrating collaborating, learning, and adapting requires staff to have a particular skill set. Some helpful skills include knowledge of adult learning techniques and strong facilitation skills.	<b><u>Putting the Community at the Heart of Learning and Adapting (Case #22):</u></b> CARE relied on skilled facilitators to implement its Participatory Performance Tracker:  <i>"Some of our particular success factors are our well-trained and invested facilitators at the community level. They are really the linchpin for doing this work in a way that gets communities to participate in the self-assessment process [Participatory Performance Tracker] and getting them motivated to act, beyond giving the project management team the information they need to improve the work."</i>  — Emily Janoch, CARE
<b>KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS APPEARED IN 11 CASES:</b> Managing data and information for an institution often requires a shared space where stakeholders can upload, access, and review information. Roughly one third of the cases reported investing in a knowledge management platform to implement their CLA approach.	<b><u>PRIME Time for Mercy Corps Ethiopia's Concept Note and Reporting System (Case #24):</u></b> To integrate a shared concept note and reporting system among 10 partners, Mercy Corps invested in staff time and a knowledge management platform:  <i>"The system required a lot of resources in terms of training staff (time) and building the online platform (money). It was a worthwhile investment given PRIME's size and complexity"</i>  — Lorenz Wild, Mercy Corps

# Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes

This section explores the questions: *How did case submitters operationalize their CLA approaches? And how did those approaches lead to outcomes?* Put another way, what are the results chains the cases put forward to demonstrate how CLA integration leads to outcomes?

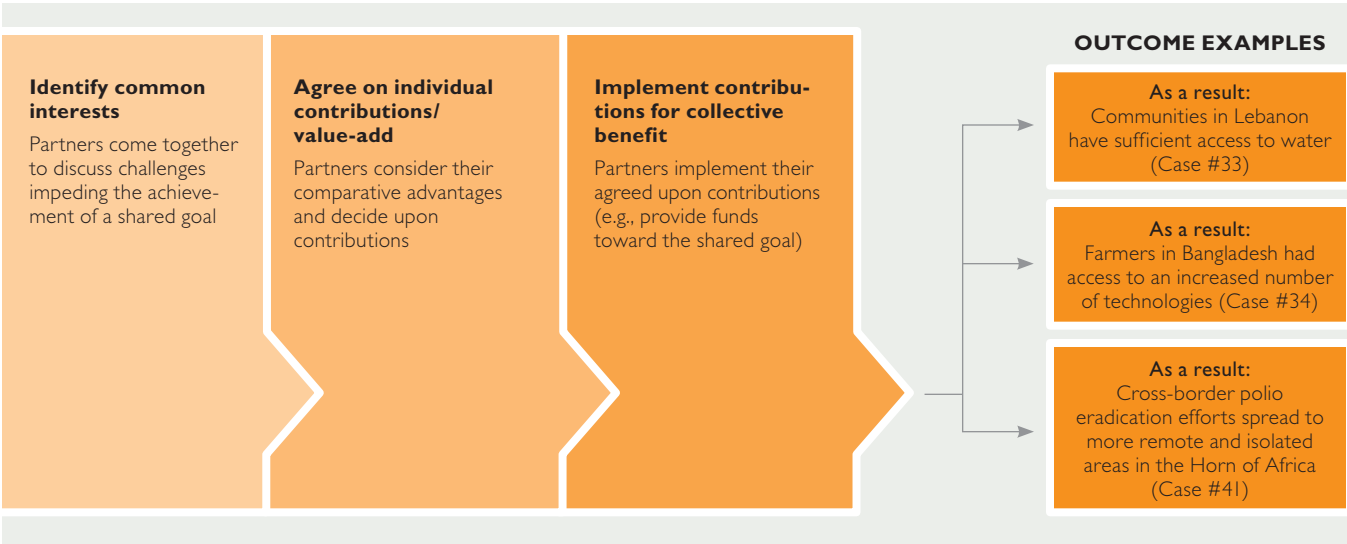
As noted in the methodology section, submitters were not required to present a coherent results chain outlining their CLA approaches or how those approaches led to outcomes and the analysis team relied on inductive coding to uncover these findings. Once detailed chains were created for each case, the analysis team determined whether there were emerging patterns that established more generalizable findings regarding how CLA approaches were operationalized and led to outcomes. The team uncovered five such findings. Each is presented in this section with examples from the cases that best represent this finding in greater detail. Apart from the last finding, each is also further bolstered by a discussion of corroborating literature and research.



## FINDING I: COLLABORATION LEVERAGES RESOURCES FOR COLLECTIVE BENEFIT.

Five of the 32 cases show how collaboration helps to reduce duplication of effort and in some cases, jointly improve desired outcomes.

### FINDING I: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.



The cases that shaped this finding describe how collaborating helps development actors to identify their respective comparative advantages around a common goal. Then, the stakeholders decide on next steps and divvy up responsibilities. Based on the final agreement each stakeholder either provides funding, human resources, and/or materials among other potential contributions toward the mutual desired outcome. This collaboration then leads to organizational and/or development outcomes that may not have occurred otherwise.

Several cases illustrate this finding:

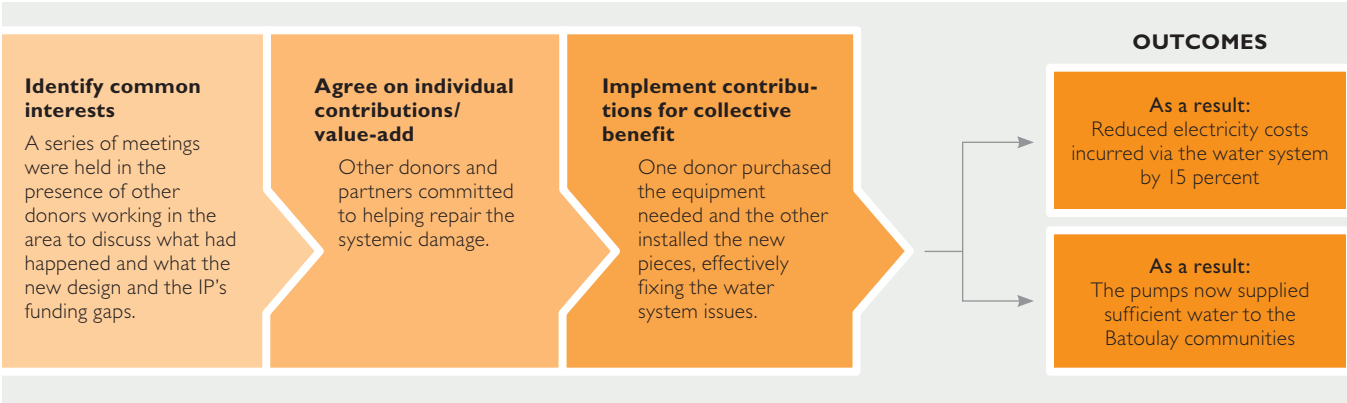
#### I. [Community Collaboration Powers Solution for Batoulay Water Pumping Station \(Case #33\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** The water infrastructure in Lebanon is inefficient and poorly maintained, resulting in poor and irregular supply to the Lebanese people. The Lebanon Water and Wastewater Sector Support

Program (LWWSS) was working to repair the entire system—not just fix individual problems—and position the in-country Water Establishments to independently manage supply and infrastructure in the future. During the implementation of LWWSS in Batoulay, Lebanon, by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), however, one of the pumps that supplied water to the surrounding communities stopped working. The broken pump also exposed a more systematic problem with the water infrastructure and the implementing partner did not have enough funds to pay for a more comprehensive solution.

**CLA Approach:** Fortunately, DAI had developed trusting relationships with other stakeholders in the Batoulay region and acted quickly to exchange up-to-date information with their network. DAI hosted a series of meetings where they revealed the extent of the water pump damage and presented proposals for solutions. These meetings resulted in three other partners (UNICEF, Office of Transition Initiatives, and Chemonics) securing additional funds and materials for the necessary repairs.

How this Case Represents the Finding.



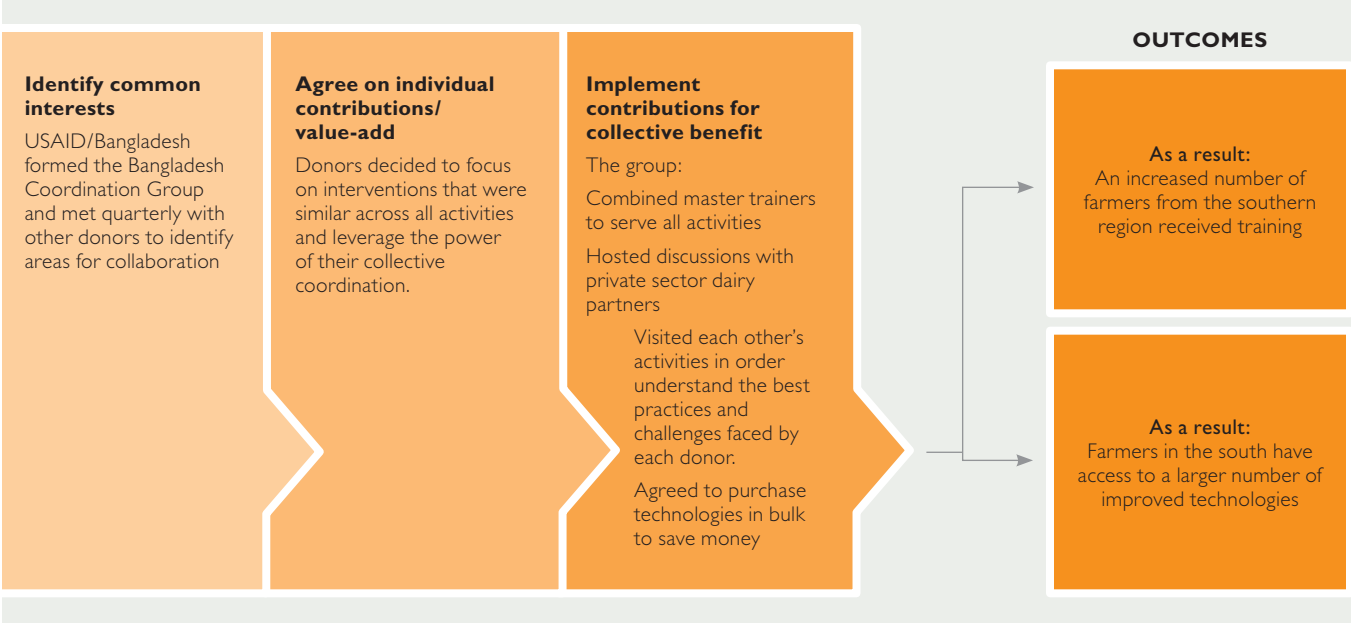
2. [Collaborating, Learning and Adapting to Development the Bangladesh Dairy Sector \(Case #34\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In Bangladesh, cattle density stands out as among the highest in the world. Milk production, however, does not compare, with dairy cows producing between one third and a half of what other countries average per dairy cow per day. People in the southern region, plagued by poverty and unfavorable soil conditions, suffered disproportionately. To improve dairy production, USAID/Bangladesh launched the Bangladesh Livestock Production for Improved Nutrition activity in the south, engaging seven different donors who funded seven different activities. USAID/Bangladesh quickly recognized the need to streamline and coordinate efforts.

**CLA Approach:** To improve coordination among donors, USAID/Bangladesh formed the Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group, which started meeting quarterly. Through these meetings, the donors identified several ways that collaboration and coordination could help Bangladeshi farmers improve the production of their dairy cows.



How this Case Represents the Finding.

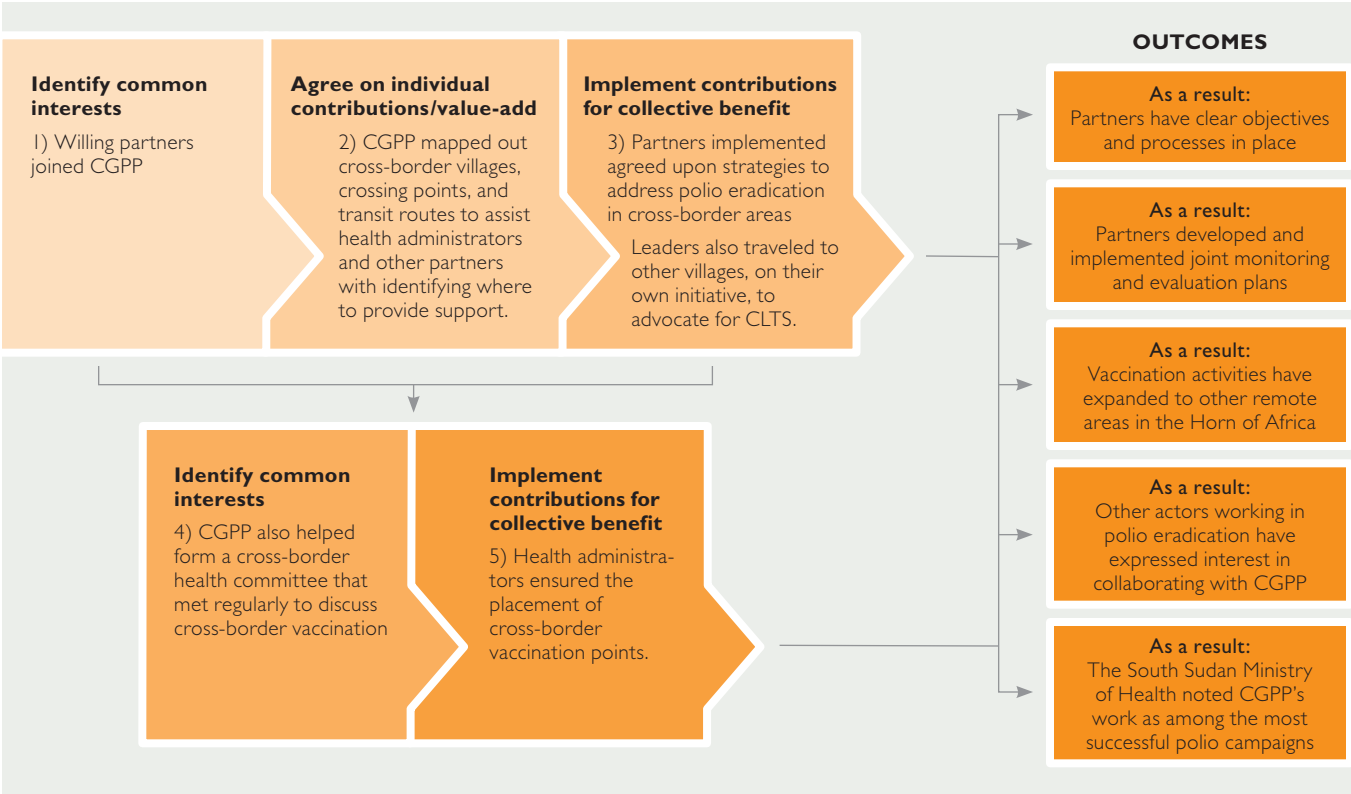


3. [Cross-border Vaccinations in the Horn of Africa \(Case #41\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In the Horn of Africa, where regional conflicts, terrorist activities, migrant passages de-stabilize the border areas, polio broke out in 2013. The CORE Group Polio Project (CGPP), identified cross-border transmission as a significant risk and decided to tackle the spread of polio in those areas.

**CLA Approach:** CGPP employed the Secretariat Model, which convenes civil society, in-country, and such international actors as UNICEF and the World Health Organization, to coordinate efforts to stop the spread of poliovirus in cross-border areas. They mapped villages, crossing points, and transit routes and established vaccination stations in target areas. The system is widely seen as successful and is being replicated in the region; monitoring and evaluation plans have been put in place.

How this Case Represents the Finding.



How does the Literature Support This Finding?

A number of studies support this finding. For example, research and theory on [collaboration for collective impact](#) provides numerous case studies of significant community impacts achieved through collaboration among actors from different sectors committed to solving a specific social problem.<sup>6</sup> In addition, while finding relatively little research on broader societal impact, a 2005 literature review of corporate strategic alliances and models of collaboration identifies gains for partners from leveraging social capital, knowledge sharing, and resource capabilities.<sup>7</sup> Collaborative organizations were also found to be more successful because relationships among individuals and groups are important for innovation and the creation and distribution of knowledge. By collaborating effectively, groups and teams develop “transactive (or shared) memory systems,” which enable better group goal performance.<sup>8</sup> However, research also shows that collaboration is not a panacea. It must be strategic, or else it can lead to wasted time, slow decision-making, interpersonal conflict, and loss of motivation.<sup>9</sup> As demonstrated above, collaboration leads to specific benefits when intentionally and systematically applied.



## FINDING 2: LOCAL ENGAGEMENT LEADS TO LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND, ULTIMATELY, IMPROVED DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.

Five out of the 32 cases highlight how engaging with local stakeholders contributes to increased ownership and agency of development intervention. This in turn can lead to better development outcomes.

**FINDING 2:** Local engagement leads to local ownership and, ultimately, improved development outcomes.



The two cases below show how better development results from collaboration with beneficiaries. When implementing partners invite local stakeholders to participate in development processes, they become motivated and engaged in solutions to community challenges.

### I. [Rapid Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting: Community-Based Response to Ebola \(Case #48\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** When Ebola struck Liberia and eventually spiraled into an epidemic, Global Communities realized it needed to help curtail the epidemic. Based on data that showed that infection was spreading due to mishandling of the dead, Global Communities decided to help improve dead-body management and encourage safe burial practices. However, communities were skeptical of Global Communities and even attacked staff members and their vehicles. Communities wanted to know: “Why do you only come when someone has died? Why do you not come to help when someone is sick?”

**CLA Approach:** Rather than trying to force behavior change, Global Communities shifted tactics and began engaging more with the communities. They built a community engagement strategy that solicited input from all members of society. Traditional leaders attended meetings and said they could help. When villagers did not trust Global Communities, traditional leaders were willing to enter and educate about Ebola transmission. They also accompanied burial staff to ensure safe and peaceful burials. Ebola transmission declined and Global Communities buried nearly 100 percent of contaminated corpses.

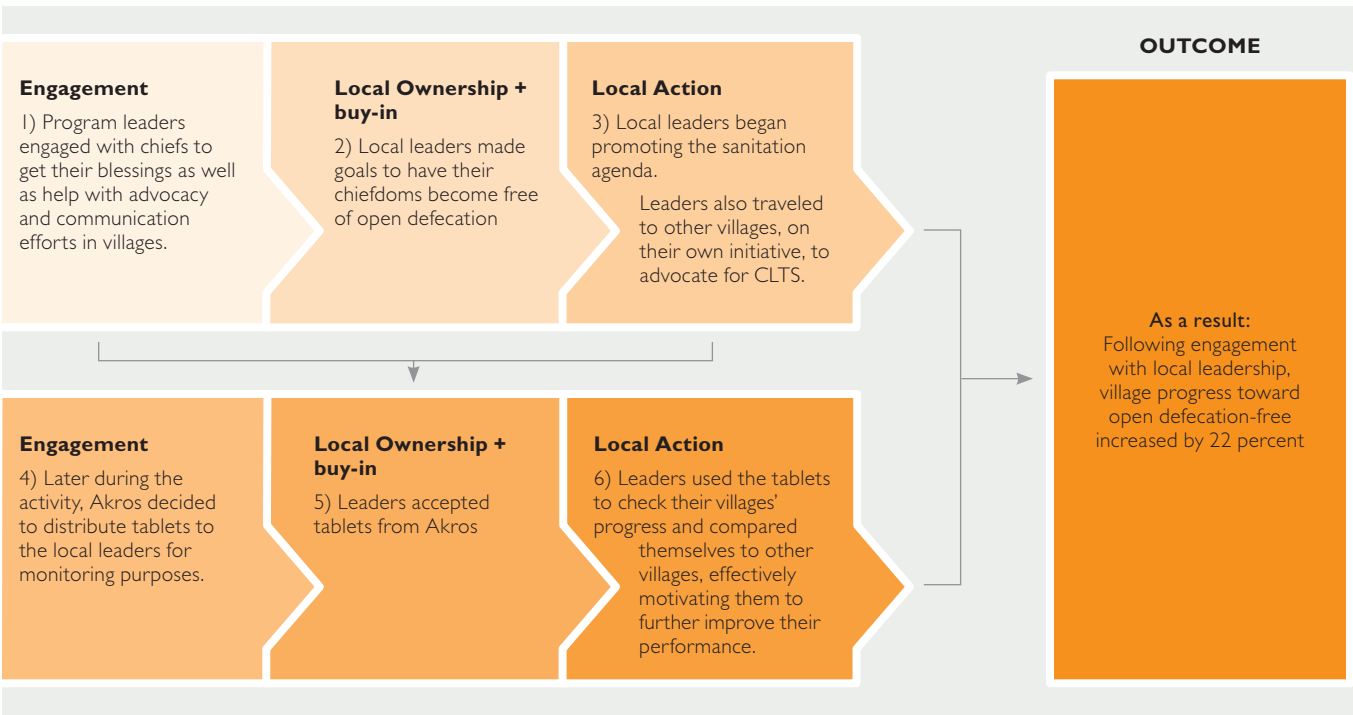


How this Case Represents the Finding:

2. [Empowering Chiefs and Traditional Leaders Revolutionizes Sanitation Program \(Case #19\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Millions of impoverished rural Zambians have no access to sanitation facilities, and open defecation is a common practice. Without hand-washing facilities, many acquire diarrheal disease. Akros helped to spearhead a community-led total sanitation (CLTS) approach with the goal of decreasing open defecation. Initially, Akros relied on a program that trained government health workers, who would then work with the communities. Once implementation of the CLTS started, however, Akros realized that behaviors were not changing: community members lacked motivation to build the hand-washing stations and latrines that could have a significant, positive impact on their health.

**CLA Approach:** To understand the root cause of the problem, Akros asked field officers to gather information from both government health workers and the communities. The organization soon learned about the strained relationship between government employees and the community members: communities placed more trust in their local leadership. Akros then shifted focus and began to engage local leaders directly. Through orientations and workshops, field staff had the opportunity to explain the dangers of open defecation. Later, to further involve local leadership in the activity, Akros also delivered handheld tablets to the chiefs, who used them to track progress in their villages. Progress toward eliminating open defecation increased by 22 percent.



How this Case Represents the Finding:

**How does the Literature Support This Finding?**

The literature that discusses “thinking politically,” being “politically smart” and pursuing “locally driven development” supports these findings. Emerging research focuses on the need for approaches that are embedded in the local context and negotiated and delivered by local stakeholders. This type of development also underscores the importance of partnerships between donors and local actors that are based on trust and transparency and where differences in power between actors are acknowledged and addressed.<sup>10</sup> Development, thus far, has predominantly been led by Northern organizations that impose their models and requirements onto local partners. The literature increasingly emphasizes the



need for locally-led approaches that are embedded in the local context, and are locally negotiated and delivered. This approach can lead to more effective development.<sup>11</sup>

### FINDING 3: INTENTIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT GENERATES STANDARD GOOD

#### PRACTICES FOR BROADER APPLICATION.

Among the 32 cases, four demonstrated how intentional knowledge management can help to generate standard good



practices leading to broader application.

**FINDING 3:** Intentional knowledge management generates standard good practices for broader application.

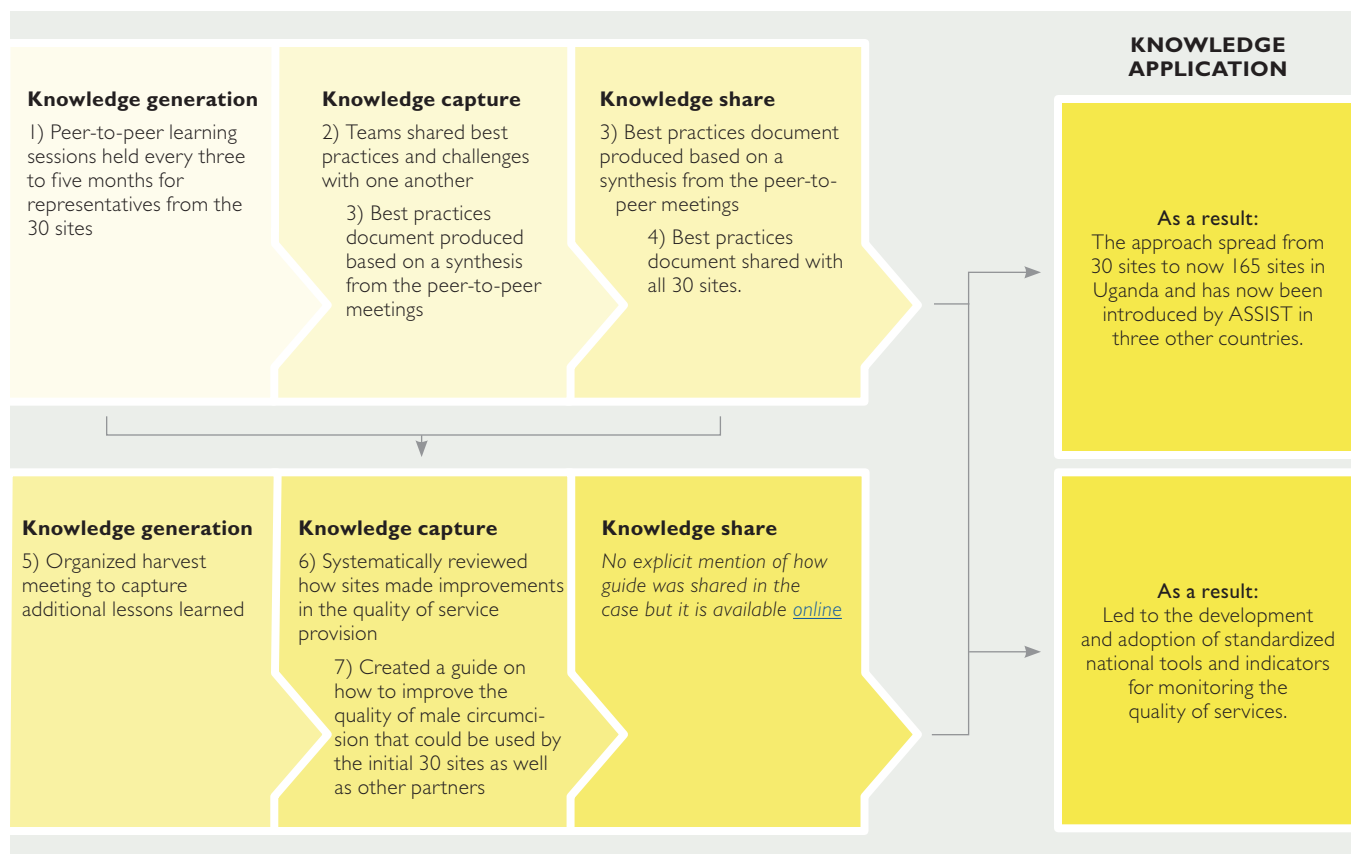
This finding aligns with the knowledge management subcomponent in the CLA framework and reflects existing literature on knowledge cycles.<sup>12</sup> The cases below demonstrate how knowledge generation, capture, and sharing can contribute to improvements at the organizational level (through knowledge application). Moreover, knowledge dissemination can also lead to scale-up.

#### I. [Health Workers at the Forefront of Improving Medical Male Circumcision \(Case #31\)](#)

**Development Opportunity/Challenge:** After an external assessment revealed inconsistencies in quality of service for safe male circumcision in Uganda, the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems project (ASSIST), with other implementing partners, was asked to make improvements in 30 health facilities.

**CLA Approach:** USAID ASSIST established a process to continuously identify gaps in the health system and then co-create local solutions to address them. To implement this process, the program trained health workers on managing adaptively: in peer-to peer sessions, they learned how to regularly monitor quality, identify areas for improvements, and adopt best practices. The program also created a [guide](#) and best practices document that was shared with all 30 sites and can be used in other regions and countries. The approach spread from 30 sites to now 165 sites in Uganda and has now been introduced by ASSIST in three other countries. It also led to the development and adoption of standardized national tools and indicators for monitoring the quality of services.

## How this Case Represents the Finding.

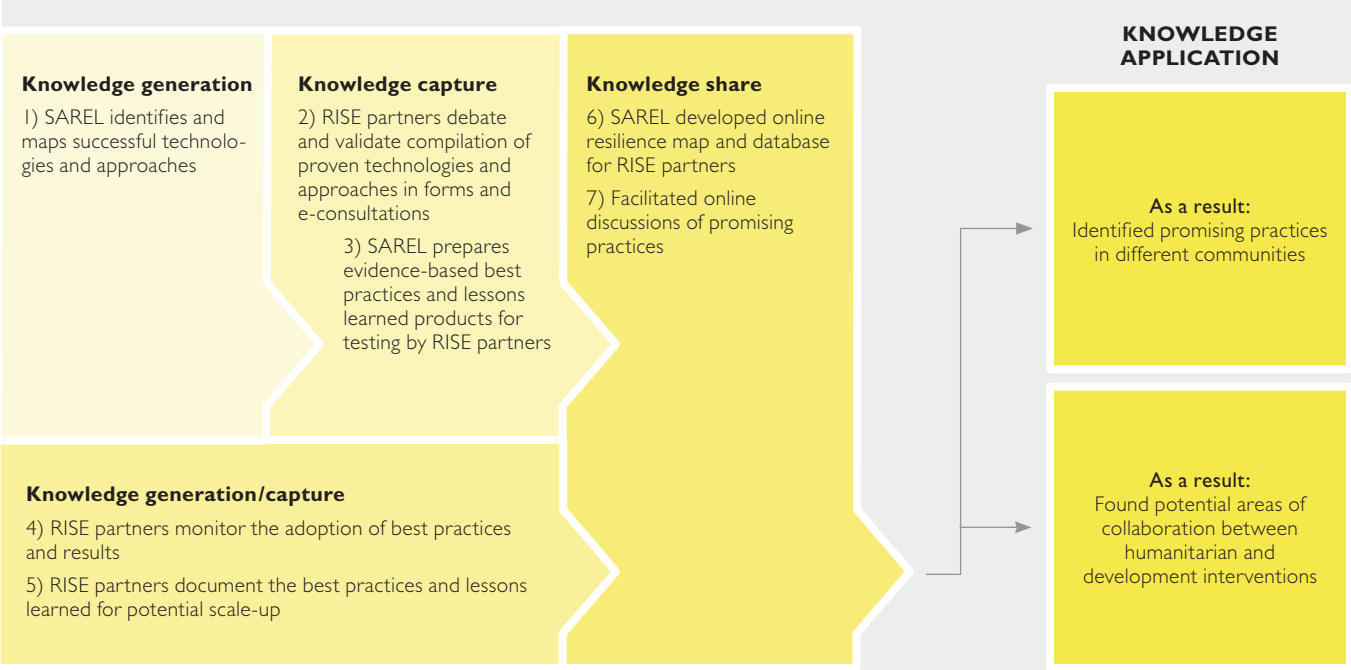


## 2. [Collaborative Learning to Adapt RISE Programs to Emerging Best Practices \(Case #78\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** A five-year activity, Sahel Resilience Learning (SAREL) provides monitoring, evaluation, collaboration, and learning support to USAID's Resilience in the Sahel-Enhanced (RISE) initiative. SAREL addresses some of the major challenges faced by RISE partners, notably a lack of a shared collaboration and learning platform. Without it, partners do not have the latest information that could improve their approaches and/or provide opportunities for collaboration.

**CLA Approach:** SAREL conducted the following activities: 1) identified and mapped proven technologies and approaches implemented by partners that have helped build the resilience of vulnerable families, 2) hosted knowledge-sharing events to validate best practices and identify opportunities for collaboration, and 3) produced briefs on best practices and uploads them to a shared online platform. Thus, the partners were able to identify promising practices and discover areas of potential collaboration between humanitarian and development interventions.

How this Case Represents the Finding.



How does the Literature Support This Finding?

The literature documents many cases of organizations becoming more productive and successful as they manage and transfer knowledge from one unit to another. Knowledge management (KM) facilitates reflection and learning, and it is pivotal for making good decisions and designing effective programs. The role of information and communication technology (ICT) is an area of interest in this field. Further, the literature cautions against focusing KM only on storing information; instead KM should be people-centric.<sup>13</sup> A recent study conducted by RWTH Aachen University in Germany quantitatively tested the proposed relationship between knowledge management systems and ramp-up performance.<sup>14</sup> The study showed a small but significant effect of knowledge management on the success of ramp-up projects. The researchers found strong linear relationships between the elements of knowledge management (knowledge generation, knowledge capture, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application). As seen in the cases above, organizations that employ all the elements of knowledge management are more likely to see positive impacts.<sup>15</sup> Such factors as company size, complexity of the product, or applied technology did not reveal significant influence.

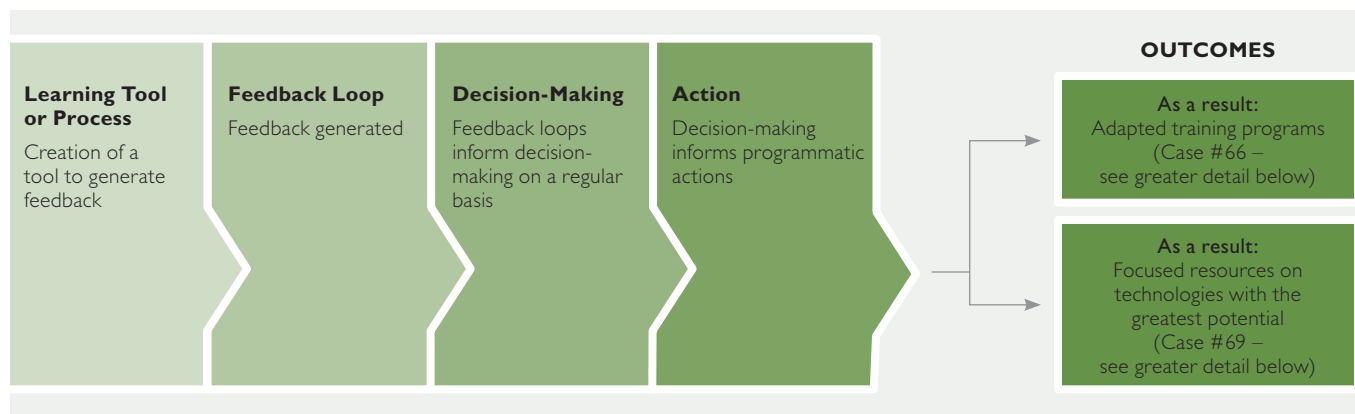




## FINDING 4: FEEDBACK LOOPS INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT EVIDENCE WILL INFORM DECISION-MAKING.

Eight of the 32 cases analyzed pointed to a pattern of intentionally using regular feedback loops to inform programmatic decision-making. In most cases, submitters described how these decisions led to actions and, in some cases, specific outcomes.

**FINDING 4:** Feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making.



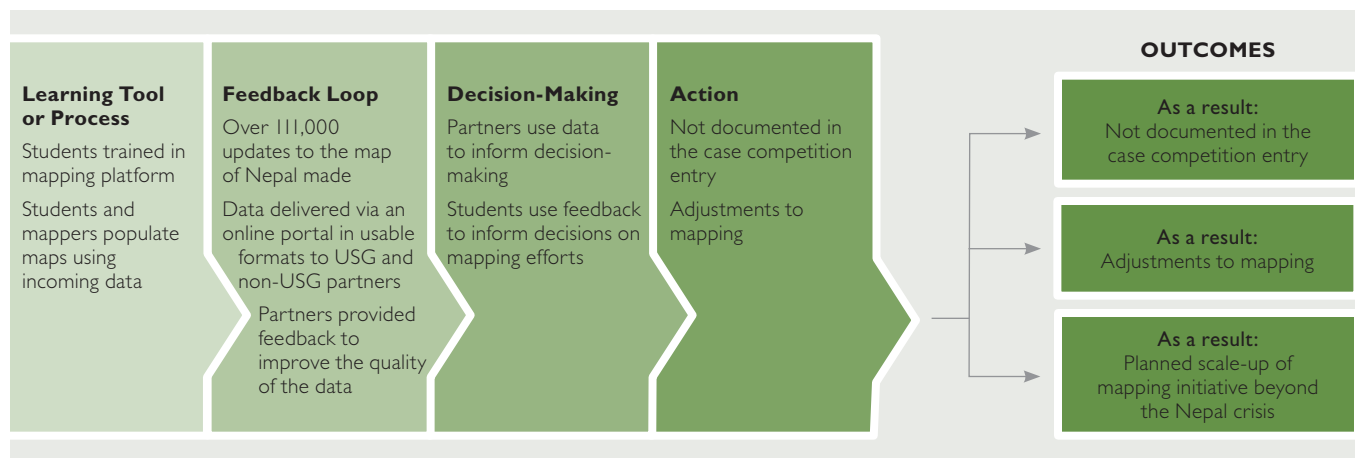
This finding mirrors the articulation of adaptive management in the CLA framework: teams and organizations analyze learning → make decisions based on learning → and follow-through on decisions reached. The cases below illustrate this process and describe specific tools and processes for creating feedback loops that provide continuous learning to inform decision-making.

### I. [Mapping a Crisis: AidData Students Respond to Nepal Earthquake \(Case # 71\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** After the 2015 earthquake in Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, partners on the ground needed rapid, up-to-date maps of the destruction to best allocate resources.

**CLA Approach:** Students from the College of William & Mary participated in a crowdsourced mapping effort to provide critical information to relief workers in Nepal. This information was provided on a regular basis to inform partner decision-making. Simultaneously, partners were providing feedback to mappers to improve the quality of data received over time, ultimately providing more than 111,000 updates to the map. This approach provided a foundation for scale-up of mapping beyond the Nepal crisis.

How this Case Represents the Finding.

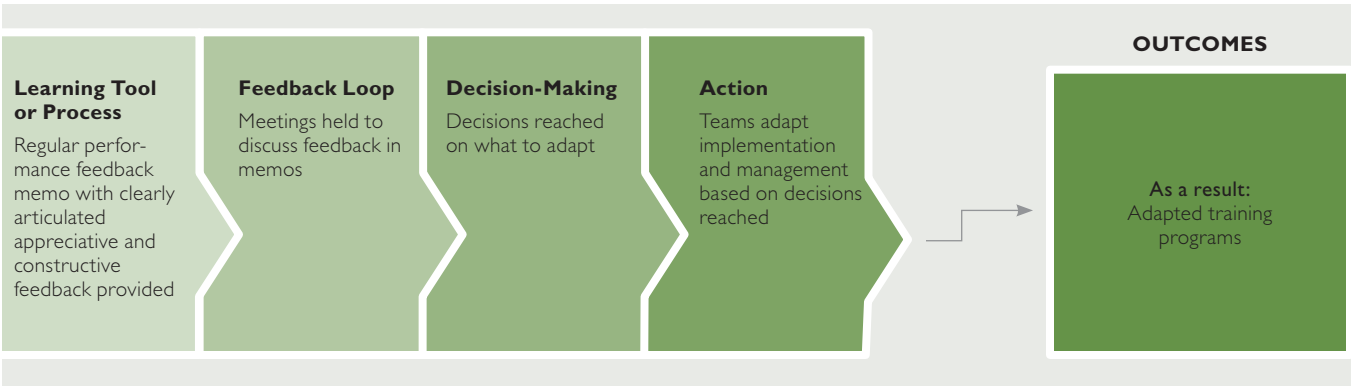


## 2. [Continuous Evaluation<sup>16</sup> and Real-Time Feedback Fosters Adaptive Program Management \(Case # 66\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** To improve literacy rates and reduce HIV transmission among primary and secondary school students, the Ugandan government designed an integrated education and health strategy. USAID/ Uganda supports this approach through the School Health and Reading Program (SHRP), implemented through the Research Triangle Institute (RTI). The mission awarded a Performance and Impact Evaluation mechanism (P&IE) to Panagora Group with the goal of providing monitoring, evaluation, and CLA advisory services for RTI.

**CLA Approach:** Panagora Group developed a multi-stage approach to continuous evaluation aimed at maximizing collaborative reflection and learning.<sup>16</sup> It provided the partner implementing the technical intervention with the real-time performance information needed to underpin adaptive management decisions and actions that perhaps, in turn, lead to improved program results.

How this Case Represents the Finding.

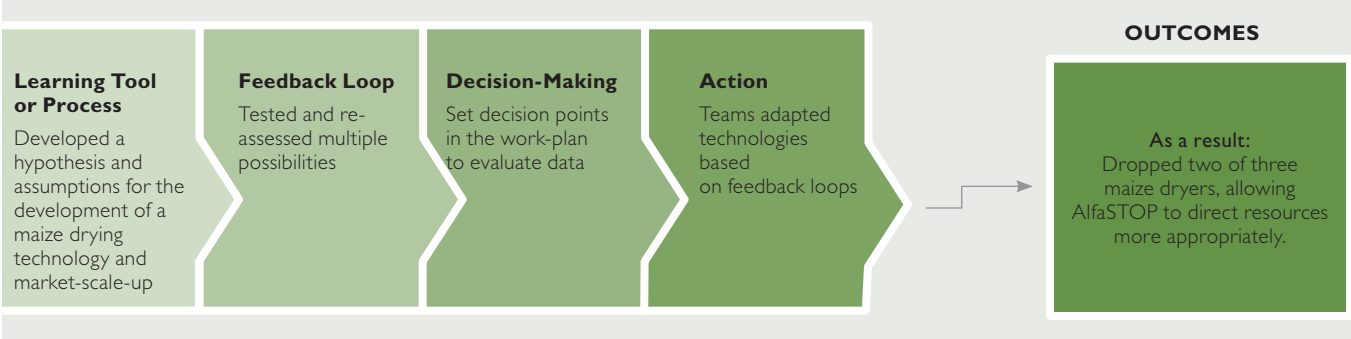


## 3. [Embracing CLA to Drive Technology Adoption in Kenya \(Case # 69\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** The Storage and Drying for Aflatoxin Prevention activity (AflaSTOP) aimed to significantly reduce the incidence of aflatoxin contamination of Kenyan farmers' maize. AflaSTOP set out to design new technology, introduce it to the market, and facilitate scale-up within a limited time frame—meaning that the activity team would need to continuously fail fast and adapt accordingly.

**CLA Approach:** AflaSTOP worked to design a culture that motivated staff to learn on a regular basis. They established a process that enabled teams to frequently test and re-assess their hypotheses and assumptions about aflatoxin technology and market entry and scale-up. Also, all teams adopted the mindset that their ideas might fail, which freed them from pressure to produce positive results and invited critical thinking. They developed and tested maize-drying technologies, ultimately selecting the dryer that worked most effectively.

How this Case Represents the Finding.



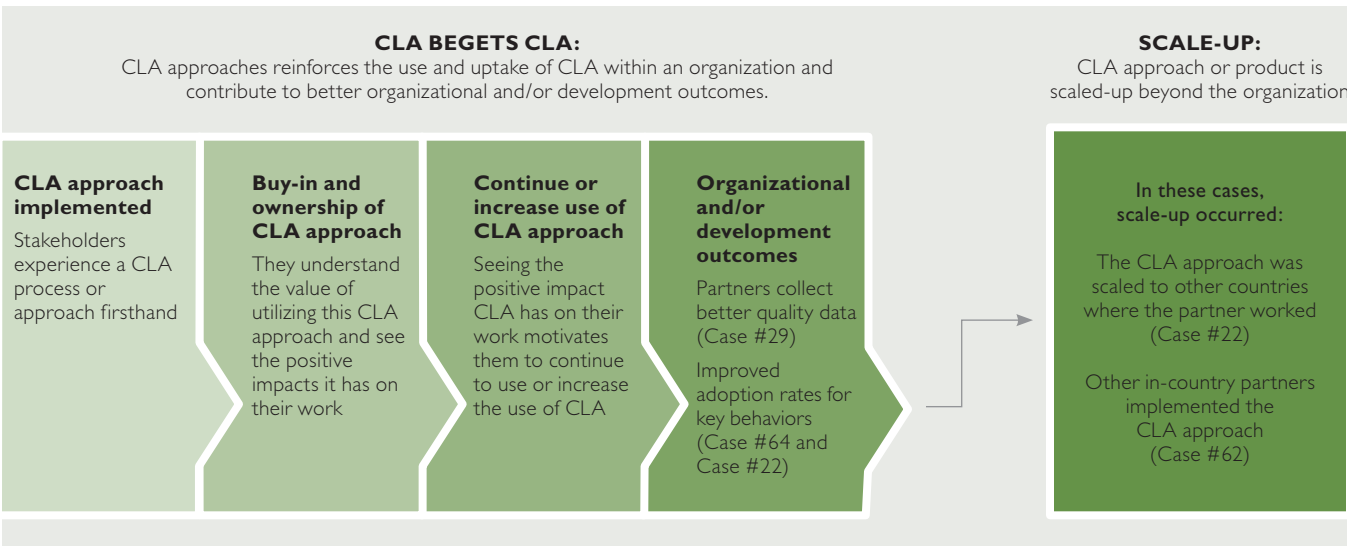
How does the Literature Support This Finding?

The literature shows that adaptive management requires an agile and enabling culture that helps organizations use rapid feedback loops to continuously and efficiently process and build on new information to achieve overall goals.<sup>17</sup> The literature also shows that when implemented properly, feedback loops can be a tool for learning and adapting as well as for reporting and accountability. A 2016 report published by Feedback Labs outlines how feedback loops have directly and indirectly contributed to development outcomes. In the development context, the strongest evidence for feedback loops exists in community-based monitoring, according to the report. In some instances, there was a positive relationship between community based monitoring and improved development outcomes. However, feedback loops are not always effective and can sometimes do more harm than good (e.g., disempowerment when feedback does not result in any changes). The report suggests that feedback loops are “smart” when the donor and/or government agency has the willingness and capacity to respond, when people are sufficiently empowered to fully participate, and when contextual factors like personal bias, access to information, and technical expertise are taken into consideration.<sup>18</sup>

FINDING 5: CLA BEGETS CLA AND SOMETIMES LEADS TO SCALE-UP.

In comparison to the preceding findings, the largest number of cases fall into this category with 10 out of the 32 cases demonstrating similar patterns around CLA exposure, uptake, and occasionally, scale-up as shown in the graphic below:

FINDING 5: CLA begets CLA; CLA sometimes leads to scale-up.



To illustrate the breakdown of this finding, the table below categorizes the ten cases according to their respective contribution:

CASE	CLA BEGETS CLA	SCALE-UP
<u>Putting Communities at the Heart of Learning and Adapting (Case #22)</u>	✓	✓
<u>Developing Country-Specific Gender Monitoring Indicators for Men and Women (Case #26)</u>	✓	✓
<u>Cultivating the CLA Enabling Environment: USAID Uganda's Mission of Leaders Program (Case #62)</u>	X	✓
<u>Health Workers at the Forefront of Improving Medical Male Circumcision (Case #31)</u>	X	✓
<u>Improving Validity and Reliability of Licensure Examination for Health Workers (Case #27)</u>	X	✓
<u>Mapping a Crisis: AidData Students Respond to Nepal Earthquake (Case #71)</u>	X	✓
<u>Learning with the Community to Improve an Intervention Approach (Case #64)</u>	✓	X
<u>Learning Platforms to Strengthen Partnerships and Outcomes for MTCT Reduction (Case #29)</u>	✓	X
<u>PRIME Time for Mercy Corps Ethiopia's Concept Note and Reporting System (Case #24)</u>	✓	X
<u>USAID/Malawi's Experiment in Integration (Case #28)</u>	✓	X

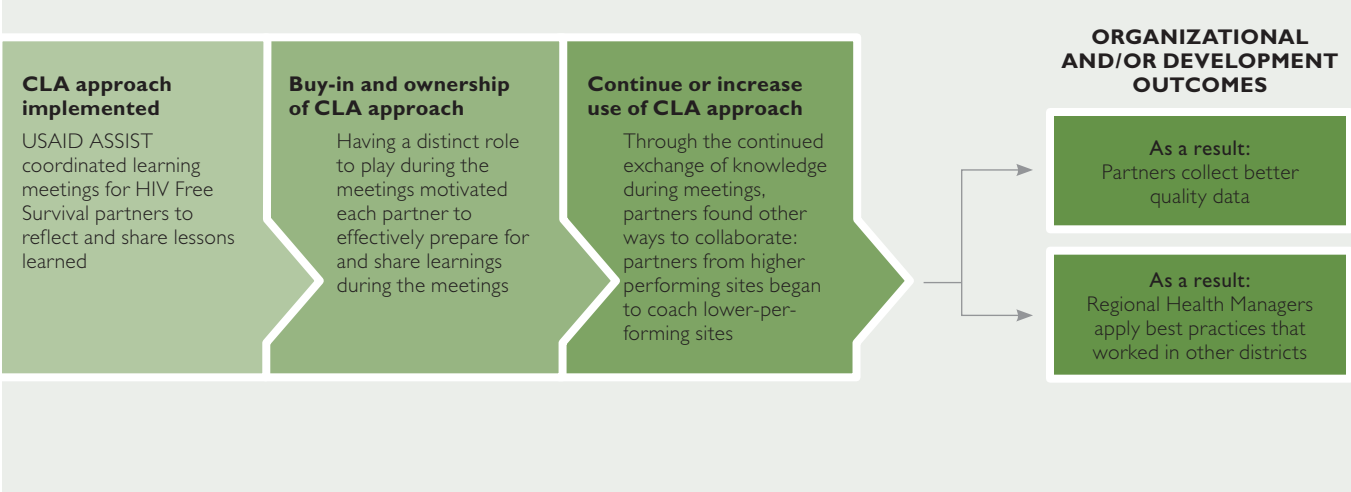
The two examples below underscore how implementing a CLA approach can lead to increased CLA uptake and potentially improved organizational and/or development outcomes.

I. [Learning Platforms to Strengthen Partnerships and Outcomes for MTCT Reduction \(Case #29\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** The Tanzanian Government implements the Partnership for HIV Free Survival (PHFS) as part of the 'Global Plan toward the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping their Mothers Alive' (eMTCT). This complex, multi-party PHFS initiative initially launched in 30 health facilities across three districts in Tanzania and needed a mechanism to share progress and learn from each facility's experience. USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (USAID ASSIST) led this approach.

**CLA Approach:** USAID ASSIST launched regular national meetings, which provided implementing partners, donors, national health officials, health providers, and community health workers with the opportunity to share learnings and challenges. Partners began to share, coach each other, collaborate, and ultimately began collecting better quality data and improving practices.

How this Case Represents the Finding.



2. [Learning with the Community to Improve an Intervention Approach \(Case #64\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Uganda's Community Connector (CC) activity aims to alleviate poverty, food insecurity, and undernutrition. One activity is to promote Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) to encourage the use of savings for investments. During the first year, field staff realized that community members were not saving for the long term but rather spending all their savings during the December holidays, leaving nothing for other expenses such as planting or school.

**CLA Approach:** To improve community members' savings, staff implemented a participatory assessment of saving behaviors and shared the data with the local and the community members involved in the savings groups. The implementing agency FHI 360 also hosted meetings where both the government and the participants in the savings program contributed to generating new solutions. This led to the creation of a new initiative, "Saving with a Purpose" (SWAP), which asked groups to develop their own savings goals and more closely aligned the disbursement of funds with planting seasons or the start of school. It also identified community members who already saved for the long-term to share their experience.

How this Case Represents the Finding.

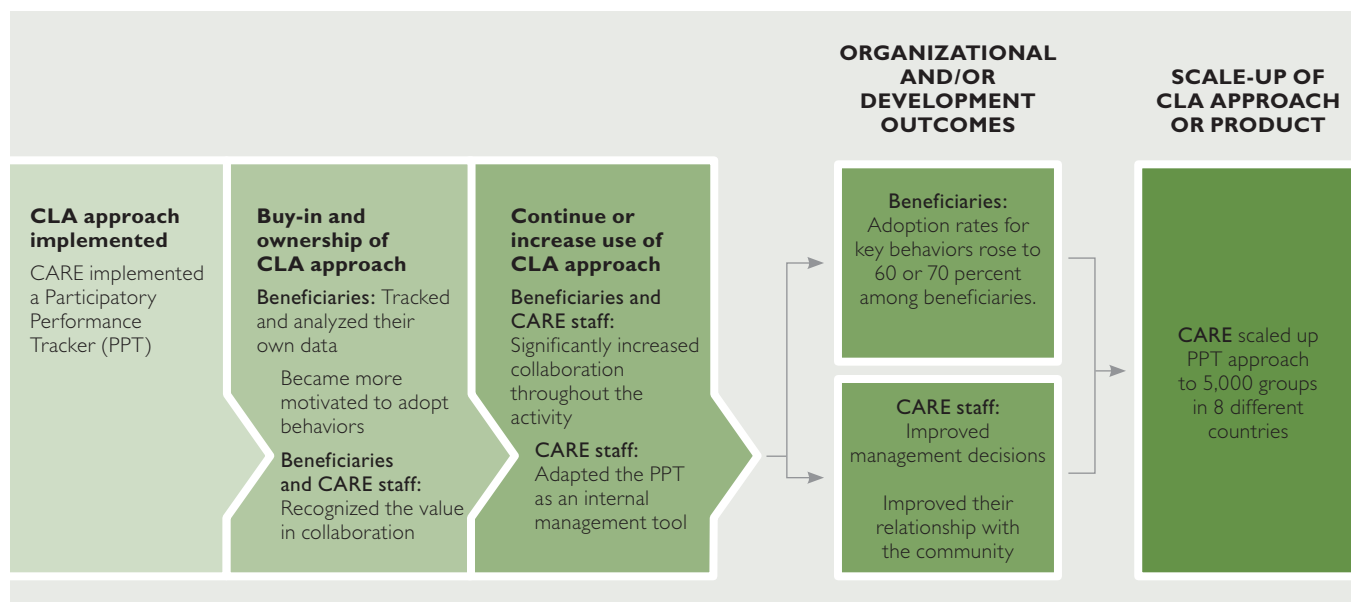


Among the 10 cases, 6 cases explicitly document evidence of scale-up. In many of those, the authors do not provide details about why other partners or country offices adopted the CLA approach or product. Therefore, the analysis team inferred that some transfer of knowledge happened among interested actors for scale-up to occur. Additionally, not all the chains follow an identical pattern. As shown previously, in four of the cases we do not see evidence of an increase in use of the CLA approach before scale-up occurs. The examples below demonstrate these nuances:

### 3. [Putting Communities at the Heart of Learning and Adapting \(Case #22\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** To increase farmers' access to food and improve nutrition, CARE worked to change the behaviors of rural farmers in Bangladesh through its Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain activity. The success and long-term sustainability of their intervention partially depends on CARE's ability to monitor progress in the behaviors it works to promote; however, monitoring behavior change among tens of thousands of rural, illiterate farmers represented a daunting challenge. Large amounts of data collected at infrequent intervals, coupled with a lack of community motivation to adopt new behaviors, forced CARE to re-examine its approaches and develop a better system to track and provide incentives for farmers to adopt healthy behavior.

**CLA Approach:** To increase community motivation and better monitor progress toward behavior change, CARE created a Participatory Performance Tracker (PPT). This tool enables program beneficiaries to track and discuss data relevant to their objectives. It also resolved some of CARE's operational challenges: relying on the PPT required community groups to hold regular meetings to review their behaviors. These data could then be aggregated and shared with program staff, who would analyze the data and suggest course corrections. Assessing their own progress also ended up motivating community groups to take more agency in adopting behaviors promoted by CARE. It also led to CARE expanding the use of the PPT to an additional 8 country offices working with 5,000 community groups. In both cases, effective M&E for learning had a ripple effect on communities using the tool and CARE's offices.

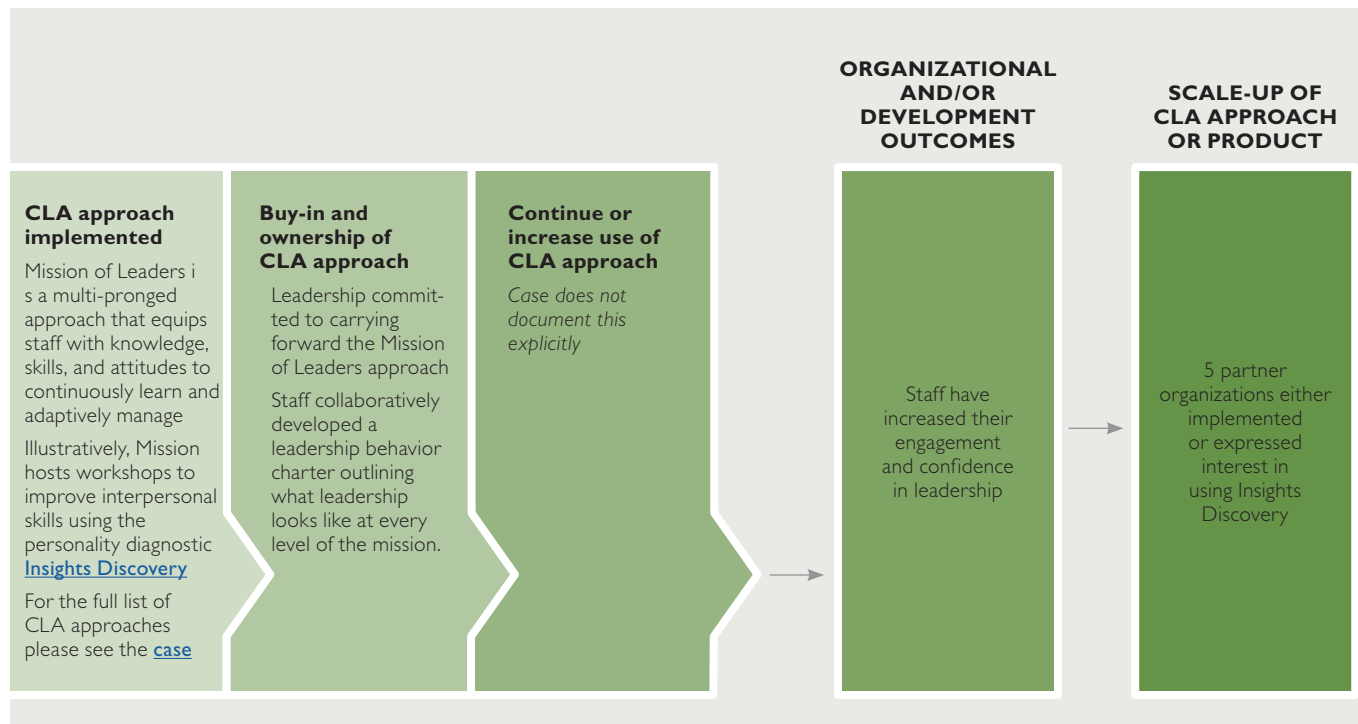


### 4. [Cultivating the CLA Enabling Environment: USAID Uganda's Mission of Leaders Program \(Case #62\)](#)

**Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Uganda, like many places where USAID works, continues to face multi-faceted development challenges despite decades of foreign aid. Conditions at USAID/Uganda, such as the high rate of Foreign Service Officer and leadership turnover, can exacerbate the problem.

**CLA Approach:** To more effectively address the development obstacles faced by Uganda, the mission institutionalized a "Mission of Leaders" approach, which aims to equip all staff with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for CLA in service

of achieving better development outcomes. A few of the components of the Mission of Leaders include professional development opportunities such as executive coaching and leadership training. Additionally, the mission hired external CLA support via the hiring of consultants to assist with various phases of Mission of Leaders. Mission leadership consistently made CLA a priority by ensuring the availability of funds.



**How does the Literature Support This Finding?**

Notably, the literature review did not uncover any additional evidence supporting this finding. Because almost one-third of the cases document a similar pattern, it may warrant further exploration in future literature reviews and case competition analyses for 2016 and beyond.



# IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

## For USAID and Implementing Partner Staff

Start with key priorities, but work toward establishing a more balanced holistic approach to integrating CLA within programs and organizations.

As described above, every case included reference to integrating CLA into the Program Cycle (design and implementation of strategies, projects, and/or activities) and organizational enabling conditions (organizational culture, business processes, and resource allocation). The implication for USAID staff and implementing partners is to consider both CLA building blocks when determining their approach to CLA integration. Focusing simply on the “nuts and bolts” of CLA (i.e., testing theories of change or taking time to pause and reflect) may not be productive if there is no openness among team members to discuss tough questions or limited resources for effective facilitation. In this way, the building blocks of the framework work hand-in-hand, reinforcing each other and further CLA integration.

### **Investing in CLA bears results. But are we willing to invest?**

The cases demonstrate how an intentional, systematic, and even minimally resourced approach to CLA can bear results. While there is no counterfactual to these cases or a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, initial findings emphasize that CLA can add value; the findings provide specific examples of how CLA approaches can lead to results, including organizational and development outcomes and even scale-up of development interventions and/or the CLA approach.

Given this, USAID staff and implementing partners may want to consider their current investment in CLA approaches and identify where additional investments may add even greater value. These investments could be relatively minimal—using existing staff expertise and refocusing staff time to include opportunities for reflection and learning—or more substantial, including hiring learning advisors or instituting knowledge management platforms. For more on ways to support CLA, see [here](#).

### **Facilitate, rather than create, development.**

This analysis also highlights how CLA promotes local engagement and local ownership to improve the success of development programming. Locally led development had far-reaching implications for USAID staff and partners. It helped create realistic expectations about how quickly results could be achieved and the time required to build relationships and engage local actors in defining their agenda. The case findings support and illustrate principles in USAID's updated [ADS 201 guidance](#) that greater collaboration with local actors during the early stages of project/activity design helps to ensure approaches are locally driven. They also underscore how taking a [facilitative approach](#)—one that focuses during implementation on indirect interventions at strategic points within a system—can help ensure better development outcomes. These findings are also reflected in existing research on local engagement and ownership in the development literature ([see EB4CLA literature review](#)).

### **Create opportunities for others to experience and learn about effective collaborating, learning, and adapting, at the individual, team, and organizational levels.**

Based on several of the cases, “experiencing is believing.” Those who experience CLA are more likely to integrate it into how they operate. CARE, for example, through its Participatory Performance Tracker, demonstrated the power of

‘experiencing is believing,’ as both community members and staff increased their use of CLA in the case after they experienced its benefits.

Several cases show that when stakeholders learn about positive outcomes linked to a CLA approach in another organization, they adapted the approach to their context. By effectively modeling CLA, organizations can perhaps more credibly share its benefits with other development actors and inspire them to integrate CLA into their own work. In USAID/Uganda, for example, when other implementing partners witnessed the positive changes in the mission from the Mission of Leaders initiative, they decided to integrate certain aspects of it into their own work. These CLA ripple effects would not have been possible without USAID/Uganda modeling CLA or CARE providing staff and beneficiaries opportunities to experience a CLA approach across its activities and partner organizations.

## For Future Case Competition Analyses and Areas of Research

Future case competition analyses can build on and refine these findings, explore questions that arise from it, and provide cumulative learning across the annual CLA case competitions. The following areas warrant further exploration:

- More detailed, contextualized information about CLA approaches in action as well as a cross-case analyses of the strengths and limitations, factors influencing success, and lessons learned from these efforts
- CLA contributions to outcomes by interviewing stakeholders and reviewing case-related documents (e.g., activity evaluations and reports)
- Changes over time in understanding and use of CLA, changes in level or type of integration within organizations, and longer-term impacts of CLA practices on organizational performance and development outcomes

In addition, future research beyond the case competition would produce valuable information, for example, an exploration of why some CLA practices and approaches are used more often than others (e.g., external collaboration vs. scenario planning) or an examination of the relationship between investments in CLA and related benefits (e.g., organizational changes and/or development outcomes).

When adapted appropriately to a specific development context, the cases here demonstrate that CLA makes sense. When organizations integrate effective collaborating, learning, and adapting into their work, positive changes can happen both within and externally to the organization. Ultimately, CLA aims to help us achieve better development results and the synthesis of the cases here sheds light on exactly what successful CLA looks like “on the ground.”

## Endnotes

1. See Annex I for the case competition scoring rubric.
2. Thomas, David (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27 (2), 237–246.
3. See Annex 4 for the TOC and results chain framework used for this analysis as well as an example of two coded cases.
4. Note that there were no cases in the 2015 case competition that conducted scenario planning, the fourth subcomponent under Learning in the CLA framework.
5. Please note that for the purposes of ensuring ease of understanding for the readers, the authors of this paper have decided to avoid showing examples of the resources subcomponents (mission resources; CLA in implementing mechanisms) and have decided to instead highlight the Resources component of the CLA framework.
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 Bubwolder, P., & Basse, F. (2016). *An Empirical Study on the Effect of Knowledge Management Ramp-up Performance in the SME Sector*, 108. European Conference on Knowledge Management. Kidmore End: Academic Conferences International Limited.
14. “Ramp-up” performance is a term used in economists to describe an increase in production ahead of anticipated increases in product demand.

- Bubwolder, P., & Basse, F. (2016). *An Empirical Study on the Effect of Knowledge Management Ramp-up Performance in the SME Sector, 108*. European Conference on Knowledge Management. Kidmore End: Academic Conferences International Limited.
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16. Note that in a USAID context, this may be more often referred to as monitoring, not evaluation.
17. Mercy Corps. (undated). *Managing Complexity: Adaptive management at Mercy Corps*. [https://d2zyf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/Adaptive%20management%20paper\\_external.pdf](https://d2zyf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/Adaptive%20management%20paper_external.pdf)
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## Web Resources (in order of appearance)

1. CLA Maturity Tool: <https://usaidelearninglab.org/library/collaborating%2C-learning%2C-and-adapting-cla-framework-and-maturity-matrix-overview>
2. ADS 201 Guidance: Program Cycle Operational Policy: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201.pdf>
3. About the Case Competition: <https://usaidelearninglab.org/cia-case-competition#1>
4. About USAID LEARN: <https://usaidelearninglab.org/learn-contract>
5. What Difference Does Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Make to Development? Key Findings from a Recent Literature Review: <https://usaidelearninglab.org/library/what-difference-does-collaborating%2C-learning%2C-and-adapting-make-development-key-findings-our>
6. The Facilitation Approach at USAID: A Discussion Paper: [https://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/the\\_facilitation\\_approach\\_at\\_usaid\\_07.28.2015.pdf](https://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/the_facilitation_approach_at_usaid_07.28.2015.pdf)
7. Participatory Performance Tracker: <http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/PPT%202pager.pdf>
8. Outcome Mapping: [http://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome\\_mapping](http://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_mapping)
9. Collaboration for Impact: <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/>
10. Uganda Guide to Improving the Quality of Safe Male Circumcision: [https://www.usaidassist.org/sites/assist/files/uganda\\_guide\\_to\\_improving\\_the\\_quality\\_of\\_smc\\_a4\\_feb2015\\_ada.pdf](https://www.usaidassist.org/sites/assist/files/uganda_guide_to_improving_the_quality_of_smc_a4_feb2015_ada.pdf)
11. Insights Discovery: <https://www.insights.com/products/insights-discovery/>
12. "There's no money for that." Three Ways to Resource Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting: <https://usaidelearninglab.org/lab-notes/%E2%80%9Cthere%E2%80%99s-no-money-that%E2%80%9D-three-ways-resource-collaborating%2C-learning%2C-and-adapting>
13. EB4CLA Literature Review: [https://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/eb4cla\\_literature\\_review\\_20160831.pdf](https://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/eb4cla_literature_review_20160831.pdf)

# ANNEX I

## Case Competition Judging Rubric

	<b>Clarity (weight=*2)</b> Does the case story reflect the overall theme of the challenge? Does it clearly illustrate how a CLA activity or approach was used and what the outcome was?	<b>Analysis</b> Does the case story reflect on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool/approach used? Does the case story identify key lessons that can be used to improve future practice?	<b>Completeness</b> Does the case story include multiple stakeholders' perspectives (e.g., a USAID Mission, IP, and other beneficiaries/stakeholders)?	<b>Creativity</b> Does the case story describe an innovative approach or novel adaptation of an established methodology? Does the case story present the activity or experience in a creative way?	<b>Replicability</b> Does the case story present practical approaches, lessons learned, or advice that others can use to incorporate CLA into their work?
3	The case strongly reflects the overall theme of the challenge. It clearly illustrates how a CLA activity or approach was used and what the outcome was, using specific examples.	The case provides thoughtful and detailed reflection on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool/approach used. It clearly identifies several key lessons that can be used to improve future practice.	The case includes multiple stakeholders' perspectives, using quotes or other paraphrased remarks.	Most importantly, the case clearly describes an innovative approach or novel adaptation of an established methodology. For a 3, it's also presented in a creative or unique way.	The case story's approaches, lessons learned, and/or advice are presented in a straightforward and practical way that would encourage others to adopt them in their own work.
2	The case reflects the overall theme of the challenge. It illustrates how a CLA activity or approach was used and what the outcome was in a general way.	The case provides some reflection on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool/approach used. It clearly identifies at least one key lesson that can be used to improve future practice.	The case includes at least one stakeholder's perspective, using quotes or other paraphrased remarks.	The case describes an innovative approach or novel adaptation of an established methodology. For a video submission, the storyboard is structured in a compelling way.	The case story presents practical approaches, lessons learned, and/or advice in a general way that would be replicable in some cases.
1	The case loosely reflects the overall theme of the challenge. It illustrates how an activity or approach was used and what the outcome was, but fails to make explicit reference to C, L, or A.	The case provides some reflection on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool/approach used. It provides general commentary on how it might improve future practice.	The case includes at least one stakeholder's perspective (beyond the author).	The case describes an innovative approach but is not clearly connected to established/proven methods. For a video submission, the structure is not particularly creative.	The case story presents only one practical approach, lesson learned, or piece of advice that could potentially be used by others.
0	The case does not reflect the overall theme of the challenge. It illustrates how an activity or approach was used but fails to give much detail on the outcome.	The case does not reflect on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool/approach used. It provides general commentary on how it might improve future practice, or none at all.	The case does not include multiple stakeholders' perspectives.	The case described is not innovative nor creatively adapted from an established methodology.	The case story does not present any practical approach, lesson learned, nor advice that could be used by others.
<b>BONUS:</b> Written submissions: 1 bonus point will be awarded per relevant supplemental photo, graphic, or video clip. Video storyboard submissions: 1 to 3 bonus points will be awarded based on the relative feasibility of video production.					

# ANNEX 2

## CLA Case Competition Form

### Case Story Template

Before submitting your entry, please carefully read the Guidelines, Criteria, and Writing Tips for case stories available on USAID Learning Lab at (old reference). Use the case story template below to help you develop your submission, following the guiding questions. Although some questions may not be applicable to your case, please try to respond as completely as possible. Also make sure you do not exceed the maximum word limit for each question, although you are free to write less. Save your story as a Word file.

To submit your case story, click on the 'Case Story' button, complete the Author Information section of the online form, and upload your story and any supporting materials in the spaces provided. Check the Release checkbox, complete the Captcha, and click the save button to submit your case story before the deadline of August 14, 2015 at 5:00 pm EDT. For any questions, please contact [submissions@usaidlearninglab.org](mailto:submissions@usaidlearninglab.org).

### Guiding Question

**Case Title \*** (10 word limit).

**What is the general context in which the story takes place? \*** (250 word limit)

*Set the scene by providing some background details about the country and/or activity context. Was the CLA activity part of a larger project or initiative? Who were some of the key stakeholders involved?*

**What was the main challenge/opportunity you were addressing with this CLA approach or activity? \***

(500 word limit)

*What prompted your organization to undertake this activity or implement this approach? Was there a particular opportunity for new or improved collaboration, learning, and/or adapting? Or was there a problem or pain point you were trying to solve?*

**Describe the CLA approach or activity employed \*** (600 word limit)

*What were the objectives or anticipated outcomes of the CLA initiative? What were the main strategies, tools, or methodologies used to carry out this approach or activity? Was it something new, or did you amend/improve an existing process or activity to promote stronger collaborating, learning, and/or adapting? Was it a one-off action, ongoing, or recurring over time? Who was involved?*

**Were there any special considerations during implementation (e.g., necessary resources or enabling factors)? \***

(500 word limit)

*Describe the critical success factors or particular implementation challenges. Did you need any special tools or skills? What type of resources (e.g., financial and/or non-financial) were required? Were there any conditions or factors (e.g., leadership buy-in) that contributed to or inhibited implementation?*

**What have been the outcomes, results, or impacts of the activity or approach to date? \*** (300 word limit)

*Have you been able to qualitatively track or measure any outcomes, results, or impacts of the activity or approach thus far?*

*What have you seen? Did you use any particular M&E methodology? If you do not yet have any noticeable outcomes or results, what are you doing to monitor the value provided by the approach or activity?*

**What were the most important lessons learned? \*** (300 word limit)

*How will your organization use this experience moving forward? If others wanted to implement a similar approach or activity, is there anything they should consider? What worked or did not work?*

**Any other critical information you'd like to share?** (250 word limit)

*Use this optional space to provide any additional information not already included.*



# ANNEX 3

## Detailed Case Coding

Please visit this [link](#) to review the scoring of the cases. Please note that the coding has been organized by the CLA framework. For additional questions, contact Kristin Lindell, Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Specialist with LEARN/PPL, at [klindell@learning4dev.org](mailto:klindell@learning4dev.org).

# ANNEX 4

## Emerging Findings Coding

The table below provides illustrates the process the analysis team used to document results chains in each case and then identify patterns among all cases. Firstly, the team recorded why a CLA approach was needed. Next, they provided details about the CLA approach and summarized the main subcomponent reflected in the approach. Then the team charted out the chain of events leading to the outcomes highlighted in the case. As a final step, the team reviewed each of the coded cases for patterns in the types of approaches used, the types of outcomes achieved, as well as any other nascent trends. This analysis led to the development of the five findings presented in the report (Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes).

## Illustrative Examples of Emerging Findings Coding Process

WHY WAS A CLA APPROACH NEEDED?	CLA APPROACH	CLA FRAMEWORK	WHAT STEPS WERE TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES?	OUTCOMES
<b>Mapping a Crisis: AidData Students Respond to Nepal Earthquake</b>				
After the 2015 earthquake in Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, partners on the ground needed rapid, up to date maps of the destruction to best allocate resources.	Students crowdsourced data from a variety of online sources to create maps with critical information about earthquake damage. This data was shared with partners on the ground via AidData to respond to the humanitarian crisis.	Knowledge Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students trained in platform</li> <li>2. Students and mappers populate maps using incoming data</li> <li>3. More than 111,000 updates to the Nepal map</li> <li>4. Data delivered via an online portal in usable formats to partners</li> <li>5. Partners provided feedback to improve the quality of the data</li> <li>6. Partners use data to drive decision-making</li> </ol>	<p>Creation of open street map club to equip other students to assist in the next disaster.</p> <p>Helped agencies with decision making and/or situational awareness.</p>
<b>Developing Country-Specific Gender Monitoring Indicators for Men and Women</b>				
Through its work in the agriculture sector, CARE aims to challenge traditional gender norms. Findings from a qualitative midterm assessment provided a unique opportunity for CARE to reflect on how best to measure whether their work was impacting gender relations in the agriculture sector.	CARE brought together 5 country offices to reflect on measuring changes in gender relations and roles over the course of a one-week workshop. Through a participatory, iterative process, staff refined a series of behavior change indicators that had come from the midterm assessment.	Pause & Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CARE did a midterm evaluation</li> <li>2. CARE Requested help through the Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program to help reinforce learning from the midterm</li> <li>3. Team members from five Pathways countries and invited gender specialists took part in the March 2015 workshop in Lilongwe, Malawi</li> <li>4. Over three days, participants worked on refining and re-organizing this data to develop appropriate behavior-change indicators around gender and social norms</li> <li>5. At the end of the workshop, the whole team collectively agreed on a monitoring time frame, format, and reporting process</li> </ol>	<p>Better reporting on impact.</p> <p>Improved gender strategies and programming.</p> <p>The process has been taken up by other programs, including two USAID-funded initiatives,</p>