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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

Preface	3
Background about Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting at USAID	3
About the Collaborating, Learning and Adapting Framework	3
Executive Summary	5
Methods	5
Key Findings	6
Implications and Considerations	8
I. Introduction	9
II. Methods	10
Guiding Questions	10
About the Research Team	10
Case Selection and Description of Dataset	10
Data Analysis	11
Verification and Limitations	12
III. Key Findings	14
Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes	16
Finding 1: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit	16
Finding 2: Local engagement leads to local ownership and, ultimately, improved development outcomes	20
Finding 3: Intentional knowledge management generates standard good practices for broader application	24
Finding 4: Feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making	30
Finding 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes	35
Finding 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale-up	39
Finding 7: Identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves our responsiveness to changing contexts	43
Finding 8: Establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming	46
Finding 9: CLA leads to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which contribute to improved organizational performance	48
Finding 10: Upfront investment in CLA can lead to increased efficiency over time	51
IV. Implications and Considerations	54
For USAID and Implementing Partner Staff	54
References	56
Endnotes	58
Annex 1: Case Competition Judging Rubric	60
Annex 2: CLA Case Competition Form	62
Annex 3: Detailed Case Coding	63
Annex 4: Emergent Findings Coding	64

PREFACE

Background About Collaborating, Learning and Adapting at USAID

In 2012, USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) introduced the collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) concept 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 time restrictions, limited resources, and a need to show immediate results; CLA can be difficult to integrate into the design and management of development assistance.

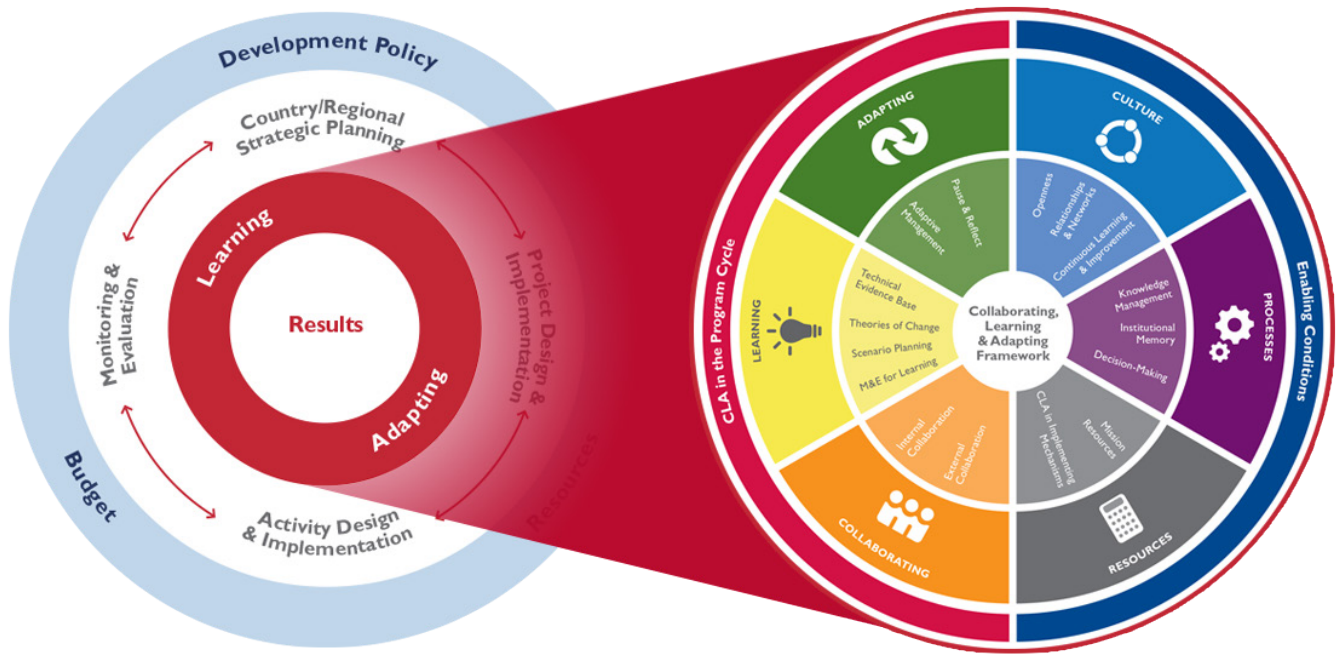
The CLA framework promotes the use of key practices throughout the Program Cycle to overcome these challenges:

- **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 they 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 and implement CLA approaches that fit their context and assist them in achieving their development objectives.

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



The CLA framework is broken into components and subcomponents designed to help USAID staff and partners think more deliberately about how CLA might be tailored to their organizational or programming contexts. The framework recognizes the diversity of CLA approaches in various organizations and projects while also giving the process 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 contextually appropriate CLA practices and conducive enabling conditions to become stronger learning institutions capable of managing adaptively. The framework stresses the holistic and integrated nature of the various CLA components 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](#)), spearheaded by USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) and its support mechanism, the Learning and Knowledge Management mechanism (LEARN). Through the annual [CLA Case Competition](#), PPL and LEARN invite USAID staff and implementing partners from around the world to submit examples of collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approaches that have added value to development programming. In 2015, 60 cases were submitted; by 2018, annual submissions had more than doubled, with 127 entries.

PPL and LEARN recognized that this collection of cases provided an opportunity to examine and synthesize learning about CLA that would be relevant to wider USAID, implementing partner, and donor audiences. In 2015, LEARN conducted an [analysis](#) of a sample of CLA cases, exploring patterns among CLA approaches as well as their contributions to organizational change and/or development outcomes. In 2018, LEARN conducted a new CLA Case Competition Analysis, taking a fresh look at a larger sample of cases submitted from 2015–2017 to reassess key findings and explore enablers and barriers to CLA that contribute to organizational and/or development outcomes.

Methods

The CLA Case Competition Analysis explores examples of CLA in action to answer these questions:

1. What patterns of contribution emerge from an analysis of results chains across strong CLA cases?
2. Under what conditions does CLA contribute to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes?

The research team consisted of three LEARN staff with extensive experience in monitoring, evaluation, and CLA practice in development programs. The team conducted a qualitative analysis to highlight common themes and patterns of CLA in action across a sample of the highest rated 83 cases from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 CLA Case Competitions. Twenty-seven cases came from USAID missions and 56 from implementing partners. Some cases were generally focused on international development, while others had a sector-specific focus, including global health; food security and nutrition; and democracy, human rights, and governance. They covered projects using CLA approaches in more than 42 countries across five regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas, and Europe), as well as six cases that were global in focus.

To uncover patterns of contribution emerging from an analysis of results chains across strong CLA cases, the researchers used a blended deductive and inductive analysis approach to code the sequence of events and underlying assumptions about how change happened in each case, identifying a results chain. Second, to determine under what conditions CLA contributes to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes, the researchers thematically coded the enablers and barriers that contributed to the specific outcomes of each case.

Independent coding and analysis of data by 2–3 researchers helped offset researcher bias and improve reliability. However, the researchers could not control for potential biases in the self-reported cases, or the uneven quality and quantity of the information provided. Despite these limitations, significant findings emerged that demonstrate how CLA contributes to organizational change and development outcomes.

Key Findings

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

What patterns of contribution emerge from an analysis of results chains across strong CLA cases?

The analysis revealed a total of 10 overarching results chains that demonstrate how CLA practices and approaches can contribute to specific development and/or organizational outcomes. Findings 7–10 are considered emerging findings as they each had two or fewer cases coded to the results chain. These emerging findings have been included in this report as they validate theories of results chains drawn from the [literature review](#) and [2015 Case Competition Analysis](#), even though there were limited case examples observed in this analysis.

There are a variety of ways that CLA can be integrated into programming. The cases in this report demonstrated a holistic approach to CLA initiatives: CLA practices were incorporated into some aspects of the Program Cycle (strategy, project, or activity design and implementation), and CLA integration was supported by enabling conditions (organizational culture, business processes, and/or resource allocation). These findings are consistent with those from the 2015 Case Competition Analysis and [evidence gathered through EB4CLA efforts](#).

1. **FINDING 1: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.** The cases that comprise this finding illustrate how collaboration helps development actors to identify their respective comparative advantages in working towards a common goal. This is consistent with research and theory on collaboration for collective impact, which shows significant benefits for communities in which actors from various sectors commit to solving a specific social problem.
2. **FINDING 2: Local engagement leads to local ownership and, ultimately, improved development outcomes.** The cases that comprise this finding show that when local stakeholders participate in program activities, they can become more committed to and engaged in identifying sustainable solutions to community challenges. This is consistent with the literature, which increasingly emphasizes that locally-led approaches embedded in the local context — and that are locally negotiated and delivered — lead to more effective development.
3. **FINDING 3: Intentional knowledge management generates standard good practices for broader application.** The cases that comprise this finding demonstrate how knowledge generation, capture, and sharing can contribute to improvements at the organizational level when this knowledge is applied. This is consistent with literature documenting that organizations can become more productive and successful when they effectively manage and transfer knowledge.
4. **FINDING 4: Feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making.** The cases that comprise this finding show how feedback loops enable the adaptive management process of continuously analyzing learning, making decisions based on learning, and following through on decisions reached. This is consistent with the literature, which shows that adaptive management requires an agile and enabling culture that allows organizations to use rapid feedback loops to continuously and efficiently process and build on new information to achieve overall goals.
5. **FINDING 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes.** The cases that comprise this finding describe how taking time to pause and reflect helps development actors better understand challenges and opportunities in their work, and co-create adaptations to facilitate improvement. Research shows that individuals learn the most from experience when they reflect on that experience, and reflecting as a group builds mutual understanding that fosters collaboration.
6. **FINDING 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale-up.** The cases that comprise this finding underscore how implementing a CLA approach can lead to increased CLA uptake, and potentially improve organizational and/or development outcomes. Some cases show a “demonstration effect,” whereby stakeholders learn about the

benefits of a CLA approach from another development actor and then adapt it to their own context. Notably, the literature review did not uncover any additional evidence supporting this finding.

7. **FINDING 7: Identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves responsiveness to changing contexts.** The cases that comprise this finding describe how scenario planning helps development actors forecast future events and identify opportunities and challenges that could influence the delivery of development assistance. Much of the research conducted on scenario planning comes from the business sector, but the literature indicates that scenario planning can improve financial performance.
8. **FINDING 8: Establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming.** The case that comprises this finding demonstrates that, through the process of developing, testing, and refining a theory of change, teams think more deeply about their assumptions and beliefs. This is consistent with the literature, which has found that such double-loop learning processes enable teams to more effectively adapt their programming.
9. **FINDING 9: CLA leads to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which contributes to improved organizational performance.** The case that comprises this finding demonstrates that when staff undertake a CLA approach, this process of meaningfully engaging in their work can be fulfilling individually and positive for the organization as well. This is consistent with a growing body of evidence that recognizes employee engagement as critical to successful organizational performance.
10. **FINDING 10: Upfront investment in CLA can lead to increased efficiency over time.** The cases that comprise this illustrate how implementing a CLA approach can highlight the potential to capitalize on CLA to increase the efficiency and impact of work in other ways. A review of the literature reveals evidence of collaborating, learning, and adapting as separate activities leading to increased efficiency within organizations, but it has not yet uncovered evidence regarding the increase of organizational efficiency as a result of CLA taken as a holistic approach.

Under what conditions does CLA contribute to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes?

The analysis validated findings from the 2015 Case Competition Analysis and EB4CLA evidence base indicating that CLA practices integrated into programming improve development outcomes, organizational outcomes, or both. Additionally, all cases reported both enablers (favorable conditions for CLA) and barriers (unfavorable conditions for CLA), and exploring these themes brought new insights to the analysis findings. While the presence of barriers did not necessarily preclude CLA, weak CLA efforts and a poor enabling environment led to challenges in achieving desired outcomes. The most commonly referenced barriers fell under several key themes:

- Teams were hard pressed to find resources (e.g., staff time and funding) to initiate CLA practices and make needed program improvements
- A lack of easily accessible information and standardized tools and platforms led to duplication of efforts and limited evidence of what worked to inform programming
- Partners did not have trusting relationships with one another, which was exacerbated by competition for scarce resources
- Stakeholders were not open to discussing uncomfortable topics, and reflective pauses generated anxiety

Similarly, while the presence of enablers did not guarantee the success of CLA, the cases indicated advantageous conditions for achieving desired outcomes when CLA approaches and the enabling environment for CLA were systematically and intentionally reinforced. The most commonly referenced enablers fell under several key themes:

- Partners developed trusting relationships as they worked together on shared challenges and goals
- Leadership and staff were committed to continuous learning and supportive of programmatic course corrections as needed

- Partners were open to reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of program implementation
- Teams generated and collected data as a learning tool to inform programmatic decisions

Implications and Considerations

The cases demonstrate that CLA begets more CLA in service of improved organizational and development outcomes. Based on this finding, CLA champions trying to introduce or expand CLA practice within their team or organization might consider:

- **Emphasizing what teams or organizations are already doing to collaborate, learn, and adapt** to further expand their practice in service of their objectives. This may also include putting CLA practices in terms that colleagues are more familiar with (such as thinking and working politically, locally led development, adaptive management, etc.).
- **Starting small, and showing what CLA looks like in action.** For example, starting small could be encouraging staff to take [five minutes at the end of a work day](#) to pause and reflect. Once people see the value of this, they may encourage others to do the same, or to incorporate this kind of practice at the team level at the beginning of staff meetings.
- **Beginning with the experience of CLA rather than the theory.** From the cases, it is clear that experiencing CLA helps people understand its value. Rather than beginning with the theory behind CLA or explaining the CLA framework in great depth, consider providing people with a taste of CLA by facilitating a learning-focused discussion.

Given that the most commonly found results chain in the cases involved the use of feedback loops to inform decision-making, technical specialists and learning advisors need to focus on how to manage feedback loops in a way that supports effective learning and adaptive management. Technical specialists and learning advisors might consider:

- **Starting with the end in mind.** Determine the critical decision points up front and identify the information needed to support evidence-based decision-making.
- **Ensuring teams have an opportunity to reflect and internalize data** in order to determine actions and get to evidence-based decision-making.

Some of the cases, particularly under the local ownership finding, show that CLA supports the Agency's strategic focus on self-reliance. With this in mind, **leaders and technical specialists should invest in resourcing effective collaboration, organizational learning, and adaptive management in service of the journey to self-reliance.** USAID cannot support countries on that journey without working in partnership with local stakeholders and the private sector, understanding local contexts, and continuously improving programming in order to achieve greater local ownership, and the cases in this analysis demonstrate CLA's contribution to those ends.

I. INTRODUCTION

The CLA framework and associated [CLA Maturity Toolkit](#) explain what collaborating, learning, and adapting are in the USAID context, but USAID/PPL and LEARN are often asked what CLA looks like on the ground. To help answer this question, 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 cases were submitted; by 2018, annual submissions had more than doubled to 127 entries. Many of these cases provide excellent examples of CLA in action, showcasing how incorporating CLA approaches into programming can better enable teams to achieve their desired results.

In 2015, LEARN conducted an [analysis](#) of a sample of CLA cases to synthesize learning about CLA approaches and their contributions to organizational change and/or development outcomes. The analysis was designed to inform USAID staff and implementing partners about the range and effects of CLA practices and how they may support their work. The 2015 analysis found five general findings – or results chains – common across multiple cases; these results chains demonstrated how CLA practices contributed to improved organizational outcomes and/or development results. Based on these findings, the research team noted several implications and considerations. USAID should consider working towards:

- Emphasizing what teams or organizations are already doing to collaborate, learn, and adapt.
- Creating opportunities for others to experience and learn about effective CLA.
- Ensuring teams have an opportunity to reflect and internalize data.
- Resourcing effective collaboration, organizational learning, and adaptive management in service of the journey to self-reliance.

In 2018, LEARN conducted a new CLA Case Competition Analysis, which is the basis of this report. This analysis took a fresh look at a larger sample of cases submitted from 2015–2017 to reassess the evidence of results chains in strong CLA cases, as well as to explore enablers and barriers to CLA that contribute to organizational and/or development outcomes. The Methods section below provides more information about the research questions, data, and analysis.¹

These analyses are part of a broader area of work known as the evidence base for CLA ([EB4CLA](#)), spearheaded by USAID/PPL and LEARN. Evidence collected and generated under the EB4CLA initiative has sought to answer key learning questions, such as: *Does an intentional, systematic, and resourced approach to CLA contribute to organizational and/or development outcomes? If so, how? And under what conditions?* These questions have also guided the research questions in both Case Competition Analyses.

II. METHODS

Guiding Questions

The 2015-2017 Case Competition Analysis sought to answer two key research questions:

1. What patterns of contribution emerge from an analysis of results chains across strong CLA cases?
2. Under what conditions does CLA contribute to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes?

About the Research Team

The research team consisted of five LEARN staff with extensive experience in monitoring, evaluation, and CLA practice in development programs. Meghan Jutras and Katherine Haugh, both Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) Specialists, were the primary authors of the report. Kristin Lindell (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research (MERL) Manager), Monalisa Salib (Deputy Chief of Party) and Ilana Shapiro (independent consultant) were secondary authors. All of the authors have expertise in evaluating development programming and experience integrating CLA into development activities. Meghan and Katherine collaboratively oversaw and conducted all phases of the coding, analysis, and writing. Kristin Lindell provided quality control and guidance throughout the process.

Case Selection and Description of the Dataset

All cases were self-reports written by USAID staff or implementing partners. Each case addressed several questions, such as⁴:

- 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, challenges/obstacles, or enabling factors)?
- What have been the most significant outcomes, results, or impacts of the activity or approach to date?
- What were the most important lessons learned?

A panel of PPL and LEARN judges reviewed and assigned each case a score based on clarity, analysis, completeness, creativity, and replicability.

The team conducted a qualitative analysis to highlight common themes and patterns of CLA in action across a sample of the highest rated 83 cases from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 CLA Case Competitions. The team selected 83 case studies to review based on guidance from prominent case study methodologists such as Robert Yin⁵ who advocates for looking at multiple case studies through replication logic. This approach focuses on the role of 'saturation' in determining the number of cases and using a results chain analysis to make analytical generalizations. The team reached adequate 'saturation' with 83 case studies in order to draw conclusions in their analysis. The saturation rate was initially validated by looking at the highest scoring cases and establishing a cutoff score; it was then confirmed through the results chain coding process (see below).⁶

Twenty-seven cases came from USAID missions and 56 from implementing partners. Some cases were generally focused on international development or were not sector-specific; these are termed “other” in the graphic below (14 cases, 17%). Others were sector-specific; common sectors of focus included global health (13 cases, 16%), food security and nutrition (11 cases, 13%), and democracy, human rights, and governance (11 cases, 13%). They included projects using CLA approaches in more than 42 countries across five regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas, and Europe). Six cases (7%) were global in focus.

FIGURE 1. The majority of case submissions (59%) were in Global Health; Food Security & Nutrition; Democracy, Human Rights, & Governance; or were not sector-specific.

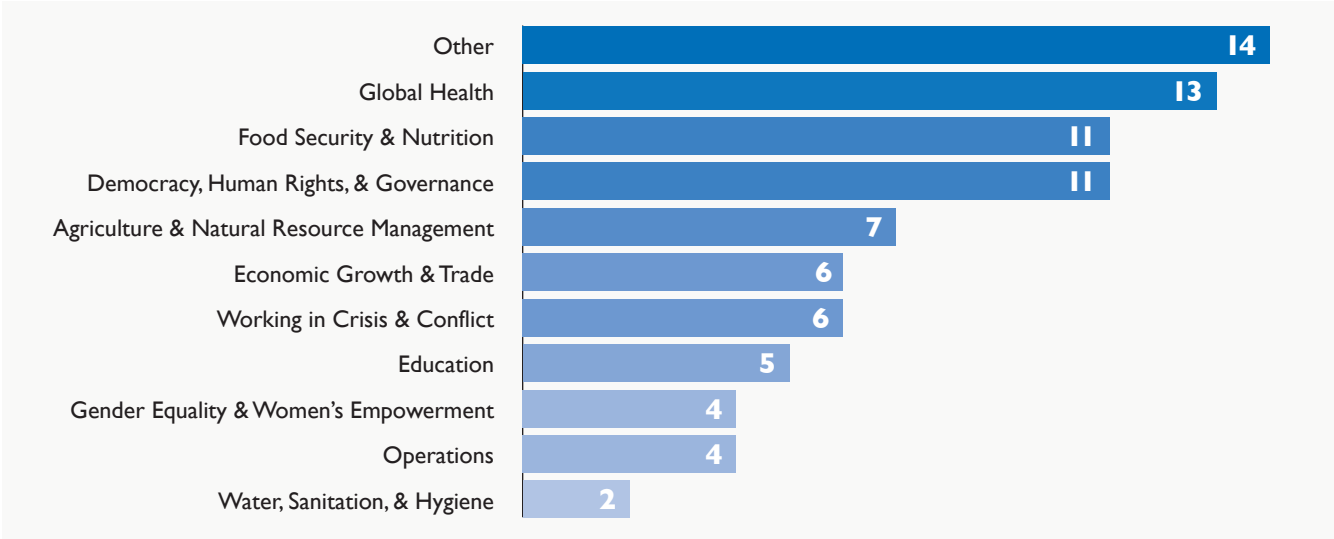
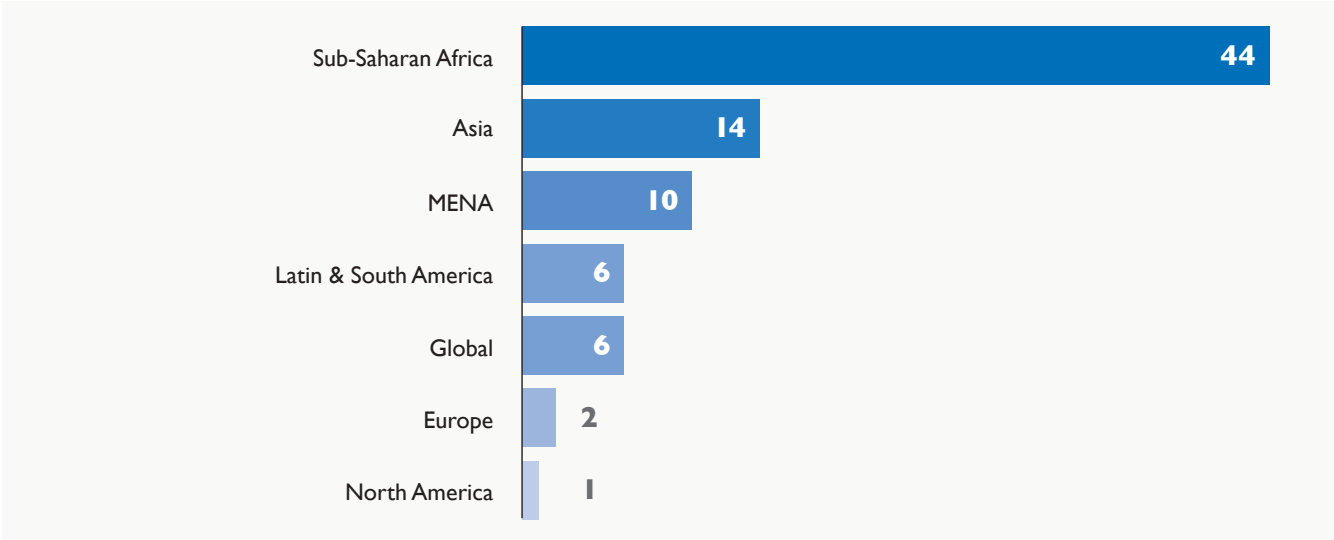


FIGURE 2. The analysis included CLA cases from more than 42 countries.



Data Analysis

To address the research questions, the team used two data analysis approaches:

- Deductive and inductive coding of results chains (key findings) to identify how CLA approaches contributed to organizational change and development outcomes
- Thematic coding of enablers and barriers that contributed to outcomes

Deductive and inductive coding of results chains: To better understand how CLA approaches contributed to organizational change or development outcomes, researchers used a blended deductive and inductive analysis approach to examine each case, using an analysis template in Google Sheets. As in the [2015 Case Competition Analysis](#), the researchers coded the sequence of events in each case narrative to ascertain the results chain and underlying assumptions about how change happened. The researchers then looked across cases to validate existing results chains and patterns of how CLA contributed to organizational and development outcomes, as well as note any new trends.

Thematic coding of enablers and barriers: To determine under what conditions CLA contributes to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes, the researchers thematically coded the enablers and barriers that contributed to the specific outcomes of each case. Enablers indicate the presence of favorable conditions for CLA, while barriers indicate the lack of those conditions. Researchers initially drew enablers and barriers from the 2015 analysis, then added some new categories from the [CLA Framework](#), a [literature review](#), [analysis of FEVs data](#), the [CLA Deep Dive on Ebola](#), and as they emerged during the analysis. Researchers conducted this coding using the same analysis template in Google Sheets, and, where possible, consolidated similar codes to identify patterns among the cases. In many cases, the authors themselves noted enablers and barriers, so the researchers reviewed these and accepted or revised the attributions as appropriate for coding. The addition of CLA enablers and barriers as a point of analysis brought new insights to the findings.

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 and/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 shared Google Sheets templates for analysis 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 CLA; and the wide range of activities, projects, and contexts imposed limits on cross-case comparison. In addition, this study was a secondary analysis of cases written for a different purpose (i.e., the Case Competition) that addressed some questions different from those posed by this analysis. The researchers did not have access to data beyond the self-reported cases for this analysis and could not verify claims about their CLA practices or activity/project outcomes.

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.

Lastly, the process and findings from the 2015 Case Competition Analysis informed this analysis. However, because this analysis includes cases from the 2015 analysis, making direct comparisons between the two analyses could be misleading. Each analysis should be considered on its own.

CLA in the Program Cycle

Enabling Conditions



Collaborating

Internal Collaboration

1. Identify and prioritize other teams/offices for strategic collaboration.
2. Decide how to engage those teams/offices.
3. Collaborate with those teams/offices based on decisions reached.

External Collaboration

1. Identify and prioritize key stakeholders for strategic collaboration.
2. Decide how to engage key stakeholders.
3. Collaborate with key stakeholders based on decisions reached.



Learning

Technical Evidence Base

1. Track the technical evidence base.
2. Apply the technical evidence base in planning and implementation.
3. Contribute to/expand the technical evidence base.

Theories of Change

1. Quality of theories of change.
2. Testing and exploration of theories of change.
3. Awareness among stakeholders about theories of change and the learning that results from testing them.

Scenario Planning

1. Identify risks and opportunities through scenario planning.
2. Monitor trends related to scenarios.
3. Respond to and apply learning from monitoring.

M&E for Learning

1. Relevance of monitoring data to decision-making.
2. Design and conduct evaluations to inform ongoing and future programming.
3. Align monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts across the strategy, project, and activity levels.



Adapting

Pause & Reflect

1. Variety and purpose of pause & reflect opportunities.
2. Timeliness of pause & reflect opportunities to inform decision-making.
3. Quality of pause & reflect opportunities.

Adaptive Management

1. Analyze learning from implementation and/or pause & reflect opportunities.
2. Inform decision-making.
3. Follow through on decisions reached to manage adaptively.



Culture

Openness

1. Sense of comfort in sharing opinions and ideas.
2. Openness to hearing alternative perspectives.
3. Willingness to take action on new ideas.

Relationships & Networks

1. Development of trusting relationships.
2. Exchange of up-to-date information.
3. Use of networks across the system to expand situational awareness.

Continuous Learning & Improvement

1. Staff take time for learning and reflection.
2. Motivation for learning.
3. Use of iterative approaches that enables continuous improvement.



Processes

Knowledge Management

1. Source various types of knowledge from stakeholders.
2. Distill knowledge.
3. Share knowledge with stakeholders.

Institutional Memory

1. Access to institutional knowledge.
2. Staff transitions.
3. Contributions of Foreign Service Nationals to institutional memory.

Decision-Making

1. Awareness of decision-making processes.
2. Autonomy to make decisions.
3. Appropriate stakeholder involvement in decision-making.



Resources

Mission Resources

1. Roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis CLA.
2. Professional development in CLA.
3. Procurement of CLA support.

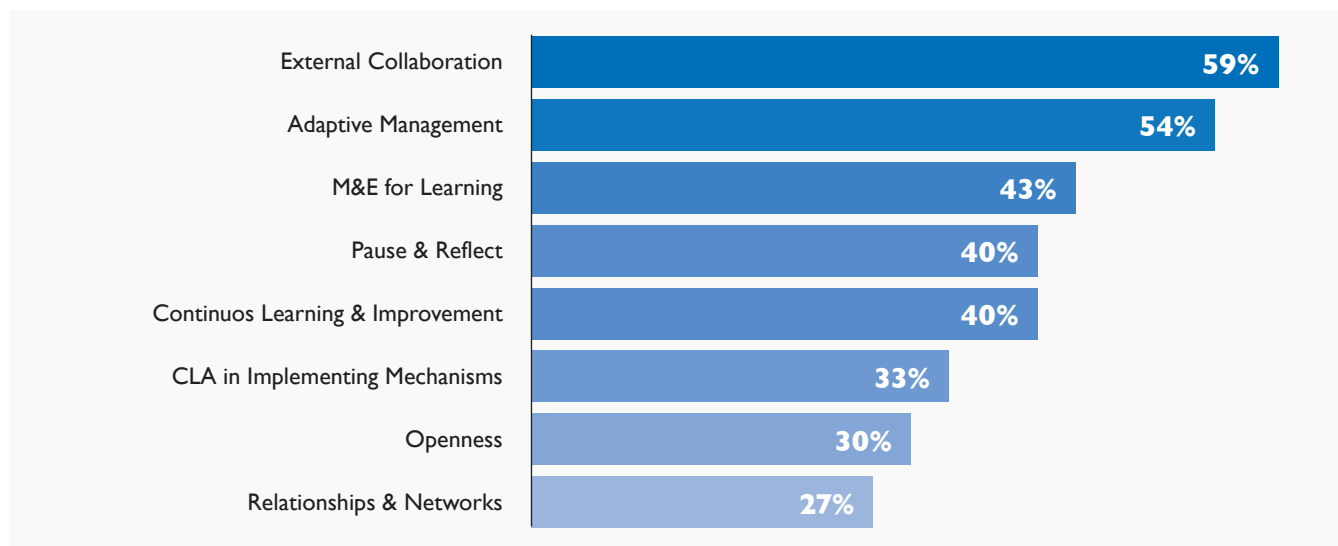
CLA in Implementing Mechanisms

1. Mechanism type and scope enables CLA.
2. Budgeting.
3. Staff composition and skills.

III. KEY FINDINGS

In answering the first research question, the team coded cases to a total of 10 results chains that were developed during and after the 2015 Case Competition Analysis [based on existing evidence](#). Out of 83 cases, 63 (76%) were coded at one or more results chains. Across the 63 cases that were coded at a results chain, most of the cases (23 cases, 36.5%) were coded at “feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making.” Further details about each results chain are presented below as Findings 1–10. Note that Findings 7–10 had two or fewer cases coded to those results chains. These emerging findings have been included as they validated theories of additional results chains drawn from the literature review and 2015 Case Competition Analysis, even though there were limited case examples observed in this analysis.

FIGURE 4. The figure below shows the eight CLA approaches (out of a total of 16) found most frequently in the cases reviewed. Out of the total 83 cases, the majority included External Collaboration (59% or 49 cases), Adaptive Management (54% or 45 cases), and M&E for Learning practices (43% or 36 cases). The subcomponents that appeared least frequently were Scenario Planning (7% or 6 cases), Theories of Change (10% or 8 cases), and Mission Resources (12% or 10 cases).



To help answer the second research question, the team looked at whether CLA integration in the cases contributed to organizational outcomes, development outcomes, or both. Eighty-five percent (54 of the 63) of cases (uniquely counted) resulted in improved organizational outcomes. Thirty-nine percent (25 of the 63) of cases (uniquely counted) resulted in improved development outcomes. Twenty-eight percent (15 of the 63) of cases resulted in both improved organizational and development outcomes.

The analysis of enablers and barriers also helped answer the second research question: Under what conditions did CLA contribute to improved organizational effectiveness and/or better development outcomes? While the presence of enablers did not guarantee the success of CLA, the cases indicated advantageous conditions for achieving desired outcomes when CLA approaches and the enabling environment for CLA were systematically and intentionally reinforced. Across all cases, the enablers coded most often were related to the following:

- Partners developed trusting relationships as they worked together on shared challenges and goals (45 cases, 54%). This reflects the Relationships & Networks subcomponent of the CLA framework.

- Leadership and staff were committed to continuous learning and supportive of making programmatic course corrections as needed (40 cases, 48%). This reflects the Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponent of the CLA framework.
- Partners were open to reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of program implementation (36 cases, 43%). This reflects the Openness subcomponent of the CLA framework.
- Teams generated and collected data as a learning tool to inform programmatic decisions (28 cases, 34%).

Similarly, while the presence of barriers did not necessarily preclude CLA, the cases indicated challenges in achieving desired outcomes when CLA efforts and the enabling environment for CLA were weak or nonexistent. The barriers coded most often across all cases were related to the following:

- Teams were hard pressed to find resources (e.g. staff time and funding) to initiate CLA practices and make needed program improvements (17 cases, 20%). This reflects the Resources component of the CLA framework.
- A lack of easily accessible information and standardized tools and platforms led to the duplication of efforts and limited evidence of what worked to inform programming (16 cases, 19%). This reflects the Knowledge Management subcomponent of the CLA framework.
- Partners did not have trusting relationships with one another, which was exacerbated by competition for scarce resources (15 cases, 18%). This reflects the Relationships & Networks subcomponent of the CLA framework.
- Stakeholders were not open to discussing uncomfortable topics and reflective pauses generated anxiety (14 cases, 17%). This reflects the Openness subcomponent of the CLA framework.

Linking CLA Approaches to Outcomes



FINDING I: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit (14 cases).

Fourteen of the 63 cases coded to a results chain show how collaboration helps reduce duplication of effort, leverage resources, and contribute to collective outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. Identify common interests

a. Partners come together to discuss challenges impeding the achievement of a shared goal.

2. Agree on individual contributions/value-add

a. Partners consider their comparative advantages and decide upon contributions

3. Implement contributions for collective benefit

a. Partners implement their agreed upon contributions (e.g. provide funds toward the shared goal)

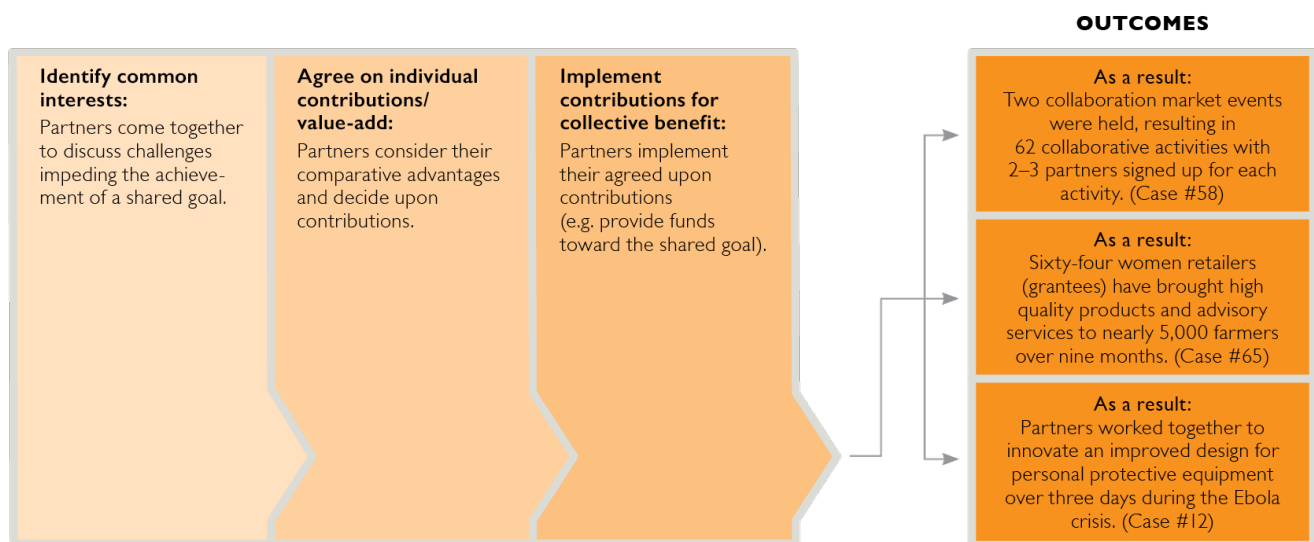
4. Outcome Examples:

a. Two collaboration market events were held, resulting in 62 collaborative activities with 2–3 partners signed up for each activity. (Case #58)

b. Sixty-four women retailers (grantees) have brought high quality products and advisory services to nearly 5,000 farmers over nine months. (Case #65)

c. Partners worked together to innovate an improved design for personal protective equipment over three days during the Ebola crisis. (Case #12)

FINDING I: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.



The cases that comprise this finding illustrate how collaboration helps development actors to identify their respective comparative advantages in working towards a common goal. Stakeholders divvy up responsibilities according to their respective strengths: each stakeholder may provide funding, human resources, materials, and/or other contributions. This collaboration contributes to mutually beneficial organizational and/or development outcomes that may not have occurred otherwise.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

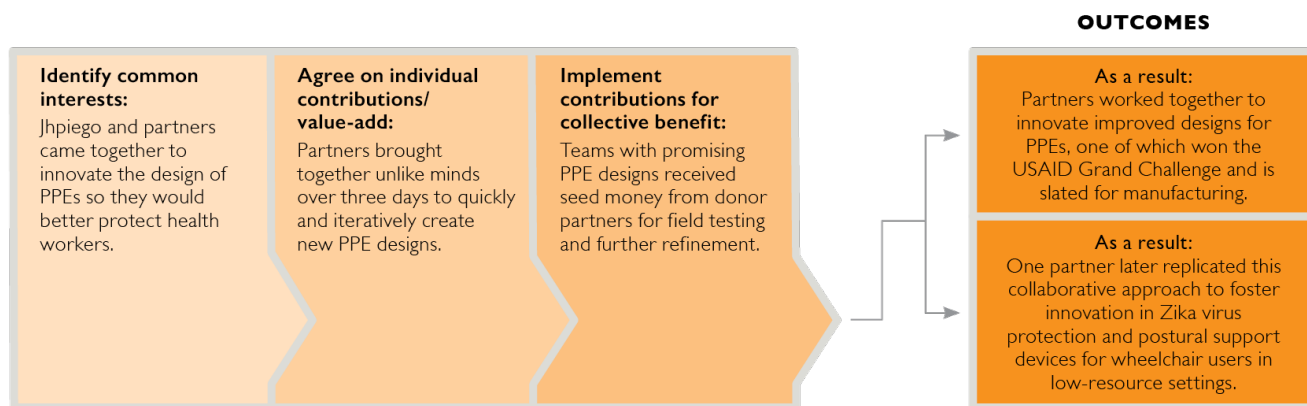
The following cases illustrate this finding.

I. [Emergency Ebola Design Challenge: Crowdsourcing for Innovation \(Case #12\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** By the end of 2014, more than 14,000 cases of Ebola were recorded in West Africa, of which more than 5,000 had resulted in death. The severity of the outbreak gravely affected health workers in the region, who needed more effective personal protective equipment (PPE) to treat patients safely and effectively.
- **CLA Approach:** In 2014, USAID and partners launched The Ebola Grand Challenge to encourage crowdsourcing, competition, and partnerships to innovatively address barriers faced by health care workers in combating the Ebola epidemic and better prepare for future outbreaks. An implementing partner, Jhpiego, realized that one of the major challenges in protecting health workers caring for those with Ebola was the outdated design of PPEs, and that the flaws were an opportunity for innovation. Jhpiego harnessed existing relationships and brought together “unlike minds” to create viable prototypes of PPEs over the course of a three day event. Partners worked together to innovate improved designs for PPEs, one of which won the USAID Grand Challenge and is slated for manufacturing.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Two main barriers posed challenges for the partners’ collaborative work. The speed and severity of the outbreak threatened the health and well-being of people in West Africa. The rapid onset of the crisis necessitated that the design event had to be organized and carried out in less than two weeks, and some desired staff were not able to attend.
 - Many enablers contributed to the success reported in this case. Jhpiego decision-makers gathered evidence about problems with the existing PPE design to identify an opportunity for innovation, and the organization harnessed its networks for collaborators. Partners then co-created the design event and sourced various types of knowledge from diverse participants. Teams worked with a sense of urgency and cooperation given the crisis. Funding was available to continue to support design teams after the event to further test and refine their concepts. These enablers reflect the Technical Evidence Base, Relationships & Networks, External Collaboration, Knowledge Management, and CLA in Implementing Mechanisms subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Identify common interests: Jhpiego and partners came together to innovate the design of PPEs so they would better protect health workers.
 - Agree on individual contributions/value-add: Partners brought together “unlike minds” over three days to quickly and iteratively create new PPE designs.
 - Implement contributions for collective benefit: Teams with promising PPE designs received seed money from donor partners for field testing and further refinement.
 - Outcomes
 - Partners worked together to innovate improved designs for PPEs, one of which won the USAID Grand Challenge and is slated for manufacturing.
 - One partner later replicated this collaborative approach to foster innovation in Zika virus protection and postural support devices for wheelchair users in low-resource settings.

FINDING I: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.

STRONG CASE #1



2. [Encouraging a CLA Culture \(Case #58\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Rural areas of the Sahel suffer hardships such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, poor governance, and gender inequality, which are exacerbated by population growth, climate change, and a growing dependency on food markets. These factors dampen community resilience and make even relatively small shocks potentially very harmful. USAID's RISE (Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced) initiative includes 28 projects being implemented in Niger and Burkina Faso, and project coverage often overlaps without systematic sharing of information about interventions, challenges, successes, and failures. The SAREL (Sahel Resilience Learning) project was designed to provide M&E, collaboration, and learning support to RISE, strengthening the capacity of the project and stakeholders to engage in adaptive, evidence-based learning.
- **CLA Approach:** SAREL took a participatory approach to co-designing its CLA activities, consulting with nearly all of the 33 implementing partners (IPs) host government bodies, and USAID. SAREL organized CLA forums, workshops, training sessions, and online discussions to enable learning, programmatic adaptation, and collaborative action. These efforts focused on the vision for RISE, resilience-enhancing practices being implemented, experiences and lessons learned, and gaps in participation and ownership. Exchanges through the different CLA events such as "collaboration markets" helped SAREL and RISE partners better understand these points, identify successful practices to scale up, and create strategic collaborations.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Barriers: Initially, there was no active, deliberate effort to share information with projects tackling similar challenges in the same area, and this lack of coordination resulted in duplication of efforts. While SAREL recognized the need for a CLA approach, this concept was new to many and required a great deal of face-time and dialogue, which was challenging for a small project covering two countries with few staff. These barriers reflect the Relationships & Networks, Knowledge Management, and CLA in Implementing Mechanisms subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Enablers: Strong support from USAID helped convince the IPs and government of the value of the CLA events. As partners had more opportunities for exchange, they became more open about their successes and challenges, built trust, and elicited feedback from other stakeholders. These enablers reflect the External Collaboration, Relationships & Networks, and Openness subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Identify common interests: The SAREL team took a participatory approach to co-creating CLA activities, consulting with 33 IPs, host government, and USAID.
 - Agree on individual contributions/value-add: Exchanges through the CLA events helped partners better understand key issues, identify successful practices to expand and scale up, and create strategic collaborations that enable everyone to use their comparative advantages.

- Implement contributions for collective benefit: SAREL has observed increased collaboration among stakeholders and better documentation of promising practices.
- Outcomes
 - Two CLA events called “collaboration markets” were held, resulting in 62 collaborative activities, with 2–3 partners signed up for each activity.
 - IPs began to put their own resources towards knowledge exchange and collaborative activities as it became clear that sharing information, learning from others, and collaborating made their work more efficient, more cost-effective, and more effective.

FINDING 1: Collaboration leverages resources for collective benefit.

STRONG CASE #2



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. 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.

Collaborative organizations were also found to be more successful because relationships among individuals and groups are important for the innovation, creation, and distribution of knowledge. By collaborating effectively, groups and teams develop “transactive (or shared) memory systems,” which enable better group goal performance.

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. As demonstrated above, collaboration leads to specific benefits when intentionally and systematically applied.



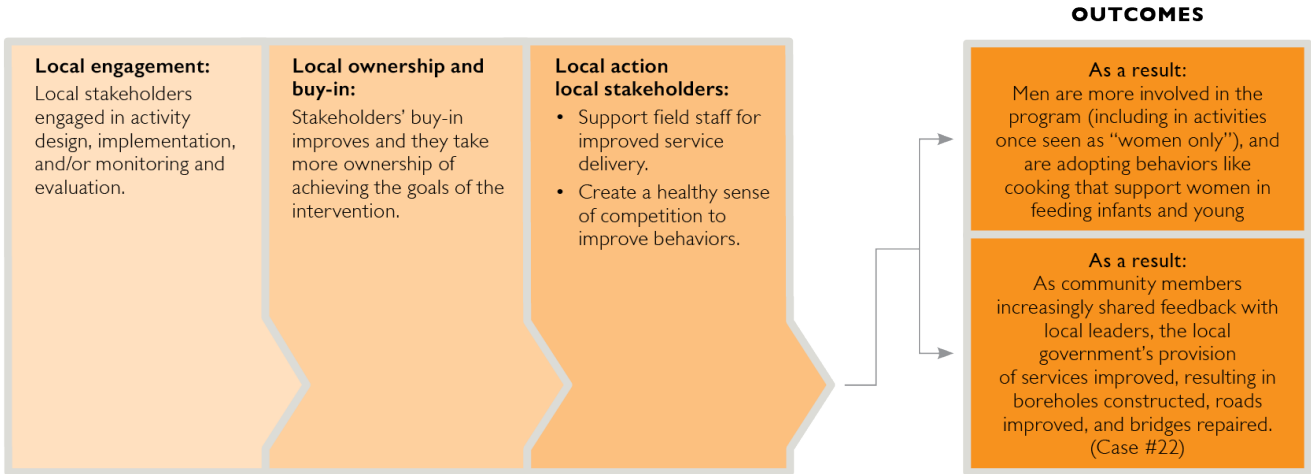
FINDING 2: Local engagement leads to local ownership and, ultimately, improved development outcomes (3 cases).

Three of the 63 cases coded to a results chain show how local engagement leads to local ownership and can ultimately improve development outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

- 1. Local engagement**
 - b. Local stakeholders engaged in the design, implementation, and/or activity monitoring and evaluation
- 2. Local ownership and buy-in**
 - a. Stakeholders' buy-in improves, and they take more ownership of achieving the goals of the intervention
- 3. Local action**
 - a. Local stakeholders:
 - i. Support field staff for improved service delivery
 - ii. Create a healthy sense of competition to improve behaviors
- 4. Outcome Examples:**
 - a. Men are more involved in the program (including in activities once seen as "women only") and are adopting behaviors like cooking that support women in feeding infants and young children. (Case #43)
 - b. As community members increasingly shared feedback with local leaders, the local government's provision of services improved, resulting in boreholes constructed, roads improved, and bridges repaired. (Case #22)

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



The cases that shaped this finding report improved development outcomes resulting from collaboration with beneficiaries. When organizations invite local stakeholders to participate in program activities, they can become more committed to and engaged in identifying sustainable solutions to community challenges.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

The following cases illustrate this finding.

- I. [Stop, reflect, improve: Using CLA to engage men to improve women and children's health \(Case #43\)](#)
 - **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In the patriarchal communities of western Zimbabwe, men exert significant influence over mothers' ability to feed children and the related choices mothers make as caregivers. Two years into implementation of its Amalima program, the Manoff Group found that activities had positively impacted key behaviors such as exclusive breastfeeding, but the quality of individual breastfeeding sessions had not improved. Male participation in activities was low and their opinions of mothers' breastfeeding times caused women to shorten these sessions at the expense of infant nutrition.
 - **CLA Approach:** The team explored reasons why men were not active supporters of exclusive breastfeeding through research and consultations with men and women about breastfeeding practices. Recognizing the need to directly engage men in their efforts, the team designed the Male Involvement Campaign with activities tailored to appeal to men and led by male champions. Men in the campaign area are now practicing supportive behaviors for infant and young children's nutrition, and have adopted additional promoted behaviors like cooking.
 - How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - A few barriers presented challenges in this case. Recognizing that they needed to revise their activities after implementation was well underway, the program team had limited time for staff to pause and reflect on how to make improvements. Staff and financial resources had to be reconfigured to undertake additional field work. Lastly, the team had to be sensitive to cultural differences around nutrition practices and men's involvement in certain program activities. These barriers reflect the Pause & Reflect and CLA in Implementing Mechanisms subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers contributed to the outcomes reported in this case. The program team was open to admitting that the program could be better and was committed to trying out new ideas to continue learning and identify opportunities for improvement. The team also had the support of leadership to reassess how to better engage men and allocate funding to make program course corrections. The team conducted stakeholder interviews to inform the design of the Male Involvement Campaign and subsequently assess the results of pilot and control groups following the intervention. Men were engaged in deciding on the feasibility and social acceptability of supportive practices, and many were included in the campaign as champions. These enablers reflect the Openness, Adaptive Management, External Collaboration, Decision Making, and Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Local engagement: Men and women from the community were engaged in participatory consultations about nutrition practices, which informed the design of the Male Involvement Campaign.
 - Local ownership and buy-in: The campaign focused on male champions and activities designed to appeal to men. Couples showcased their participation by sharing testimonials with their community.
 - Local action: The program reached 800 men in six months, and men in the campaign area are more involved in the program, including in activities once seen as "women only."
 - Outcomes
 - Men in the campaign area are practicing supportive behaviors for infant and young children's nutrition, and have adopted additional promoted behaviors like cooking.

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

STRONG CASE #1



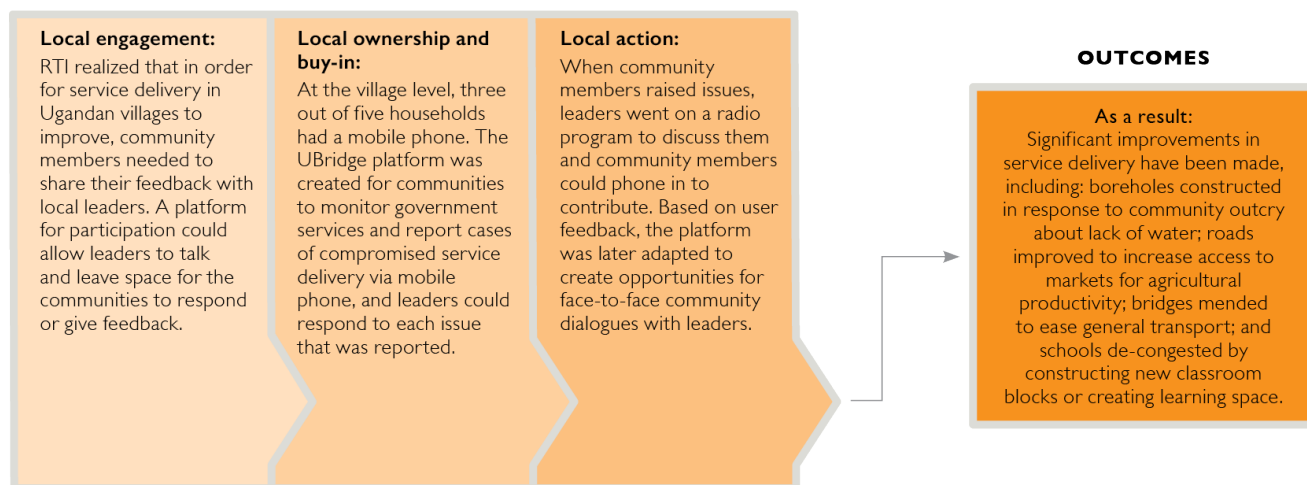
2. [Enhancing Dialogue between Communities and their Leaders to Improve Service Delivery \(Case #22\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Uganda has a decentralized system of governance, which means that local government structures are responsible for ensuring social services reach people living at the lowest governance level: the village. However, in order for leaders to make sure villagers are receiving social services, they need to communicate and get feedback from beneficiaries. During community meetings, people went to hear from leaders rather than engage with them. In many cases, communities did not know that services could be improved.
- **CLA Approach:** To facilitate the process of engagement, the Governance, Accountability, Participation, and Performance (GAPP) program developed the UBridge platform to allow communities and their leaders to discuss different aspects of service delivery. The platform enabled communities to monitor government services and report cases of compromised service delivery; leaders, in turn, were able to respond to each issue that was reported. Notable improvements in service delivery have been made, such as boreholes constructed in response to community outcry about lack of water; roads improved to increase access to markets for agricultural productivity; bridges mended to ease general transport; and schools de-congested by new classroom blocks or learning spaces.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Barriers: Initially, communities did not know they had rights to demand that service provision could be improved, and were unaware of full range of government services and projects. This barrier reflects the Knowledge Management subcomponent of the CLA framework.
 - Enablers: An existing knowledge sharing platform and in-house memory aided in the development of UBridge. The GAPP team engaged users (local leaders and community members) to learn what needed to be improved with the platform and adapted it accordingly. A critical collaboration with UNICEF helped UBridge use an existing platform that was more sustainable for the project. These enablers reflect the Knowledge Management, Continuous Learning & Improvement, Relationships & Networks, and External Collaboration subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Local engagement: RTI International realized that for service delivery in Ugandan villages to improve, community members needed to share their feedback with local leaders. A platform for participation could allow leaders to talk and leave space for the communities to respond or give feedback.
 - Local ownership and buy-in: At the village level, three out of five households had a mobile phone. The UBridge platform was created for communities to monitor government services and report cases of compromised service delivery via mobile phone, and leaders could respond to each issue that was reported.

- Local action: When community members raised issues, leaders went on a radio program to discuss them and community members could phone in to contribute. Based on user feedback, the platform was later adapted to create opportunities for face-to-face community dialogues with leaders.
- Outcomes
 - Significant improvements in service delivery have been made, including boreholes constructed in response to community outcry about lack of water; roads improved to increase access to markets for agricultural productivity; bridges mended to ease general transport; and schools de-congested by constructing new classroom blocks or creating learning space.

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

STRONG CASE #2



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.

Development, thus far, has predominantly been led by Northern organizations that often 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, locally negotiated, and locally delivered. This approach can lead to more effective development.



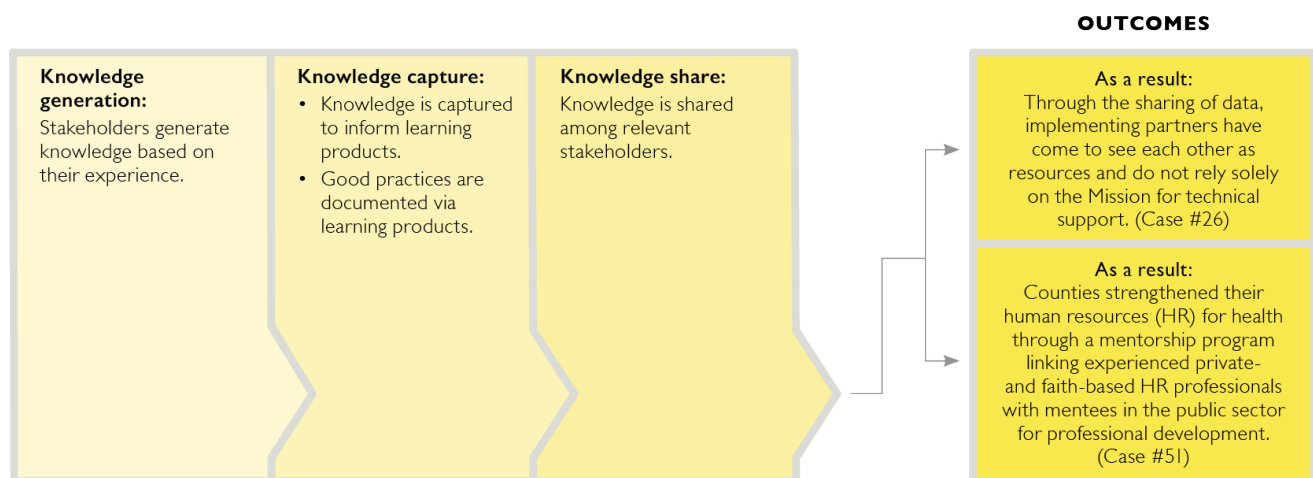
FINDING 3: Intentional knowledge management generates standard good practices for broader application (11 cases).

Eleven of the 63 cases coded to a results chain show how intentional knowledge management generates good practices for broader application.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. **Knowledge generation**
 - a. Stakeholders generate knowledge based on their experience
2. **Knowledge capture**
 - a. Knowledge captured to inform learning products
 - b. Good practices documented via learning products
3. **Knowledge share**
 - a. Knowledge shared among relevant stakeholders
4. **Outcome Examples:**
 - a. Through the sharing of data, implementing partners have come to see each other as resources and do not rely solely on the Mission for technical support. (Case #26)
 - b. Review and revision of Program Office processes resulted in combining 12 different approval documents into one and streamlining work processes for staff, significantly improving clearance timelines. (Case #16)
 - c. Counties strengthened their human resources (HR) for health through a mentorship program linking experienced private- and faith-based HR professionals with mentees in the public sector for professional development. (Case #51)

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



The cases that shaped this finding demonstrate how knowledge generation, capture, and sharing can contribute to improvements at the organizational level when this knowledge is applied. Knowledge dissemination can also lead to scale-up and improved development outcomes.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

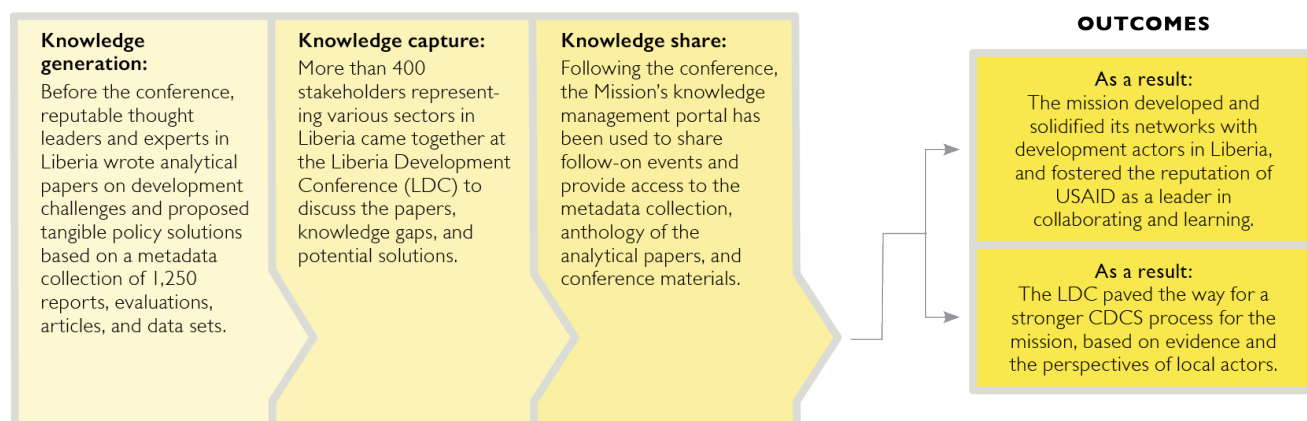
The following cases illustrate this finding.

I. [Development Conference Builds Technical Evidence Base in Liberia \(Case #37\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Information about the efficacy of development programming at the country level in Liberia is difficult to come by. All actors need this information to build on past successes, learn from past failures, and take a well-informed and collaborative approach to spearheading the development of the country.
- **CLA Approach:** USAID/Liberia and Social Impact organized the first Liberia Development Conference (LDC) with the theme “Engendering collective action for advancing Liberia’s development.” The conference was an opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders, present evidence on Liberia’s development challenges and potential solutions, share knowledge with stakeholders, and integrate this information into the redesign of the Mission’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Following the LDC, the mission developed and solidified its networks with development actors in Liberia and incorporated the perspectives of local actors in the CDCS.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - There were two initial barriers that the mission and Social Impact sought to overcome. After years of development work, the efficacy of development programs in Liberia was difficult to ascertain due to limited and inaccessible information. Development work was often not based on evidence, due to the difficulty accessing information and managers’ lack of experience using evidence to support individual experiences and opinions. These barriers reflect the Knowledge Management and Technical Evidence Base subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers contributed to the outcomes in this case. Mission leadership and staff were committed to the initiative and supported the conference planning and execution. The LDC provided a venue for the mission to develop and solidify relationships with development actors throughout Liberia, such as academia, the private sector, and political parties. The conference prioritized the engagement of all political parties in open discussion on Liberia’s development challenges, prompting them to think about how their platforms could address common issues. These enablers reflect the Relationships & Networks, External Collaboration, and Openness subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Knowledge generation: Before the conference, reputable thought leaders and experts in Liberia wrote analytical papers on development challenges and proposed tangible policy solutions based on a metadata collection of 1,250 reports, evaluations, articles, and data sets.
 - Knowledge capture: More than 400 stakeholders representing various sectors in Liberia came together at the LDC to discuss the papers, knowledge gaps, and potential solutions.
 - Knowledge share: Following the conference, the Mission’s KM portal has been used to share ensuing events and provide access to the metadata collection, anthology of the analytical papers, and conference materials.
 - Outcomes
 - The mission developed and solidified its networks with development actors in Liberia, and fostered the reputation of USAID as a leader in collaborating and learning.
 - The LDC paved the way for a stronger CDCS process for the mission, based on evidence and the perspectives of local actors.

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

STRONG CASE #1



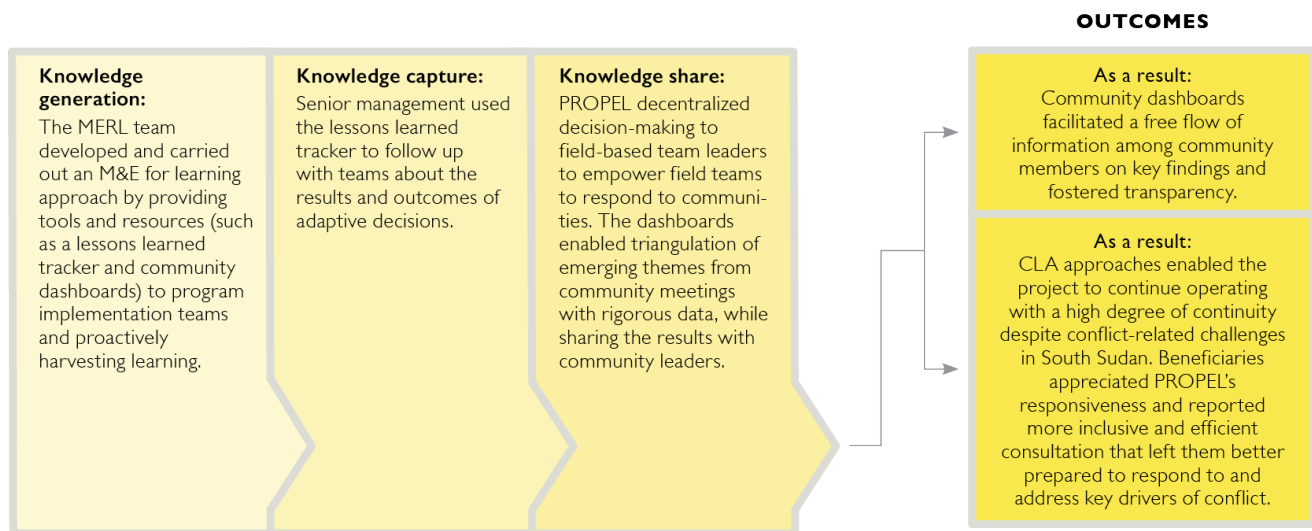
2. **Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting to Build Resilience in Fragile States (Case #86)**

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** South Sudan is experiencing violent conflict, economic collapse, famine, and displacement of over one-third of the population. The humanitarian crisis necessitates delivery of basic foods, medical services, and civilian protection, but the government lacks the capacity to deliver these services. The Promoting Resilience through Ongoing Participatory Engagement and Learning (PROPEL) project had to place a developmental focus on people subject to recurrent shocks and stresses, focusing on learning for adaptive management and testing the development hypothesis that vulnerable communities should serve as key actors and agents in their own future.
- **CLA Approach:** PROPEL implemented multiple CLA approaches. The monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) unit drove adaptive management through real-time reporting, facilitating staff reflection and action planning based on findings, and tracking follow-through on decisions. A baseline community mapping exercise gave community members and stakeholders the opportunity to collaborate and provide input. A learning agenda served to test the development hypothesis and pilot and document good practices for strengthening resilience. A lessons-learned tracker allowed the MERL team to harvest actionable learning with program teams, which senior management then used to follow up on adaptive decisions and outcomes. The community dashboard provided summary data that program teams could use to triangulate with community-led decision-making processes. These CLA approaches enabled the project to continue operating with a high degree of continuity despite conflict-related challenges in South Sudan.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:**
 - **Barriers:** The poor security situation in South Sudan resulted in shifting priorities, periods of uncertainty, and program interruptions. An overall reduction in donor funding and increasing focus on humanitarian assistance reduced opportunities to share learning. Multiple shifts in Mission priorities significantly affected CLA design, including cancellation of two target communities for learning and testing methods. These barriers reflect the CLA in Implementing Mechanisms subcomponent of the CLA framework.
 - **Enablers:** Staff use data from the community mapping exercise, stakeholder input, the lessons-learned tracker, and community tracker to make adaptive programming decisions. Program teams facilitate community-led decision-making through regular consultation with local stakeholders. Incorporating research into the MERL team (instead of outsourcing) allowed for ongoing gathering and applying of learning, as the team facilitated staff reflection and action planning based on findings. The Mission was committed in supporting PROPEL's efforts to adapt and improve rapidly. These enablers reflect the M&E for Learning, Decision Making, Continuous Learning & Improvement, and Adaptive Management subcomponents of the CLA framework.

- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Knowledge generation: The MERL team developed and carried out an M&E for learning approach by providing tools and resources (such as a lessons-learned tracker and community dashboards) to program implementation teams and proactively harvest learning.
 - Knowledge capture: Senior management used the lessons-learned tracker to follow up with teams about the results and outcomes of adaptive decisions.
 - Knowledge share: PROPEL decentralized decision-making to field-based team leaders to empower field teams to respond to communities. The dashboards enabled triangulation of emerging themes from community meetings with rigorous data, sharing the results with community leaders.
 - Outcomes
 - Community dashboards facilitated a free flow of information among community members on key findings and fostered transparency.
 - CLA approaches enabled the project to continue operating with a high degree of continuity despite conflict-related challenges in South Sudan. Beneficiaries appreciated PROPEL's responsiveness and reported more inclusive and efficient consultation that left them better prepared to respond to and address key drivers of conflict.

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

STRONG CASE #2



3. [USAID/Tanzania's Path-Breaking Program Funding Action Cover Sheet \(Case #16\)](#)

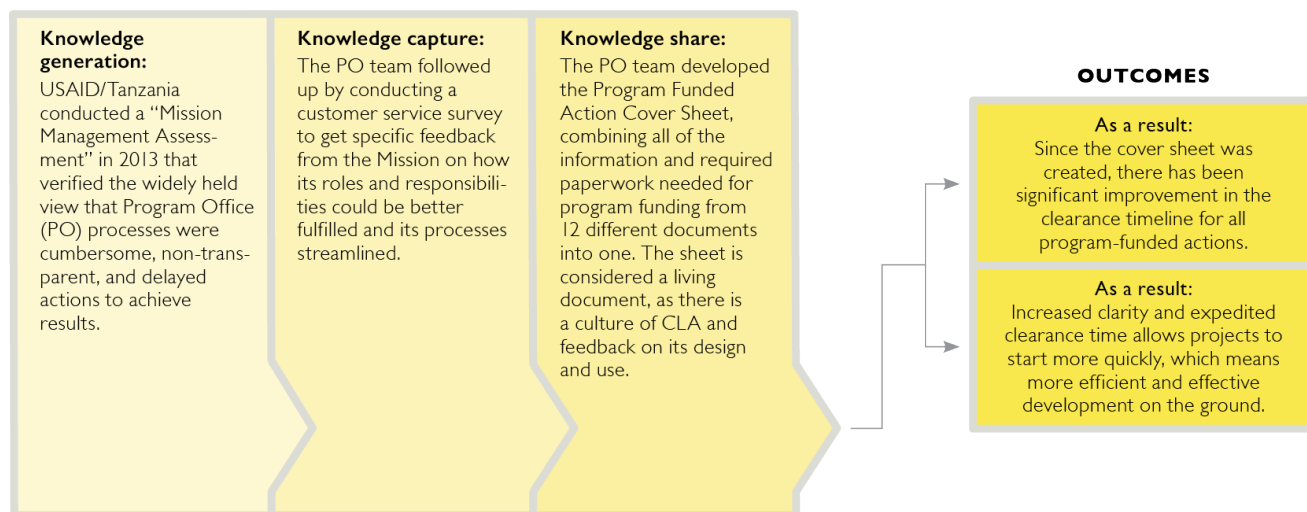
- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** USAID/Tanzania staff were frustrated by a seemingly non-transparent set of processes for applying to secure program funds for implementation. The process involved using 12 approval documents and was slow, unpredictable, and opaque.
- **CLA Approach:** The Mission held a pause and reflect moment by conducting a Mission Management Assessment in 2013 to assess their Program Office (PO) processes. They also conducted a survey to understand Mission staff's perspective on what they thought was not working and get their ideas for improvement. As a result, they combined the 12 approval documents into one and streamlined the program fund application process for all staff.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Barriers: The approval process to secure program funding was opaque and information about the steps in the process was scattered and disorganized. As a consequence, the process of getting funds was slow and

unpredictable. These barriers reflect the Knowledge Management and Mission Resources subcomponents of the CLA framework.

- Enablers: The Program Office team was open to change and Mission leadership gave staff the opportunity to decide what change they wanted to see. The team conducted an assessment and survey, and used this evidence to inform their course of action. Mission staff supported changes for a more streamlined, effective process, and the team was committed to continuing to learn and adapt. These enablers reflect the Internal Collaboration, M&E for Learning, and Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Knowledge generation: USAID/Tanzania conducted a “Mission Management Assessment” in 2013 that verified the widely held view that PO processes were cumbersome, non-transparent, and delayed actions to achieve results.
 - Knowledge capture: The PO team followed up by conducting a customer service survey to get specific feedback from the Mission on how its roles and responsibilities could be better fulfilled and its processes streamlined.
 - Knowledge share: The PO team developed the Program Funded Action Cover Sheet, combining all of the information and required paperwork needed for program funding from 12 different documents into one. The sheet is considered a living document, as there is a culture of CLA and feedback on its design and use.
 - Outcomes
 - Since the cover sheet was created, there has been significant improvement in the clearance timeline for all program-funded actions.
 - This has led to increased clarity and expedited clearance time: projects can start more quickly, which means more efficient and effective development on the ground.

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

STRONG CASE #3



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. Institutional memory resides in an organization's

documents, policies, and procedures, as well as within its staff, and it must be properly transferred when restructuring or staff transitions occur to maintain efficient and quality programming. 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.

A study conducted by RWTH Aachen University in Germany quantitatively tested the proposed relationship between knowledge management systems and ramp-up performance. The study showed a small but significant effect of knowledge management on the success of ramp-up projects. The researchers found strong linear relationships among 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. Such factors as company size, complexity of the product, or applied technology did not reveal significant influence.

META-THEME: INFORMATION THAT INTENTIONALLY ALIGNS WITH DECISION-MAKING LEADS TO MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING AND, EVENTUALLY, BETTER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.

Findings 4, 5, 7, and 8 below fit within the meta-theme that information, intentionally aligned with decision-making, leads to more effective programming and better development outcomes. The case *Shae Thot: Integrating Governance into Community-driven Development Programming in Myanmar (#52)* illustrates this meta-theme. As the country has transitioned to a more democratic system, Pact and its partners saw opportunities for township and village governance systems to engage their community members in reform efforts. The Shae Thot program mainstreamed a beneficiary feedback approach to inform decision-makers at the village level, and embarked on a Local Partners Initiative to engage CSOs. In response to shifting political dynamics in local governance, Shae Thot launched a political economy analysis to help inform strategic decision-making around its future work with local governments. Pact then conducted an evaluation to compare intervention and non-intervention areas; it found that the intervention areas had significant improvements in outcomes such as crop yields, access to clean water, and access to health services. Shae Thot has documented cases of positive outcomes where intentional feedback has led to meaningful inclusion of community voices in decision-making, both within the program and by local government leaders in intervention areas.



ADAPTING

FINDING 4: Feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making (24 cases).

Twenty-four of the 63 cases coded to a results chain show how feedback loops increase the likelihood that evidence will inform decision-making.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. Learning tool or process

- a. Creation of a tool to generate feedback

2. Feedback loop

- a. Feedback generated

3. Decision-making

- a. Feedback loops inform decision-making on a regular basis

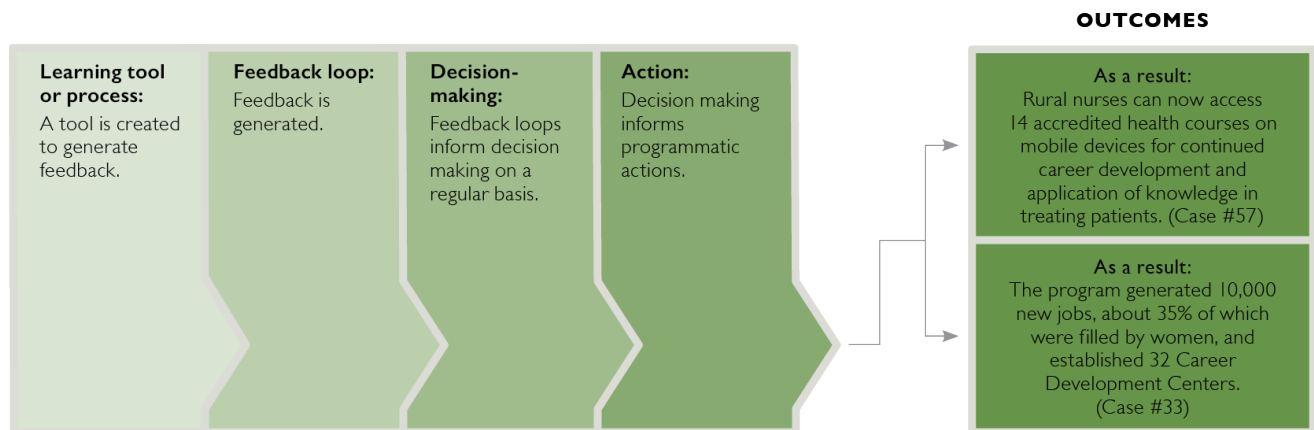
4. Action

- a. Decision-making informs programmatic actions

5. Outcome Examples:

- a. The State of the Mission has increased transparency and demonstrated USAID's commitment to its partnerships. It has also created opportunities for IPs to learn about others' activities, and these partners have increased collaboration with one another. (Case #99)
- b. Rural nurses can now access 14 accredited health courses on mobile devices for continued career development and application of knowledge in treating patients. (Case #57)
- c. The program generated 10,000 new jobs, about 35% of which were filled by women, and established 32 Career Development Centers. (Case #33)

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 that comprise this finding showcase this process and describe specific tools and processes for creating feedback loops that enable continuous learning to inform decision-making.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

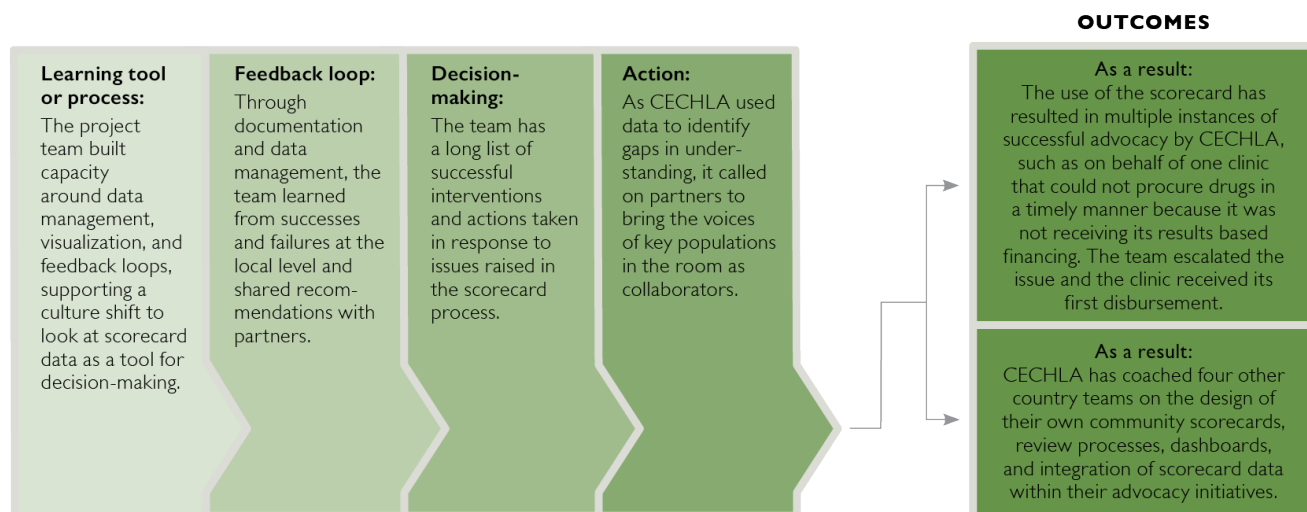
The following cases illustrate this finding.

I. [Data, Dashboards, and Dialogue for Policy Advocacy Wins in Zimbabwe \(Case #82\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In Zimbabwe, district health executive (DHE) teams are using community scorecard data to understand major health challenges facing local communities and taking action to reduce barriers to care. However, M&E data was largely used for reporting rather than as a critical tool for decision-making across partners and sites.
- **CLA Approach:** Given the potential of the scorecard to reveal issues and challenges around demand for and quality of services at the target clinics, the PEPFAR-funded Coalition for Effective Community Health & HIV Response, Leadership, and Accountability (CECHLA) built capacity around data management, established feedback loops, and supported a culture shift among partners, encouraging them to use their monitoring data to elevate advocacy issues above the clinic level to districts. The use of the scorecard has resulted in multiple instances of CECHLA achieving its advocacy goals, and CECHLA has coached four other country teams on the design of their own community scorecards.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - A few barriers influenced this case. Evidence-based decision-making was initially difficult because there was no central tool for looking at data segmented by clinic or analyzing trends over time. This was compounded by the geographic dispersion of partners, who had little dedicated time together to collaborate and learn from one another's work. These barriers reflect the Technical Evidence Base and External Collaboration subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Multiple enablers were identified in this case. A CLA champion on the CECHLA team catalyzed the work on the community scorecard. The project called on partners to bring in the voices of key populations where there were knowledge gaps. Data collected through the scorecards began to be used to inform new directions and needs for the project, including revisiting advocacy plans, program strategies, and measurement approaches. CECHLA developed a list of successful interventions and actions taken in response to issues raised in the scorecards to share with partners to further learning. These enablers reflect the External Collaboration, Knowledge Management, Relationships & Networks, and M&E for Learning subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Learning tool or process: The project team built capacity around data management, visualization, and feedback loops, supporting a culture shift to look at scorecard data as a tool for decision-making.
 - Feedback loop: Through detailed documentation and data management, the team learned from past successes and failures at the local level and shared recommendations with partners for how to address challenges.
 - Decision-making: The team has a long list of successful interventions and actions taken in response to issues raised in the scorecard process.
 - Action: As CECHLA used data to identify gaps in understanding, it called on partners to bring the voices of key populations in the room as collaborators.
 - Outcomes
 - The use of the scorecard has resulted in multiple instances of CECHLA achieving its advocacy goals. In one rural clinic's service area, patients complained of drug shortages, but it was determined that the problem concerned non-adherent patients who later needed second-line drugs. The team conducted drug- and treatment-literacy interventions in response.
 - Another clinic was not receiving its results-based funding, so it could not procure drugs in a timely manner. The team escalated the issue and the clinic received its first disbursement.
 - CECHLA has coached four other country teams on the design of their own community scorecards, review processes, dashboards, and integration of scorecard data within their advocacy initiatives.

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

STRONG CASE #1



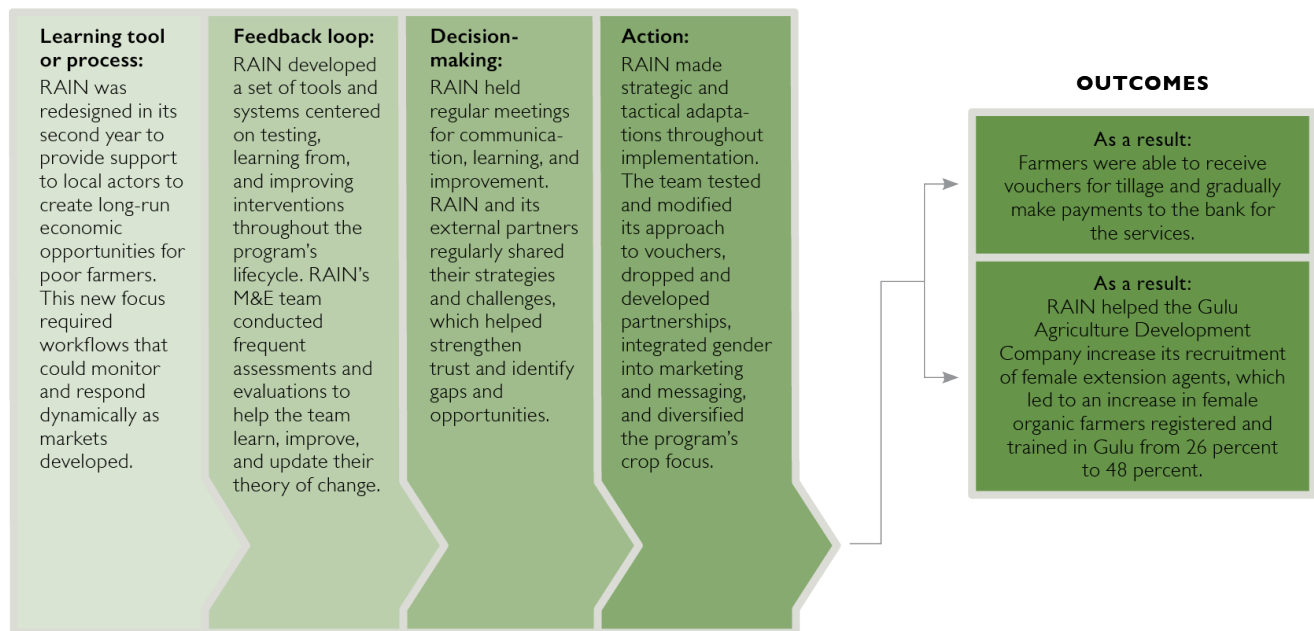
2. [Building an Adaptive Team for Market Systems Development in Acholi, Uganda \(Case #29\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In northern Uganda, recovery from two decades of conflict has been marked by rapid economic and social shifts. The Revitalizing Agricultural Incomes and New Markets (RAIN) program's original approach focused on direct training of farmers. The program pursued three core objectives: enhance smallholder production and profitability; improve agribusiness and trade performance in input and output markets; and expand access to agricultural financial services.
- **CLA Approach:** RAIN was redesigned in the first year to incorporate a market systems approach: rather than directly delivering goods and services, the program would support local actors to create long-run economic opportunities for poor farmers. RAIN's new focus required team members to design workflows and tools to monitor markets and respond as they developed. As a result of these efforts, farmers were able to receive vouchers for tillage and gradually make payments to the bank for services.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Barriers: With few examples to learn from, the team faced challenges in building a shared understanding of the market systems approach, the non-traditional partnerships needed to expand market opportunities for the poor, and the proper structure of agreements. Partners working together to implement RAIN faced differences in organizational culture, human resource policies, and operational systems. These differences necessitated significant efforts by leadership to build a collaborative, cohesive team. These barriers reflect the Knowledge Management and External Collaboration subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Enablers: RAIN actively recruited a dynamic team to carry out an adaptive market development program, and employed local staff to ensure a strong base of localized knowledge and increase retention. The M&E team focused on learning over measurement, and quarterly and semi-annual meetings were used for sharing knowledge and generating ideas. Leadership modeled coaching behavior and encouraged team members to mentor one another, which became a norm within RAIN. Team members gave each other constructive criticism and advice, helping fellow staff and the program to learn, adapt, and improve. These enablers reflect the Relationships & Networks, Adaptive Management, M&E for Learning, and Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Learning tool or process: RAIN was redesigned in its second year to have a market systems approach: rather than directly delivering goods and services to households, the program would support local actors to create long-run economic opportunities for poor farmers and others. This new focus required team

- members to design their workflows to monitor and respond dynamically as markets developed.
- **Feedback loop:** RAIN developed a set of tools and systems centered on testing, learning from, and improving interventions throughout the program's lifecycle. RAIN's M&E team conducted frequent mini-assessments and internal evaluation activities. M&E staff focused on helping the program team learn, improve interventions, and evolve a theory of change.
- **Decision-making:** The RAIN team held weekly touch point meetings for communication, and quarterly and semi-annual meetings for learning and improvement. RAIN and its external partners regularly made presentations about their strategies and challenges, which strengthened trust and helped identify information sharing gaps and opportunities.
- **Action:** RAIN made a series of strategic and tactical alterations throughout implementation. The team repeatedly tested and altered its approach to input vouchers, dropped and developed partnerships in financial services, integrated gender into marketing and messaging, and diversified the program's crop focus.
- **Outcomes**
 - Farmers were able to receive vouchers for tillage and gradually make payments to the bank for the services.
 - RAIN supported the local Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) to pilot a mobile-based savings drive in one branch. The SACCO then independently repeated the drive in all of its branches, increasing membership from 10,000 to 16,000 overall, attracting savings of more than \$750,000, and distributing more than \$40,000 in loans in the first three months.
 - RAIN helped the Gulu Agriculture Development Company increase its recruitment of female extension agents, which led to an increase in female organic farmers registered and trained in Gulu from 26 percent to 48 percent.

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

STRONG CASE #2



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. 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, according to the report, the strongest evidence for feedback loops exists in community-based monitoring. 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.



ADAPTING

Finding 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes (9 cases).

Of the 63 cases coded to a results chain, nine show how taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improve organizational outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. Review project performance and identify the need for improvement.

- a. Teams review their project performance, sometimes through a mid-term evaluation or assessment process, and recognize key areas that need improvement.

2. Stakeholders gather to pause and reflect on project performance

- a. Teams bring together a group of development actors (both internal and external) to reflect together on the challenges and brainstorm actions to be taken to improve.

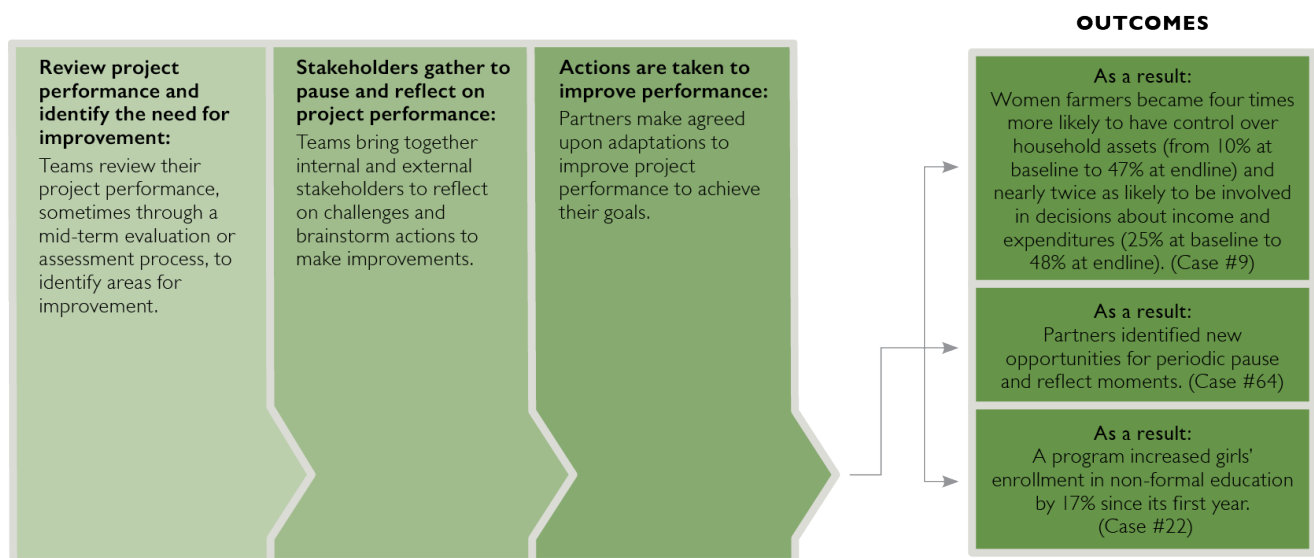
3. As a result, actions are taken to improve performance.

- a. Partners make agreed upon adaptations to improve project performance to achieve their goal.

4. Outcome Examples:

- a. Women farmers are now four times more likely to have control over household assets (from 10% at baseline to 47% at endline) and are nearly twice as likely to be involved in decisions about income and expenditures (25% at baseline to 48% now) (Case #9).
- b. Partners identified new opportunities for periodic pause and reflect moments (Case #64).
- c. Partners increased girls' enrollment in non-formal education by 17% since its first year (Case #22).

FINDING 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes.



The cases that shaped this finding describe how taking time to pause and reflect helps development actors better understand challenges and opportunities in their work and co-create adaptations they must take in order to improve. In the majority of cases, partners had the opportunity to review project success (e.g., through a mid-term evaluation or assessment process) and identified the need to improve. Then, partners convened a group of internal and external

stakeholders to pause and reflect together to understand why they were not making the progress they intended and identify actions to improve. As a result of the pause and reflect session, partners made adaptations in their work, which resulted in improved organizational and development outcomes.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

The following cases illustrate this finding:

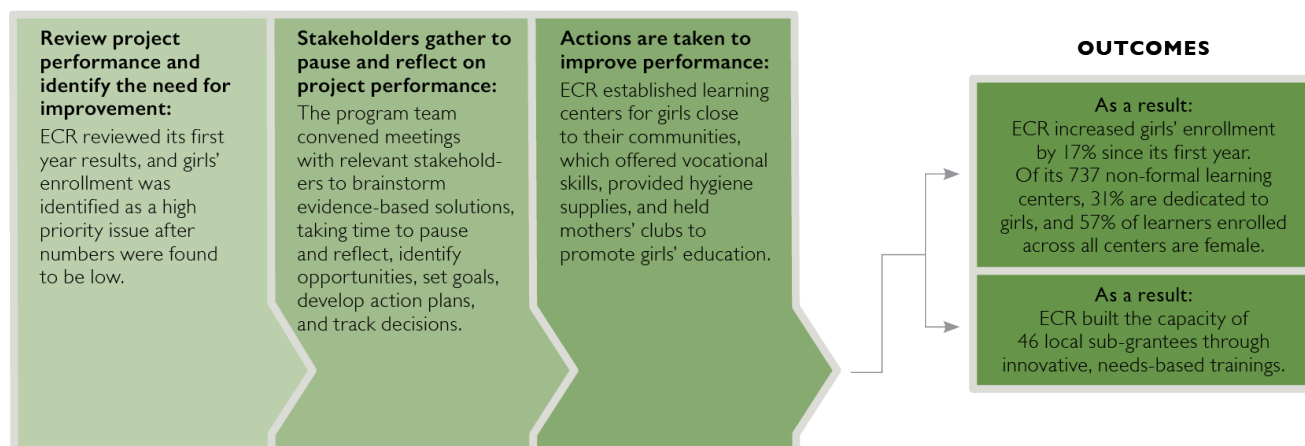
I. Nigeria Education Crisis Response: Using Feedback Loops to Drive Project Success

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Northern Nigeria has been characterized by high poverty levels, inefficient government services, and weak institutional capacity. The Boko Haram insurgency exacerbates these issues, wreaking havoc on communities and leading to political insecurity and two million displaced persons. In this volatile operating environment, there is a lack of coordination between many IPs and development actors.
- **CLA Approach:** The Education Crisis Response (ECR) team focused on expanding access to relevant and high-quality non-formal education (NFE) opportunities for internally displaced and out-of-school children and youth. ECR evolved its programming to adapt to Nigeria's volatile northeastern region, ensuring that it was embedded in communities, built upon local ownership, and more responsive to beneficiaries. A rich array of feedback loops and reflection moments were developed to process data, review progress, and allow for decision-making and adaptation built on the collective input of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Through these efforts, ECR built the capacity of 46 local sub-grantees through innovative, needs-based trainings, and increased girls' enrollment by 17% since its first year.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:** Several barriers and enablers influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - Several barriers posed challenges in this case. Northern Nigeria is a volatile operating environment with the Boko Haram insurgency and resulting humanitarian crisis. The security situation posed challenges for project implementation, such as necessitating travel restrictions. Development actors faced time constraints for learning and adaptation given the constantly shifting circumstances on the ground. Although the program team recognized that CLA approaches would be beneficial, adopting these approaches would take time and involve a long learning process. These barriers reflect the CLA in Implementing Mechanisms and Adaptive Management subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers influenced this case. To adapt to constantly shifting circumstances, ECR employed feedback loops at multiple levels in order to modify its approach and alter implementation when needed. These feedback loops became ingrained in ECR's implementation process and culture for making evidence-informed decisions. ECR also used a decentralized management approach, empowering stakeholders to participate in project decision-making and forging relationships with a wide range of partners through routine consultations to strengthen ties, share information, and seek unified solutions. ECR rooted itself in communities, empowering community coalitions to identify priorities, mobilize local resources, and find local solutions to local problems. These enablers reflect the M&E for Learning, Pause & Reflect, Relationships & Networks, External Collaboration, and Decision-Making subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- **How this case represents the finding:**
 - Events
 - Review project performance and identify the need for improvement:
 - ± ECR reviewed its first year results, and girls' enrollment was identified as a high priority issue after numbers were found to be low.
 - Stakeholders gather to pause and reflect on project performance:
 - ± The program team convened meetings with relevant stakeholders to brainstorm evidence-based solutions, taking time to pause and reflect, identify opportunities, set goals, develop action plans, and track decisions.

- Actions are taken to improve performance:
 - ± ECR established learning centers for girls close to their communities, which offered vocational skills, provided hygiene supplies, and held mothers' clubs to promote girls' education.
- Outcomes
 - ECR increased girls' enrollment by 17% since its first year. Of its 737 non-formal learning centers, 31% are dedicated to girls, and 57% of learners enrolled across all centers are female.
 - ECR built the capacity of 46 local sub-grantees through innovative, needs-based trainings.

FINDING 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes.

STRONG CASE #1



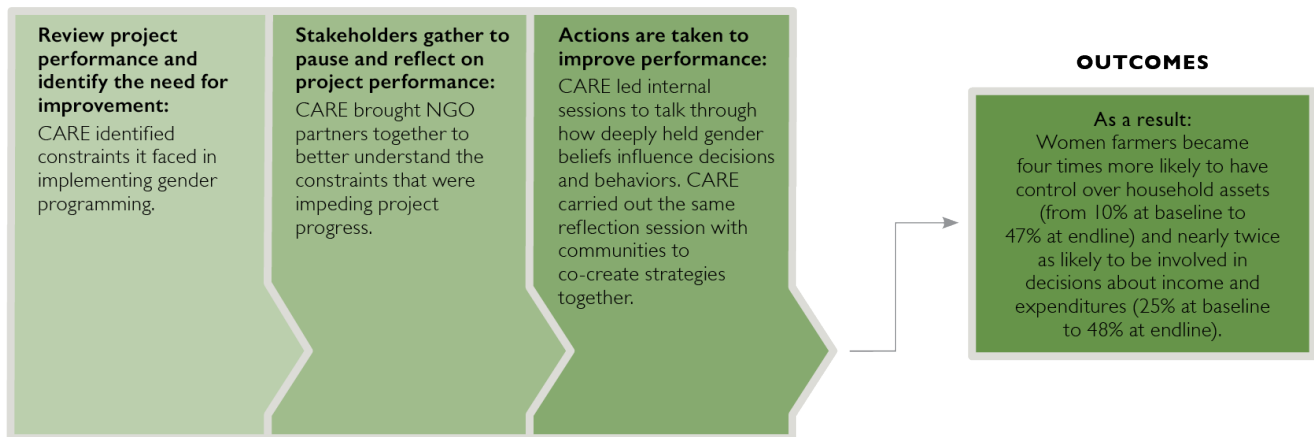
2. Practice What You Preach: A Tool for Staff Transformation

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In Mali, some cultural perspectives about women's place in society can perpetuate gender inequality and poverty.
- **CLA Approach:** Using a CLA and curiosity-centered approach made it easier and more effective for program staff to work with communities on the sensitive issues of changing gender norms around women farmers and their workloads. Staff noticed that these communities were hesitant to embrace change, and decided to examine their own behaviors first. They created a tool to collect data and create safe spaces for conversation about complicated behavior change. As a result of these conversations, they redesigned some of the work on the ground to be more effective.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:** Several barriers and enablers influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - A few barriers influenced this case. Gender norms held by both program staff and community members sometimes conflicted with the program's approach, which presented challenges for CARE in implementation. In the communities where CARE was working, men and women often preached about the need for gender equality but did not practice it at home. Among CARE staff, the team found it difficult to hold a safe space where project staff could talk about deeply held gender norms.
 - Several enablers were critical in influencing the outcomes reported as a result of the CLA approach. Most notable was the presence of CLA champions on the CARE team: staff modeled CLA attitudes and recognized the difficulties of changing their own behaviors. They then served as influential role models in their communities. CARE opened up discussion of gender norms on the team. The team measured the impact of the Personal Performance Tracker (PPT) exercise and committed to holding quarterly reflections on their own practices. Throughout, CARE staff sought to understand and empathize with the communities they served. These enablers reflect the Openness, M&E for Learning, Decision Making, Continuous Learning & Improvement, and Pause & Reflect subcomponents of the CLA framework.

- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Review project performance and identify the need for improvement.
 - ± CARE identified constraints it was facing in implementing gender programming.
 - Stakeholders gather to pause and reflect on project performance
 - ± CARE brought all five NGO partners together to better understand the constraints that were impeding the project's progress. During this initial meeting, staff agreed that a CLA approach (through the use of a PPT) could help identify indicators of change, regularly reflect as individuals and teams, track changes over time, and develop an action plan for addressing constraints.
 - As a result, actions are taken to improve performance.
 - ± CARE led sessions internally to talk through deeply held gender beliefs and how those beliefs influence team decisions and behaviors. These sessions helped CARE staff empathize with community members and come up with thoughtful, realistic, and relevant strategies for them. CARE carried out the same PPT session with communities and shared the strategies they came up with.
 - Outcomes
 - Women farmers are now four times more likely to have control over household assets (from 10% at baseline to 47% at endline) and are nearly twice as likely to be involved in decisions about income and expenditures (25% at baseline to 48% now).
 - CARE staff are working to roll out their tool across all of the CARE organization so others can benefit from the approach.

FINDING 5: Taking the time to pause and reflect leads to improved organizational and development outcomes.

STRONG CASE #2



HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

The literature discusses the importance of reflecting often and adapting as needed to improve outcomes. Research has found that individuals learn the most from experience when they take the time to reflect on it afterwards. In addition to helping individuals learn, the literature also shows that reflecting as a group builds mutual understanding, which fosters collaboration. According to the latest research on neuroscience, group reflection is more likely to catch flaws in thinking and biases than individual learning.

FINDING 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale-up (11 cases).

Of the 63 cases coded to a results chain, eleven show how CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale-up.

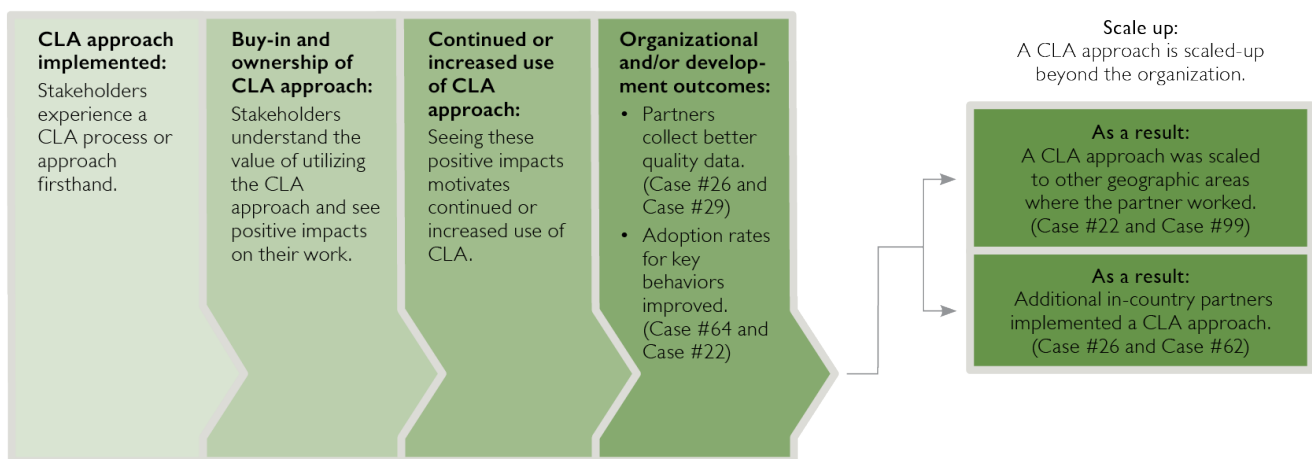
DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

- 1. CLA approach implemented**
 - a. Stakeholders experience a CLA process or approach firsthand.
- 2. Buy-in and ownership of CLA approach**
 - a. They understand the value of utilizing the CLA approach and see the positive impacts it has on their work.
- 3. Continued or increased use of CLA approach**
 - a. Seeing the positive impact CLA has on their work motivates them to continue to use or increase the use of CLA.
- 4. Organizational and/or development outcomes**
 - a. Internal assessment practices have improved (Case #1)
 - b. Partners collect better quality data (Case #26 and #29)
 - c. Improved adoption rates for key behaviors (Case #64 and Case #22)
- 5. Scale-Up CLA approach or product is scaled-up beyond the organization. In these cases, scale-up occurred:**
 - a. The CLA approach was scaled to other geographic areas where the partner worked (Case #22 and Case #99).
 - b. Other in-country partners implemented the CLA approach (Case #26 and Case #62)

FINDING 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale up.

CLA Begets CLA:

CLA approaches reinforce the use and uptake of CLA within an organization and contribute to better organizational and/or development outcomes.



The cases that comprise this finding underscore how implementing a CLA approach can lead to increased CLA uptake and potentially improved organizational and/or development outcomes. Some cases show a “demonstration effect,” whereby stakeholders learn about the benefits of a successful CLA approach implemented by another development actor and then adapt the approach to their own context.

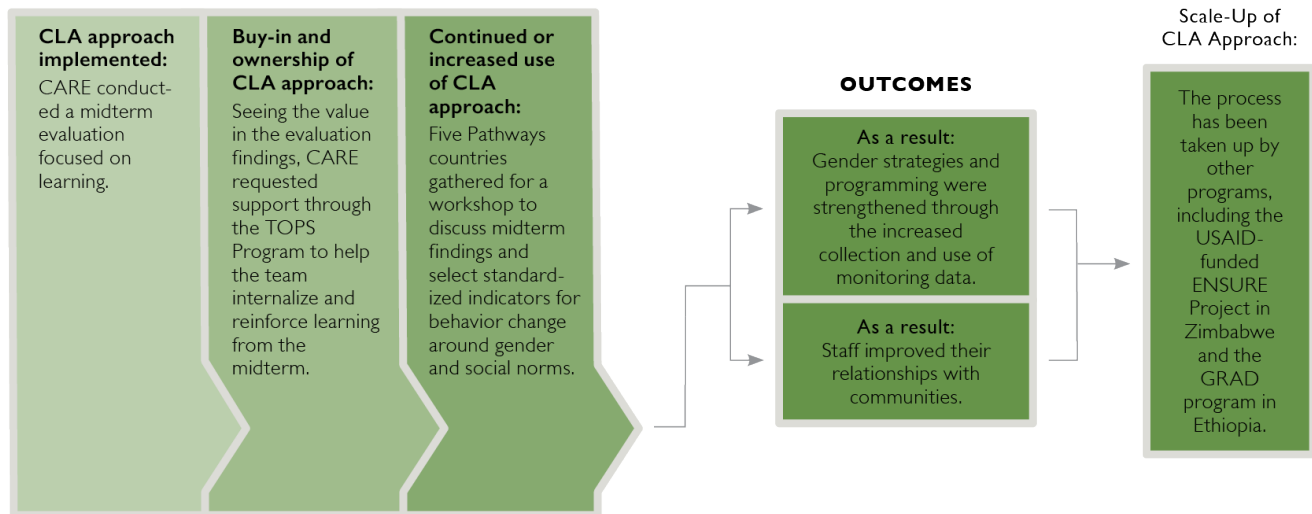
STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

I. [Developing Country-Specific Gender Monitoring Indicators for Men and Women \(Case #26\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** The challenge that CARE sought to address in Malawi was to take forward the rich findings from a previously conducted qualitative midterm review so that instead of becoming a one-off exercise, the evaluation would feed into the development of improved monitoring.
- **CLA Approach:** In order to ensure evaluation findings fed into the development of improved monitoring, CARE led a Gender-Indicator Design Workshop. The purpose of the Workshop was to use the data and experiences from the midterm review to develop a common framework of semi-standardized behavior change indicators that the respective Pathways teams could use to continue to measure, monitor, and encourage changes in gender relations among key actors in the Pathways program.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:** Several barriers and enablers influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - A few barriers influenced this case. Differing cultural perspectives about men's and women's roles in agricultural productivity and participation challenged CARE in program implementation. Within CARE, the team faced challenges with the evaluation being viewed as a one-off activity and findings from the evaluation being shared only with a limited group of stakeholders. These barriers reflect the Openness, M&E for Learning, and Knowledge Management subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers influenced this case as well. Through the facilitated Gender-Indicator Design Workshop, participants began to feel more comfortable sharing differing viewpoints and having an open discussion about gender relations. The workshop created space for reflection, which in turn enabled the development of trusting relationships amongst staff, partners, and communities. These enablers reflect the Openness, Pause & Reflect, and Relationships & Networks subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- **How this case represents the finding:**
 - Events
 - CLA approach implemented
 - ± CARE conducted a learning-focused midterm evaluation.
 - Buy-in and ownership of CLA approach
 - ± Seeing the value in the evaluation findings, CARE requested help through the Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program to help the team internalize and reinforce the learning from the midterm.
 - Continued or increased use of CLA approach
 - ± TOPS funding was used to convene team members from five Pathways countries for a collective learning process. During the workshop, participants discussed their midterm review findings and focused on selecting monitoring indicators for behavior change around gender and social norms, indicators based on their country-specific data but using a common framework to standardize and structure them around similar themes.
 - Organizational and/or development outcomes
 - ± CARE developed an improved monitoring framework to continue to measure and encourage changes in gender relations.
 - ± Improved reporting on impact.
 - ± Gender strategies and programming were strengthened as a result of increased monitoring information.
 - ± Better understanding of gender among staff and communities.
 - ± Improved relationships with communities.
 - Scale-Up:
 - The process has been taken up by other programs, including two USAID-funded initiatives, the ENSURE Project in Zimbabwe, and the GRAD program in Ethiopia.

FINDING 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale up.

STRONG CASE #1



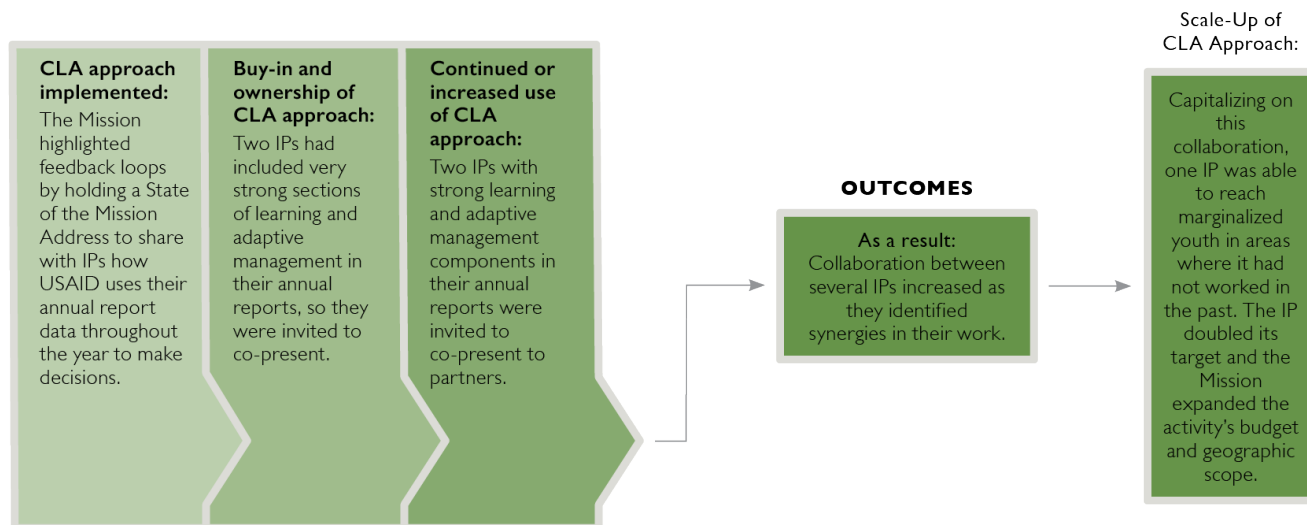
2. [USAID Morocco's State of the Mission Address: Improving Feedback Loops](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** USAID/Morocco's Program Office (PMO) has worked to promote CLA with IPs and across the Mission. The PMO was interested in finding ways to better utilize monitoring, evaluating, and learning results to improve performance, as there was a lot of rich information in reports that was not being used to the fullest extent or shared beyond the IP and Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR)/Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). There were also untapped synergies between partners, and the Mission wanted to increase collaboration, particularly where multiple partners work in the same cities.
- **CLA Approach:** The PMO set a positive example of feedback loops by conducting a State of the Mission Address, a roll up, and a presentation of IPs' annual reports back to the IPs. The report template was recently updated to include sections on learning and adaptive management, and it was clear that there was valuable learning and adaptation happening within IPs that the Mission was not fully aware of and could be of use to the broader range of partners. The Mission explained how USAID uses the data and information from the annual reports throughout the year, and then had two IPs present their case studies of learning and adaptation. The Mission underscored the concept of feedback loops and shared a positive example from each partner's report.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:** Several barriers and enablers influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - Key barriers in this case were the untapped synergies between IPs, as well as the large volume of relevant and useful information in reports that was not being used or shared. These barriers reflect the Relationships & Networks and Knowledge Management subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers influenced this case. Adding a specific learning and adaptive management section to the annual reports enriched the information that missions and IPs received from one another. Sharing the IP reports was critical for improving learning and collaboration among partners, and staff began to use evidence from reports to make strategic programming decisions. In addition, two CLA champions who provided regular mentoring and feedback to IPs on how to incorporate CLA into their work helped spark a commitment among partners to learn more about CLA. These enablers reflect the Relationships & Networks, Knowledge Management, and Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- **How this case represents the finding:**
 - Events
 - CLA approach implemented

- ± The Program Office decided to set a positive example of feedback loops by sharing with IPs how USAID uses the data and information provided in the annual reports throughout the year to make decisions.
- Buy-in and ownership of CLA approach
 - ± Two IPs had included very strong learning and adaptive management sections in their annual reports, so they were invited to co-present.
- Continued or increased use of CLA approach
 - ± The IPs and Mission staff noted the usefulness of the learning and adaptive management sections in the annual reports and learned a great deal about other IP activities.
- Organizational and/or development outcomes
- There has been an increase in collaboration among several IPs as a result of this process.
 - ± Capitalizing on the collaboration sparked by this activity, one IP was able to reach marginalized youth in areas where they hadn't worked in the past. As a result, the IP doubled its target and the Mission decided to expand the activity's budget and geographic scope.

FINDING 6: CLA begets CLA and sometimes leads to scale up.

STRONG CASE #2



HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

Notably, the literature review did not uncover any additional evidence supporting this finding. Because 17% of cases (11 out of 63) document a similar pattern, it may warrant further exploration in future literature reviews and Case Competition Analyses for 2016 and beyond.

Emerging Findings

The following findings, numbered 7-10, had two or fewer cases coded to the results chain. These emerging findings have been included as they validated theories of additional results chains drawn from the literature review and 2015 Case Competition Analysis, although there were limited case examples observed in this analysis.



FINDING 7: Identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves our responsiveness to changing contexts (2 cases).

Two of the 63 cases coded to a results chain show how identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves responsiveness to changing contexts. While the researchers observed only two case examples of this finding, it is included as evidence supporting the theorized results chain, based on the literature review and 2015 Case Competition Analysis.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. Understand the context

- a. Crowdsource risks, opportunities, challenges and course-changing events likely to occur over the next 18 months.

2. Develop scenarios and appropriate assistance approaches

- a. Draft scenarios and approaches that would be both effective and viable.

3. Validate scenarios and assistance approaches

- a. Work with stakeholders to validate the scenarios and assess the relevance and feasibility of programmatic approaches

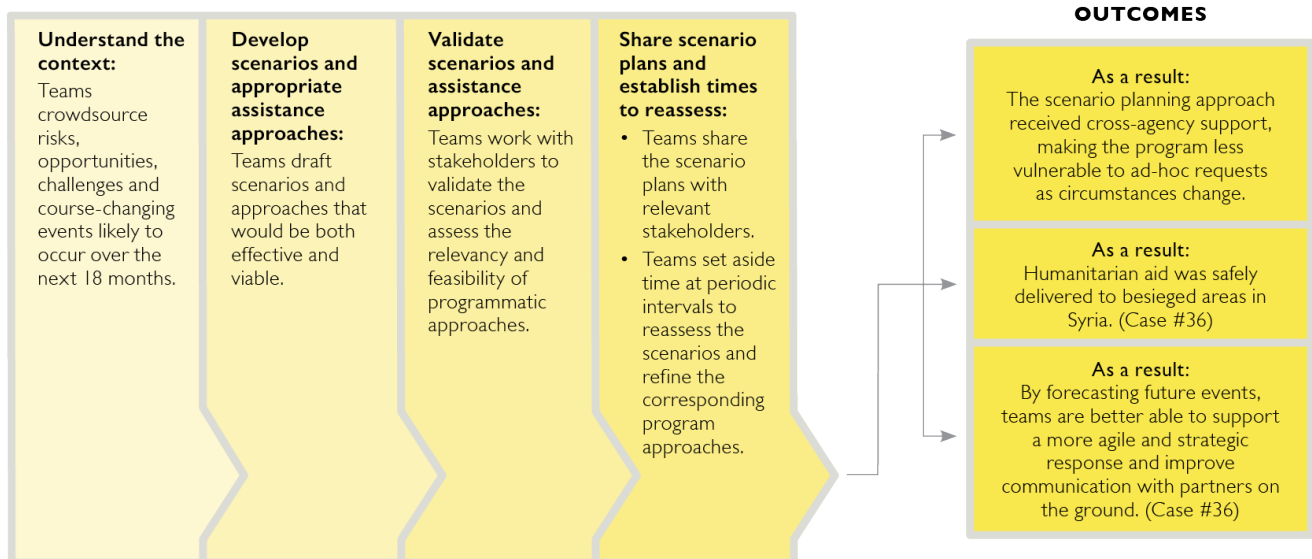
4. Share scenario plans and establish times to reassess

- a. Share the scenario plans with relevant stakeholders.
- b. Set aside time at periodic intervals to reassess the scenarios and refine the corresponding program approaches.

5. Outcome Examples:

- a. The scenario planning approach received cross-agency support, making the program less vulnerable to ad-hoc requests as circumstances change (Case #50).
- b. Humanitarian aid was safely delivered to besieged areas in Syria (Case #36).
- c. By forecasting future events, teams are better able to support a more agile and strategic response and improve communication with partners on the ground (Case #36).

FINDING 7: Identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves our responsiveness to changing contexts.



The cases that shaped this finding describe how scenario-planning helps development actors forecast future events and identify opportunities and challenges that could influence the delivery of development assistance. Stakeholders then work together to develop hypothetical programming plans under each scenario that would be viable and effective given the circumstances. These hypothetical plans are vetted by various groups and shared with all participating teams. The scenario-planning exercise contributes to improved agility and communications within and between organizations, which can ultimately lead to improved development outcomes.

STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

The following case illustrates this finding.

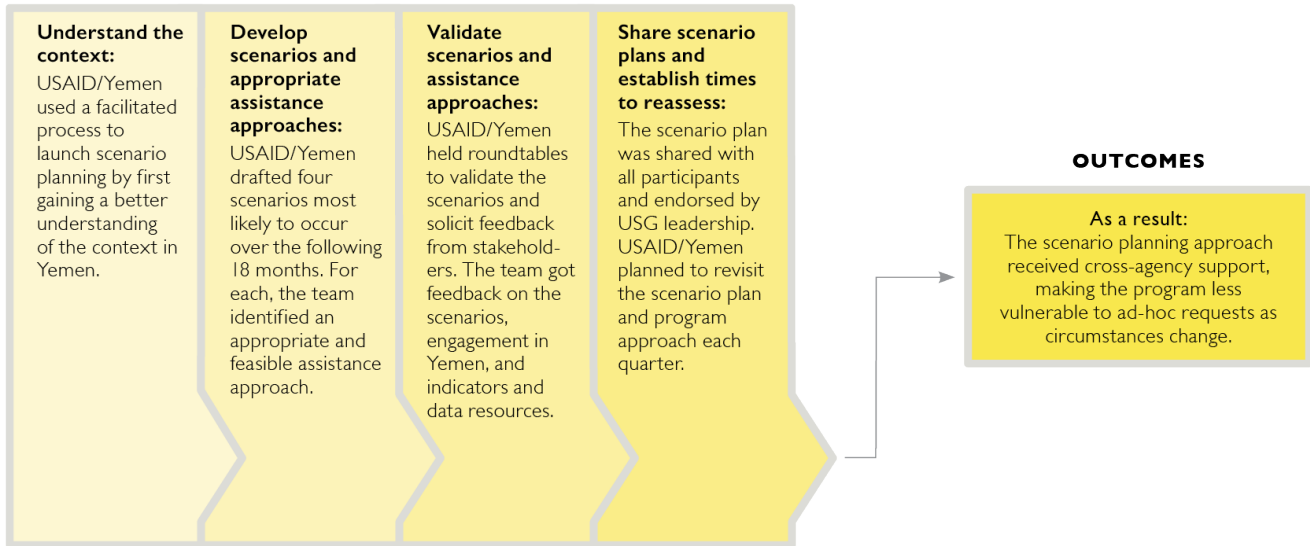
I. [Scenario-Planning Assistance to Yemen \(Case #50\)](#)

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** In Yemen, there is a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation exacerbated by looming economic collapse. The U.S. Embassy suspended operations in early 2015 and relocated staff and operations, so the core team is split across various countries. There is no formal strategy to guide programming in the dynamic and challenging context of Yemen.
- **CLA Approach:** After the U.S. Embassy suspended operations in early 2015, USAID/Yemen started piloting a small number of high-impact, early recovery assistance activities. The team developed a scenario plan and monitoring framework to direct the implementation of responsive and adaptive program assistance. Together with internal and external stakeholders, the team developed this approach to guide USAID decision-making and provide a platform for USAID to serve as a thought leader with the U.S. government in providing assistance to Yemen. The scenario planning approach received cross-agency support, making the program less vulnerable to ad-hoc requests as circumstances change.
- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:
 - Logistical challenges, such as the lack of a U.S. embassy presence in Yemen, were a barrier to efficiently carrying out development assistance.
 - Several enablers influenced the scenario-planning process. In this challenging operating environment, teams recognized the need to innovate and adapt quickly to carry out their work effectively. Partners worked across various groups to deepen their understanding of the context and validate scenarios. The mission and partners established mutual trust working together to craft and test scenarios. The mission also had the flexibility to apply the scenario-planning approach and make programmatic decisions in response to rapidly changing circumstances. These enablers reflect the Adaptive Management, Relationships & Networks, and Scenario Planning subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - Understand the context: USAID/Yemen used a facilitated process involving the broader USAID team to launch the scenario-planning process. The team crafted its scenario plan by first seeking to understand the context in Yemen.
 - Develop scenarios and appropriate assistance approaches: USAID/Yemen identified key themes from the brainstorming session and built out four draft scenarios most likely to occur over the next 18 months. For each scenario, the team identified an appropriate and realistic assistance approach.
 - Validate scenarios and assistance approaches: USAID/Yemen held various roundtables to validate the scenarios and solicit feedback with USAID sectoral technical experts, humanitarian assistance practitioners, interagency partners, and implementing partners. The participants shared feedback on existing scenarios, provided a realistic assessment of their engagement in Yemen, offered suggestions for indicators and data resources, and generated an additional scenario.
 - Share scenario plans and establish times to reassess: The resulting scenario plan was shared with all participants and endorsed by USAID senior leadership and the US Ambassador to Yemen. USAID/Yemen made plans to revisit the scenario plan and corresponding program approaches on a quarterly basis.

- Outcomes
 - o The scenario-planning approach received cross-agency support, making the program less vulnerable to ad-hoc requests as circumstances change.

FINDING 7: Identifying, monitoring, and responding to scenarios improves our responsiveness to changing contexts.

STRONG CASE #1



HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

Much of research conducted on scenario-planning comes from the business sector and has only recently evolved into a process employed by the private sector and by both non-governmental and community organizations. The literature on scenario-planning indicates that scenario-planning can improve financial performance. Researchers emphasize that the value of scenario-planning does not lie so much in the creation of scenarios, but in the discussion of consequences.



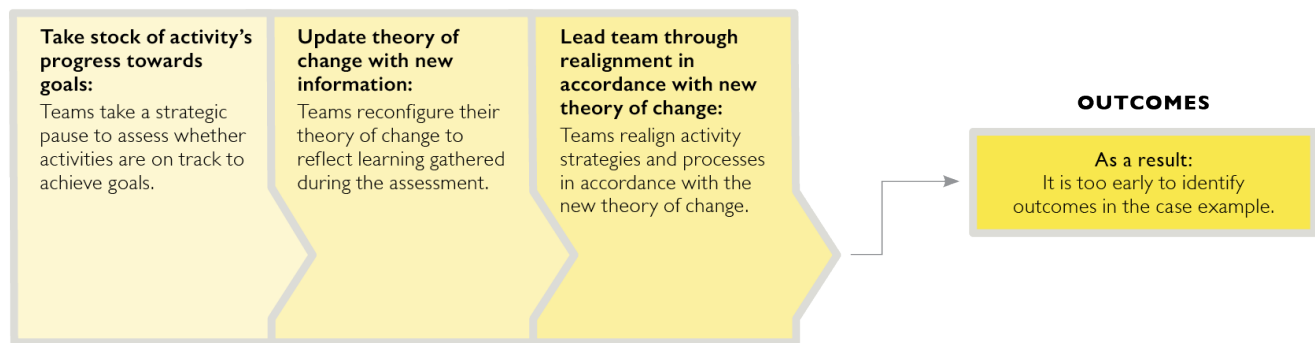
FINDING 8: Establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming (1 case).

Of the 63 cases coded to a results chain, one case shows how establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming. While the researchers observed only one case example of this finding, it is included as evidence supporting the theorized results chain, based on the literature review and the 2015 Case Competition Analysis.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

1. **Take stock of activity’s progress towards goals.**
 - a. Teams take a strategic pause to assess whether activities are on track to achieve goals.
2. **Update theory of change with new information**
 - a. Teams reconfigure their theory of change to reflect learning gathered during the assessment.
3. **Realign in accordance with new theory of change.**
 - a. Teams realign activity strategies and processes in accordance with the new theory of change.
4. **Outcome Examples**
 - a. Given that the new theory of change was just recently implemented and a new processes plan was put in place for continued CLA, it is too early to identify project outcomes. (Case #53)

FINDING 8: Establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming.



STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

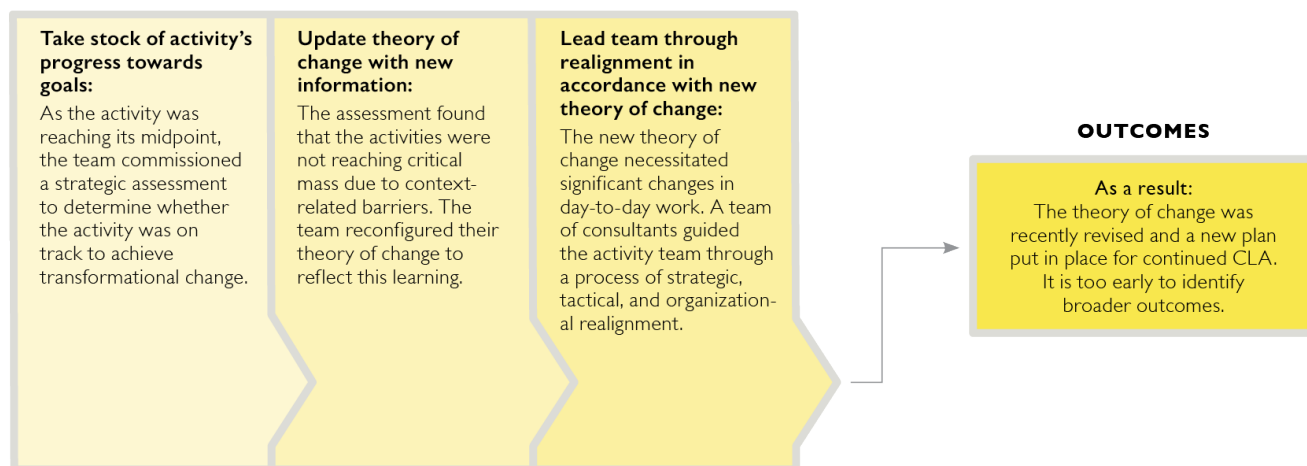
One case illustrates this finding:

1. [Realigning Strategy to Respond to Market Realities: Agricultural Inputs Uganda \(Case #53\)](#)
 - **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** The Feed the Future Uganda Agricultural Inputs Activity aims to increase smallholders’ access to quality agricultural inputs, decrease the prevalence of counterfeit inputs, and increase the quantity of high-quality improved seed on the market.
 - **CLA Approach:** In June 2015, as the activity reached its midpoint, the team commissioned a strategic assessment to determine whether the activity was on track to achieve transformational change. The activity demonstrated the need to change the team’s theory of change, and as a result, the implementation of its activities.
 - **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:**
 - No barriers were reported in this case.

- Several enablers influenced this case. The team set aside time strategically for the theory of change process, involved the entire team, and made sure to have the right expertise available. The timing of the initial assessment was critical, as the team had time to grapple with a new direction without losing productivity or momentum, as well as time for reflection in advance of work planning. The team used the assessment as a learning opportunity and focused heavily on prioritization and sequencing of activities. Staff were flexible, thinking strategically during the assessment process, and were able to adapt their approach effectively in accordance with the new phases of the project's life. These enablers reflect the Continuous Learning & Improvement, Openness, Theories of Change, M&E for Learning, and Adaptive Management subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - ± Take stock of activity's progress towards goals: As the activity was reaching its midpoint, the team commissioned a strategic assessment to determine whether the activity was on track to achieve transformational change.
 - ± Update theory of change with new information: The assessment found that the activities were not reaching critical mass due to a few context-related barriers. As a result, the team reconfigured its theory of change to reflect that learning.
 - ± Realign in accordance with new theory of change: The new theory of change necessitated significant changes in the day-to-day work; a team of consultants guided the broader activity team through a process of strategic, tactical, and organizational realignment.
 - Outcomes
 - ± Given that the new theory of change was just recently implemented and a new process plan was put in place for continued CLA, it is too early to identify project outcomes.

FINDING 8: Establishing and testing theories of change increases the likelihood of improving intervention design, leading to more efficient programming.

STRONG CASE #1



HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

A review of the literature shows that the use of theories of change emanates from an evolution of concepts drawn from the practices of evaluation and informed social action. Much of the literature on double-loop learning relates to theories of change. By developing and testing theories of change, teams engage in double-loop learning, and through this process think more deeply about their own assumptions and beliefs. Double-loop learning has been shown to enable individuals, teams, and organizations to adapt programming in the most effective and sustainable way.



FINDING 9: CLA leads to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which contribute to improved organizational performance (1 case).

Number of cases coded at this chain

Of the 63 cases coded to a results chain, one shows how CLA led to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, contributing to improved organizational performance. While the researchers observed only one case example of this finding, it is included as evidence supporting the theorized results chain, based on the literature review and 2015 Case Competition Analysis.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

- 1. Recognition of need for CLA approach**
 - a. Team recognizes that the circumstances warrant a collaborating, learning, and adapting approach.
- 2. CLA activity undertaken**
 - a. Team utilizes a collaborating, learning, and adapting approach.
- 3. Staff given opportunity to capitalize on the CLA approach**
 - a. Staff are given the autonomy and resources to expand on and/or strengthen the CLA approach.
- 4. Outcome Example:**
 - a. The project has increased staff morale across IPs, as staff from different projects have built relationships with one another and have a strong sense of community. They are more efficient and effective in their work, accelerating all projects to their results. (Case #8).

FINDING 9: CLA leads to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which contribute to improved organizational performance.



STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

I. USAID/Jordan Health Office’s Joint Workplan: Driving Portfolio-wide Coordination

- **Development Challenge/Oppportunity:** Jordan now hosts the world’s fifth-largest refugee population, and the country is under strain from a mounting Syrian refugee and humanitarian crisis. This has put extraordinary pressure on Jordan’s healthcare system. As a result, USAID Jordan’s Population, Family, Health (PFH) Office has expanded and realigned its program to focus on the resilience of Jordan’s health system.
- **CLA Approach:** Managing this rapidly growing portfolio has necessitated support from implementing partners (Abt, Chemonics, and Palladium). As a result, there has been a focus on collaboration, coordination, and cooperation to make sure partners are able to relate, communicate, and collaborate effectively with each other.

- How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process: There were several enablers and barriers that influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - Several barriers influenced this case. The refugee crisis in Jordan put serious pressure on Jordan's healthcare system. Partners faced staff shortages, and conditions in the country negatively affected morale. There were also the common tensions and competition amongst IPs. IPs did not meet regularly to share information or use their networks to expand their situational awareness, resulting in missed opportunities for strategic collaboration. These barriers reflect the Relationships & Networks and CLA in Implementing Mechanisms subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Key enablers also influenced this case. While acting as a barrier, the refugee crisis also necessitated that USAID/Jordan and IPs work closely with one another to stay abreast of ongoing developments and anticipate how these would affect Jordan's healthcare system. IPs have developed trusting relationships in which they exchange up-to-date information and use their networks to maintain situational awareness. They now meet regularly to learn from each other and collaborate on shared objectives. These enablers reflect the External Collaboration and Relationships & Networks subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- How this case represents the finding:
 - Events
 - ± Recognition of the need for a CLA approach: USAID/Jordan realized that with the growth of its health portfolio, the rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in Jordan affected staff morale and its work across three different IPs. Staff needed to integrate principles of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration in their work.
 - ± CLA activity undertaken: USAID/Jordan started by implementing a joint workplan that included all IPs working throughout the health sector. It reinforced the joint workplan with a rigorous meeting schedule to ensure coordination and continuous learning, and by creating a framework for IP relationships around a shared goal.
 - ± Staff given the opportunity to capitalize on the CLA approach: Staff used the workplan process to identify synergies among IPs and facilitate opportunities for collaboration around cross-cutting goals. Rather than mandating particular behaviors, USAID gave participants the opportunity to fill strategic gaps and co-design deliverables.
 - Outcomes
 - ± The project has increased staff morale across IPs as staff from different projects have built relationships with one another and a strong sense of community across IPs.
 - ± Because IPs are more engaged in their work and are better able to collaborate, they are more efficient and effective, accelerating all projects toward their results.

FINDING 9: CLA leads to increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which contribute to improved organizational performance.

STRONG CASE #1



HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

A growing body of evidence from both private and public sector organizations recognizes employee engagement as critical to successful organizational performance. The literature also indicates that employee and team empowerment helps improve job satisfaction, commitment, innovativeness and organizational performance. A 2016 report published by Deloitte stated that “Learning opportunities are among the largest drivers of employee engagement and strong workplace culture.. As such, learning-driven behavior change extends beyond technical and systems knowledge. Studies show that it can facilitate a radical shift in approach and vision by molding organizational culture. This is in part because engaged employees are more motivated to transfer learning. Having the ability to share and apply learning to effect change leads to greater autonomy, which is associated with greater job satisfaction, greater commitment to the organization and lower employee turnover. In the USAID context, a recent study of responses to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey for USAID staff revealed evidence of strong relationships between collaborating, learning, and adapting, on the one hand, and indicators of organizational effectiveness, such as employee engagement, on the other.

FINDING 10: Upfront investment in CLA can lead to increased efficiency over time (2 cases).

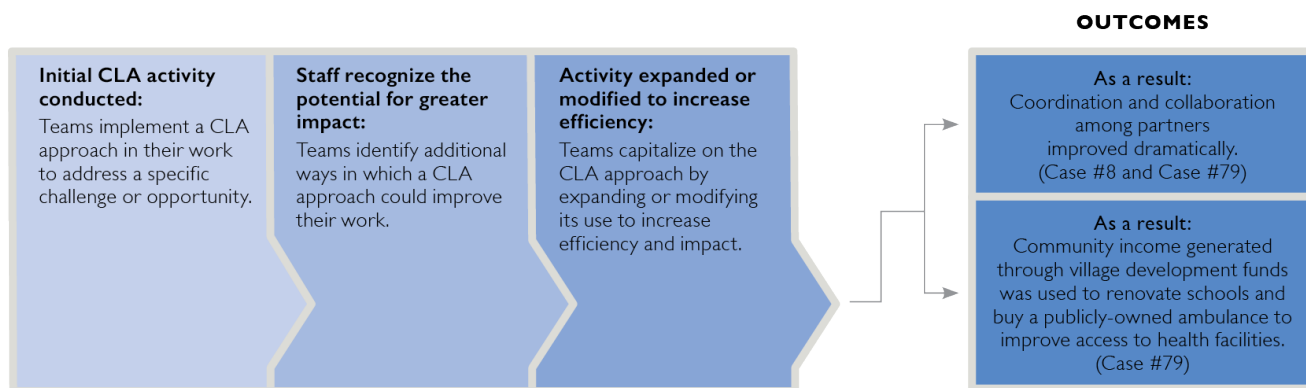
Number of cases coded at this chain

Of the 63 cases coded to a results chain, two show how investing in CLA can lead to increased efficiency. While the researchers observed only two case examples of this finding, it is included as evidence supporting the theorized results chain, based on the literature review and 2015 Case Competition Analysis.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAIN

- 1. Initial CLA activity conducted**
 - a. Teams implement a CLA approach in their work to address a specific challenge or opportunity.
- 2. Staff recognize potential impact of activity behind original scope**
 - a. Teams identify additional ways in which a CLA approach could improve their work.
- 3. Activity expanded or modified to increase efficiency**
 - a. Teams capitalize on the CLA approach by expanding or modifying its use to increase efficiency and impact.
- 4. Outcome Examples:**
 - a. Coordination and collaboration among partners strengthened dramatically (Case #8 and Case #79).
 - b. New organizational structure introduced, with departments structured more efficiently around geographic areas and focused on beneficiaries (Case #79).
 - c. Shae Thot reached over 2.3 million people in 2,844 villages with improved, integrated delivery of holistic services (Case #79).
 - d. Community income generated through village development funds was used to renovate schools or buy a publicly owned ambulance to improve access to health facilities (Case #79).
 - e. The percentage of mothers who had 4 or more antenatal visits increased from 36% to 81% from 2014-2016 (Case #79).
 - f. 109,855 clients benefited from financial services to increase access to finance (Case #79).
 - g. 577,337 people were provided with access to improved water sources (Case #79).

FINDING 10: Upfront investment in CLA can lead to increased efficiency over time.



STRONG CASE EXAMPLES

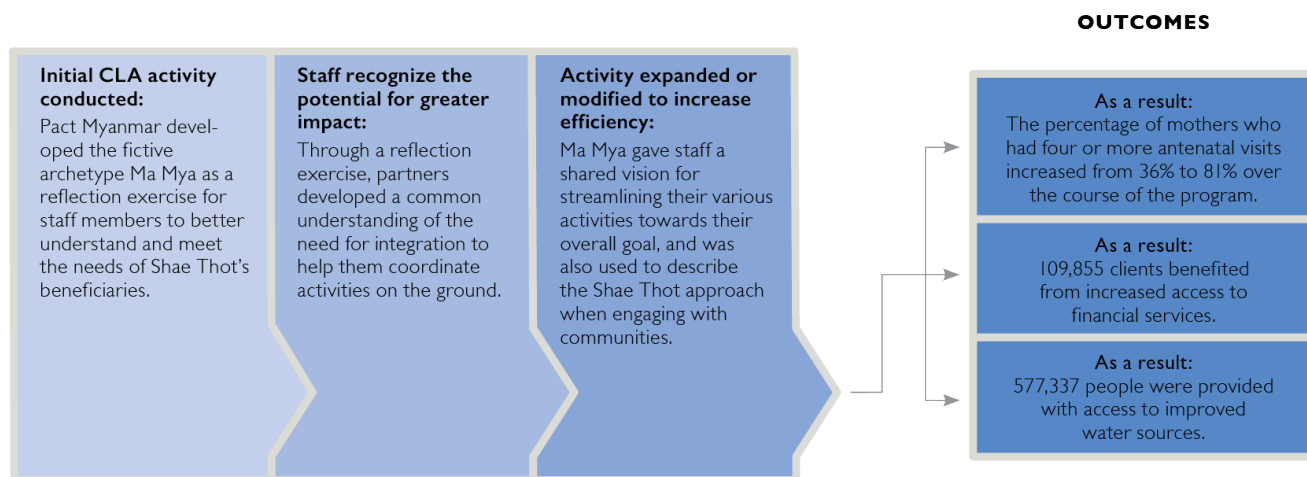
I. Ma Mya: The Power of Visual Archetype for Human-Centered CLA

- **Development Challenge/Opportunity:** Myanmar remains one of the least developed countries in the world, with large parts of its population suffering from inadequate access to water and sanitation as well as health, financial, and livelihood opportunities. Governance structures are generally poor, but since the democratic election in 2015, the country is going through a period of rapid social reform and there are new opportunities to strengthen governing systems at the village and township levels.
- **CLA Approach:** Pact Myanmar developed a simple visualization of its key beneficiary, a fictive person called Ma Mya, displaying the multi-faceted needs and vulnerabilities of Shae Thot's beneficiaries. The archetype of Ma Mya represents every man, woman, and child, and conceptualizes Shae Thot's unified goal of improving beneficiaries' lives on several levels.
- **How Enablers and Barriers Influenced the Process:** Several barriers and enablers influenced the outcomes reported in this case.
 - A few barriers influenced this case. Initially, communities felt overwhelmed and frustrated by uncoordinated approaches from various partners. At that time, IPs had insufficient time for collaboration, learning, and adaptation. These barriers reflect the Relationships & Networks and Continuous Learning & Improvement subcomponents of the CLA framework.
 - Several enablers also influenced this case. After the Ma Mya archetype was created, partners began to use the archetype as a platform for field implementation staff and communities to continuously reflect on whether their activities were contributing to serving the needs of vulnerable populations. At regular intervals, the project took stock, reflected, and adapted approaches to respond to changes in community needs and context. USAID/Burma was supportive and committed to integrated development, and community representatives dedicated significant time to engage and take on their role in community governance structures. These enablers reflect the Pause & Reflect, Adaptive Management, Mission Resources, and Relationships & Networks subcomponents of the CLA framework.
- **How this Case Represents the Finding**
 - Events
 - Initial CLA activity conducted
 - ± Pact Myanmar developed the fictive archetype Ma Mya as a reflection exercise for staff to better understand and meet the needs of Shae Thot's beneficiaries.
 - Staff recognize the potential impact of activity behind original scope
 - ± Through the reflection exercise, partners developed a common understanding of the need for integration, which they believed would make it easier for them to coordinate their activities on the ground.
 - Activity expanded or modified to increase efficiency
 - ± Partners used the Ma Mya archetype from the initial reflection exercise to plan and integrate their activities. Ma Mya became a crucial focal and reference point for external communication and collaboration. Ma Mya was not only used to describe the Shae Thot approach when engaging with communities, but also gave implementation staff and communities a platform to streamline their various activities towards their overall goal of serving the needs of vulnerable populations.
 - Outcomes:
 - Coordination and collaboration among partners strengthened dramatically.
 - New organizational structure introduced with departments structured more efficiently around geographic areas and focused on beneficiaries.
 - Shae Thot reached over 2.3 million people in 2,844 villages with improved, integrated delivery of holistic services.
 - Community income generated through village development funds for community priorities was used to renovate schools or buy a publicly-owned ambulance to improve access to health facilities

- The percentage of mothers who had 4 or more antenatal visits increased from 36% to 81% from 2014–2016.
- 109,855 clients benefited from financial services to increase access to finance.
- 577,337 people were provided with access to improved water sources.

FINDING 10: Upfront investment in CLA can lead to increased efficiency over time.

STRONG CASE #1



The details of the second case coded at this results chain was also included in the previous results chain regarding improved engagement and satisfaction. See details above.

HOW DOES THE LITERATURE SUPPORT THIS FINDING?

Notably, a review of the literature reveals evidence of collaborating, learning, and adapting (as separate activities) leading to increased efficiency within organizations, but has not yet uncovered any additional evidence regarding the increase of organizational efficiency as a result of applying CLA as a holistic approach.

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

For USAID and Implementing Partner Staff

The cases demonstrate that CLA begets more CLA in service of improved organizational and development outcomes. Based on this finding, CLA champions trying to introduce or expand CLA practice within their team or organization might consider:

- **Emphasizing what teams or organizations are already doing to collaborate, learn, and adapt** to further expand their practice in service of their objectives. This may also include putting CLA practices in terms that colleagues are more familiar with (such as thinking and working politically, locally led development, adaptive management, etc.).
- **Starting small, and showing what CLA looks like in action.** For example, starting small could be encouraging staff to take [five minutes at the end of a work day](#) to pause and reflect. Once people see the value of this, they may encourage others to do the same, or to incorporate this kind of practice at the team level at the beginning of staff meetings.
- **Beginning with the experience of CLA rather than the theory.** From the cases, it is clear that experiencing CLA helps people understand its value. Rather than beginning with the theory behind CLA or explaining the CLA framework in great depth, consider providing people with a taste of CLA by facilitating a learning-focused discussion.

Given that the most commonly found results chain in the cases involved the use of feedback loops to inform decision-making, technical specialists and learning advisors need to focus on how to manage feedback loops in a way that supports effective learning and adaptive management. Technical specialists and learning advisors might consider:

- **Starting with the end in mind.** Determine the critical decision points up front and identify the information needed to support evidence-based decision-making.
- **Ensuring teams have an opportunity to reflect and internalize data** in order to determine actions and get to evidence-based decision-making.

Some of the cases, particularly under the local ownership finding, show that CLA supports the Agency's strategic focus on self-reliance. With this in mind, **leaders and technical specialists should invest in resourcing effective collaboration and adaptive management in service of the journey to self-reliance.** USAID cannot support countries on that journey without working in partnership with local stakeholders and the private sector, understanding local contexts, and continuously improving programming in order to achieve greater local ownership, and the cases in this analysis demonstrate CLA's contribution to those ends.

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.”

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Endnotes

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22. USAID 2016, 36.
23. Phelps, Chan, and Kapsalis 2001, 223–32; Miller and Cardinal 1994, 1649–65.

24. Argyris and Schön 1978.
25. OPM 2016; OPM 2015.
26. Fernandez and Moldogaziev 2013, 490–506; Dizgah, Chegini, Farahbod, and Kordabadi 2011, 973–80; Ugboro and Obeng 2000, 247–72; Kirkman and Rosen 1999, 58–74.
27. Deloitte University Press 2016.
28. Galletta, Portoghese, and Battistelli 2011; Spector 1986, 1005–16.
29. Shapiro 2016.

ANNEX I

Case Competition Judging Rubric

	Clarity (weight=*2)	Analysis	Completeness	Creativity	Replicability
	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?	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?	Does the case story include multiple stakeholders' perspectives (e.g., a USAID Mission, IP, and other beneficiaries/ stakeholders)?	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?	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 adopting 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 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.
<p>BONUS: 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.</p>					

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.

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 Katherine Haugh or Meghan Jutras, Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Specialists with USAID LEARN, at khaugh@learning4dev.org and mjutras@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
Mapping a Crisis: AidData Students Respond to Nepal Earthquake				
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Knowledge Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students trained in platform 2. Students and mappers populate maps using incoming data 3. More than 111,000 updates to the Nepal map 4. Data delivered via an online portal in usable formats to partners 5. Partners provided feedback to improve the quality of the data 6. Partners use data to drive decision-making 	<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>
Developing Country-Specific Gender Monitoring Indicators for Men and Women				
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Pause & Reflect</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CARE did a midterm evaluation 2. CARE Requested help through the Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program to help reinforce learning from the midterm 3. Team members from five Pathways countries and invited gender specialists took part in the March 2015 workshop in Lilongwe, Malawi 4. Over three days, participants worked on refining and re-organizing this data to develop appropriate behavior-change indicators around gender and social norms 5. At the end of the workshop, the whole team collectively agreed on a monitoring time frame, format, and reporting process 	<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>