



CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Family Care First

CAMBODIA (2015-ONGOING)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: Family Care First (FCF), facilitated by Save the Children International (SCI), is a coalition of organizations working together to support children to live in safe, nurturing family-based care. With approximately 60 member organizations, FCF is working to prevent children from being separated from their families and to increase the number of children that are safely and successfully integrated into family care. Acting as a central hub, FCF and its members are strengthening systems and policies as well as providing services directly to children and families.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Prior to FCF, many actors working in the family care space in Cambodia had been developing innovative approaches to care and capacity building, but USAID Cambodia observed that a broader lack of coordination was preventing effective knowledge sharing across the sector. Local and international organizations were also seeking more opportunities to connect with government agencies to inform the development and implementation of child-care policies.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: To address these needs, USAID initially designed a pilot-learn-grow initiative to bring together development and implementing partners who had previously worked in isolation or competition to promote and scale innovative approaches to family care and align standards of practice across the sector.

Collective Action Initiated: USAID brought interested parties together to participate in a co-design workshop to inform both the goals and structure of the program. Drawing on a wide range of expertise in the sector, USAID/DRG and USAID Cambodia designed FCF using the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Framework to generate a holistic plan for catalyzing a transformation of the childcare system and achieving high-impact results.

Collective Action Structure: With SCI serving as a central hub to facilitate collaboration, FCF partners identified four main themes of systems intervention and high-priority needs. To tackle these objectives, the members of the coalition created thematic working groups for each priority topic which were supported by a sub-working group dedicated to knowledge sharing as well as a steering committee. Working together with local and national governments as well as over sixty partner organizations, FCF implements a coordinated suite of interventions in five priority provinces that were identified by Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY).

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Cambodia

Focus: Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Hub: International NGO

Key Reflections

- Coalition provides a venue for members to share innovative approaches, learn from each other and contribute to government policymaking.
- Program required adaptive, hands-on participation from USAID personnel to keep government and donors on the same page by building strong working relationships.
- Structured and locally led/chaired technical working groups help facilitate partnerships and encourage participation.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

Working collaboratively with a wide range of partners, FCF has been able to affect the care of over 20,000 children through improved case management services and systems, social worker capacity development, and the development and implementation of MoSVY guidelines. Members of the coalition report a high perceived value in being a part of the activity through partnering with other local organizations, being able to share their expertise and more actively participate in government engagement. The strength of the coalition also enabled it to quickly respond to COVID-19 by providing direct support to families and supporting the government in developing updated safe standards of care.

Challenges

In bringing together such a large number of partners, the hub experienced challenges getting partners aligned on main thematic topics, encouraging participation among non-funded members and working closely with national government stakeholders. The hub also initially had issues building credibility with local government due to the prominence of expatriate members in the group.








Lessons Learned

To address these challenges, the hub implemented a developmental evaluation process to create effective, adaptive responses to members' lack of alignment and participation. The hub also built-in incentives beyond funding to keep partners engaged in the collaboration and conducted an annual partner survey to better respond to the needs and concerns of members in the coalition. To address the issue of a lack of local government support, the hub began holding more meetings in Khmer and elevating the profile of Cambodian partners within the coalition. Leadership at SCI (the hub) and USAID also pro-actively engaged key stakeholders in government ministries to build buy-in and trust, improving relationships that allowed member organizations to engage with government structures more easily.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Activity	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	National	 Time Period	Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Main convenors were key sector stakeholders and donors. Coalition became an essential venue for sector knowledge and government engagement.
 Government Buy-in	USAID and SCI nurtured relationships with key ministry staff to demonstrate the value of FCF and aligned project goals with the government's priorities.
 Funding for Activities	Funding is dispersed to members through a transparent and non-competitive multi-step process focused on government priorities. The sub-award process also leverages a co-design approach within the FCF network and involves a review committee consisting of multiple donors and local experts.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Central hub with multiple working groups; experienced and dynamic individuals in key leadership positions; focus on transparency.
 Adaptability	Annual member surveys provide essential feedback to the hub which responds with a plan to address issues raised by members.
 Perceived Value	Members noted access to funding, knowledge sharing, capacity and technical skills development, ability to engage with government and influence policy as high value opportunities.
 Commitment to Action	Members who received funding are required to show progress through formal MEL reporting and knowledge sharing; actors also report a sense of sectoral accountability for 'pulling in the same direction'.

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CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Partnership for HIV-Free Survival

TANZANIA (2013-2016)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Partnership for HIV-Free Survival (PHFS) is a multi-country initiative launched in 2013 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to improve prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT). In Tanzania, PHFS used a collaborative method to strengthen postnatal care within community health facilities, strengthen nutrition services along the continuum of maternal care, and generate evidence on the effectiveness of key PMTCT interventions.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Before PHFS, many organizations in the HIV and maternal sector in Tanzania were working on various approaches to improve PMTCT outcomes, but lacked broader communication, knowledge sharing and coordination across the sector. Acting as a hub, PHFS brought these organizations together in a collaborative approach that built local-ownership of the initiative among members and Tanzania's Ministry of Health (MoH) to scale effective PMTCT approaches.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: The global PHFS initiative was designed by USAID, the Institute for Health Improvement (IHI) and WHO. Within Tanzania, the initiative was established by University Research Company (URC) the implementing organization of USAID's Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) and FHI 360. Member selection was mainly driven by USAID who invited local and national organizations that they funded to participate in the coalition.

Collective Action Initiated: Working with a consortium of international implementing partners and local organizations, FHI 360 served as the convener and facilitator for the coalition, an implementing partner, EGPAF (Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation), served as the secretariat with support from the MoH, USAID and WHO. The implementing partner utilized the standing of the MoH, USAID and WHO to help convince local and international partners to join the coalition.

Collective Action Structure: The hub was supported by a steering committee with clear roles and responsibilities that was led by the MoH and consisted of representatives of all major members of the coalition as well as Tanzania's national coordinator for PMTCT. As part of the activity, the hub also utilized a structured Quality Improvement (QI) approach led by URC that supported members to generate evidence to better understand the effectiveness of key interventions. The work of the coalition and hub was guided by a national PMTCT protocol, developed by the MoH-led steering committee, which outlined a common agenda including roles for every partner and how they contributed to the coalition, the expected results of the QI approach, and how PHFS' work would be documented, including rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Tanzania

Focus: Maternal and Child Health

Hub: International NGO

Key Reflections

- USAID ensured that the activity's goals aligned with government priorities. In turn, the government became a champion, utilizing their convening power to ensure buy-in from other coalition members.
- A steering committee developed a common agenda up front with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure membership accountability and ownership.
- Sector-wide coordination and government leadership allowed members to test and scale impactful interventions for improving maternal and child health outcomes.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

In Tanzania PHFS achieved its technical objective of reducing mother to infant HIV transmission below 5% within the timeline of the activity. This was accomplished through local ownership of the initiative by MoH, who led a coalition that helped to align members' priorities and leverage resources for joint activities. The work of the coalition was also influenced by the QI approach that empowered organizations to share information and learn from each other while fostering a healthy competition among members. These combined successes led to scaling up of key activity initiatives across the country even after the project ended.

Challenges

The coalition encountered challenges in bringing together stakeholders from different backgrounds and ensuring that all members felt equally heard and included in the process. This led to the hub needing to resolve tensions with some members, especially in regard to program initiatives and funding allocations. This was accomplished through skilled facilitation by the implementing partner, joint planning and feedback sessions, and local leadership by the MoH to get all partners on the same page, resulting in the coalition lobbying USAID for increased funding for additional objectives.








Lessons Learned

The work of the coalition greatly benefitted from the development of a national protocol based on the QI approach which used members' data to generate evidence for selected interventions, furthering members' buy-in to innovative approaches to PMTCT. Additionally, the establishment of a steering committee at the outset helped to guide the coalition's work and get all members on the same page. This was all accomplished by coordinated efforts among a large group of local, national and international organizations and implementing partners working through a protocol of clear roles and responsibilities.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Activity	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	National	 Time Period	Moderate

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Coalition was convened by the implementing partner with support from the national government, lending it authority and an incentive for members to work toward a shared objective.
 Government Buy-in	Initiative designed by USAID to align with government priorities. Coalition also brought much-needed capacity and expertise to government efforts.
 Funding for Activities	The coalition directly funded many members with a focus on joint activities through the QI framework. This served as a major motivator for members to participate in the coalition.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Government assumed a leadership role, supported by a steering committee with experienced technical staff from multiple member organizations.
 Adaptability	Using principles of the QI framework, members were provided with the built-in flexibility of a reflective and adaptive approach for guiding the implementation of their activities.
 Perceived Value	Members noted access to a network, opportunities to learn from others and alignment to their goals as main motivators; the government valued access to resources and expertise it was lacking.
 Commitment to Action	Clear protocols for members' roles and responsibilities based on shared learning guided the implementation of the work, creating a shared sense of responsibility among members.

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CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Transparency Rapid Response Project

MEXICO (2016-2021)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Transparency Rapid Response Project (TRRP) was designed as a demand-driven mechanism to address a range of requests from the Government of Mexico (GOM), civil society, and USAID to support Mexican-led efforts to reduce corruption and impunity at the federal and state levels. As part of this activity, TRRP, implemented by Dexis Consulting, worked in collaboration with the Rapid Results Institute (RRI) to carry out short-term focused Collective Action efforts to help government actors within target State Anti-corruption Systems (Sistemas Estatales Anticorrupción - SEA) to increase the resolution of cases of corruption and administrative corruption proceedings.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Although most SEAs were established in 2017, the institutions that comprise them, including the state Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Audit Institution, the Inspector General's Office, and the Court of Administrative Justice, among others, had never come together to collaborate toward concrete activities and materialize their mandate of working together to curb corruption. Prior to the challenge, SEA institutions across Mexico were working in an isolated fashion with little understanding of how other institutions functioned or what their needs were.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: To address this lack of coordination, TRRP implemented a series of "100 Day Challenges" (100DC), a systems change management methodology, to foster intense collaboration across the SEA institutions and civil society partners. The 100DC approach is focused on getting system actors in the same room to identify a common objective that they then agree to work on intensely together over a duration of one-hundred days. In the case of all government agencies responsible for preventing, investigating and sanctioning corruption at the state level, members of these institutions were already convened by their respective SEA law within local state Coordinating Committees.

Collective Action Initiated: To begin each 100DC, RRI facilitated an initial Leadership Design Session, inviting the participation of senior leaders from government authorities representing each of the SEA institutions. This included representatives of the special prosecutor for anti-corruption, the President of the State Supreme Court, the inspectors general, external auditors, civil society members and private sector representatives. The members of the coalition then worked to identify key priorities to curb corruption and big picture goals to support the effort. The initial design session was followed by a launch workshop where frontline team members (e.g., judges, prosecutors, administrators, auditors, etc.) are brought together to identify the activities and innovations that they will jointly deliver to achieve their shared goal.

Collective Action Structure: Using the existing SEA structure in all the states where 100DCs took place, the front-line teams held weekly meetings to present their progress to other members of this initiative, an approach that both increased the pace of collaboration and held members accountable to one another. At a mid-point workshop, the system leaders and their operational staff managers reviewed the progress to date and adjusted plans seeking to meet goals by the end of the 100DC.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Mexico

Focus: Anti-Corruption

Hub: Government

Key Reflections

- Tangible short-term results can help build relationships and strengthen the case for collaboration, even within potentially rigid government structures.
- Collective Action approach provides room for flexibility of scope, goals and methods to achieve goals while still operating within a structured collaborative model.
- A base level of political will is an essential precondition for collaboration, even if actors are not exactly aligned on approach, scope, or goals.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

Through focused collaboration, SEA institutions were able to drastically improve their productivity, translating to an increased efficiency for state anti-corruption systems. This in turn resulted in dramatic increases in the number of administrative corruption proceedings resolved, including in some high-profile cases that attracted international attention. According to participants of the 100DC, the approach also greatly improved the coordination and communication among institutions, motivated public employees participating in the exercise, and helped civil society better understand the roles and process of SEA institutions, as well as the challenges they face. The process has since been replicated in six states in Mexico with the support of TRRP, RRI, USAID and state authorities.

Challenges

In one location where TRRP sought to work with SEA institutions, some government participants raised concerns about how much civil society would participate in the program. In this case, potential champions within SEA institutions turned out to be spoilers, who, because of their position in the local political economy, were able to slow down the progress of the coalition and eventually used the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason to justify not continuing the work of the group. The TRRP team realized the challenges early through internal capacity and landscaping assessments and adjusted their work accordingly.








Lessons Learned

The 100DC approach within TRRP shows achieving substantial short-term results can help to not only build relationships but also strengthen the case for collaboration, as group members see a tangible output of their intensive coordination. With regular check-ins and dedicated support, the process also highlights how flexibility can be built into a structured collaborative approach, even on a short timeline. Additionally, the challenges that the project encountered show that a minimum base level of political will is an essential precondition for collaboration, even if actors are not aligned on approach.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Intervention	 Range of Actors	Targeted
 Geographic Scope	Sub-National	 Time Period	Short

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	State authorities had the mandate to convene and develop joint anti-corruption strategies under their respective State Anti-Corruption legislation.
 Government Buy-in	TRRP assessed conditions for collaboration and held early consultations with key government officials.
 Funding for Activities	Committee members' individual activities were funded by state authorities through existing mechanisms.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Government-appointed committee president with structure mirroring official government organizational charts. Members also benefited from the support of TRRP and RRI as experienced facilitators.
 Adaptability	Members define their own goals and methods for achieving them within the 100-day timeframe.
 Perceived Value	Members were able to generate political capital by showing the public and their supervisors that they were achieving success through collaboration.
 Commitment to Action	Weekly meetings led to intensive collaboration creating a sense of accountability to one another among members; participants were responsible to their supervisors to show action; early wins helped build and maintain commitment to the approach.

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CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Clean Air Green Cities

VIETNAM (2017-2022)

BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Clean Air Green Cities (CAGC) activity aims to establish networks and strengthen linkages among key stakeholders in Hanoi, Vietnam to improve air quality and associated health issues. This is being accomplished through a Collective Action model implemented by Live and Learn as the coalition hub, within USAID's Local Works program. The activity seeks to build a critical mass of aligned actions by bringing together local governments, business, community members, educators and youth. As part of the approach, the hub is working to build the capacity of coalition members to effectively advocate for improved air quality by conducting networking and knowledge sharing events, increasing access to resources to implement direct actions, and improving awareness of air quality issues among community members.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Air pollution from agriculture, transportation, and industries has dramatically increased in Hanoi as a result of Vietnam's rapid economic development and is an increasing concern among the population. Although there were many scientists, research groups and other advocates working on this issue, when Live and Learn began the project in 2017, many air quality stakeholders were working in isolation and unknown to one another. Moreover, the local government was also unaware of the research and advocacy being undertaken by local stakeholders and thus, was unaware of emerging approaches for addressing the issue. Thus, a network of stakeholders focused on air quality could both improve knowledge on the issue and support the government in policy and decision making.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: The project was initially designed by the USAID Vietnam with support from USAID DC to focus on technical approaches for reducing air pollution. After the project was awarded to Live and Learn, they began to pilot activities focused on bringing stakeholders together to work collaboratively based on their past experiences. The CAGC activity was one of four projects working on environmental issues, others focused on themes such as water and plastic pollution. Live and Learn brought together a wide range of stakeholders to share knowledge and resources while working towards joint actions.

Collective Action Initiated: Live and Learn was already active in this area and thus was well-connected with several key local stakeholders. The implementer also tapped into networks through building on existing connections, reaching out through social networks, and academic conferences. By conducting multiple meetings and repeated interactions with potential coalition members, Live and Learn built trust among stakeholders to get them on board with a common agenda.

Collective Action Structure: Live and Learn served as the hub and in the first phase of the project, mobilized over 80 stakeholders to build linkages among local organizations on air pollution and health impacts. The hub facilitated discussions among core coalition members (i.e., critical actors focused on policy, advocacy and research) and network members (e.g., schools, community members, youth, etc.) who played a supporting role in the coalition. As a hub, Live and Learn maintained a flexible approach, provided needed

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Vietnam

Focus: Air Quality

Hub: Local NGO

Key Reflections

- The hub utilized existing connections to bring a wide group of members together and used evidence-based communication to gain government buy-in.
- A flexible hub worked to understand different members' needs and roles that they could play to participate in topic-specific working groups.
- Members were motivated to participate by gaining access to other stakeholders' expertise and skills and collectively working together on a shared issue.

support to organizations to inform their work and helped to foster connections through working groups on specific air quality themes. Throughout the process, the hub sought to ensure that each subgroup had a clear strategy, members had the resources they needed to take action and decision making among the members were locally led.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

Clean Air Green Cities achieved many of its objectives including mobilizing multiple networks of stakeholders to share knowledge and build capacity for tackling air pollution, leveraging multiple external sources of funding, and improving community awareness of air pollution issues. The activity also led to a systematic change in Vietnam where collaboration is now part of the government's approach to other complex issues. In some cases, members have continued collaborating outside of the CAGC activity, to further their work on tackling air pollution.

Challenges

One of the main insights that emerged from the program is the need to clearly define roles and responsibilities of coalition members which led to some issues with members' accountability. The hub addressed this issue by helping each working group define clear expectations for members of the coalition. The activity also had some pushback from government actors who were reluctant to work with civil society stakeholders. Through thoughtful facilitation, the hub was able to foster connections between government and other members of the coalition as well as present science-based evidence to encourage government buy-in.








Lessons Learned

Members of the coalition noted that Live and Learn's flexible approach as a convenor, facilitator, and hub ensured that they felt supported throughout their participation in the coalition. This allowed the hub to translate the various members' expertise into impact by leveraging resources, knowledge and connections. This was accomplished through many meetings and repeated interactions to build trust in the coalition and the Collective Action process.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Activity	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	Local	 Time Period	Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Implementer leveraged existing relationships with sector stakeholders to bring members together.
 Government Buy-in	Approach provided access to technical capacity, resources, and expert knowledge that helped support government in achieving their objectives.
 Funding for Activities	Some, but not all, members received funding from the hub to implement direct action and advocacy activities.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Coalition focused on understanding stakeholders needs and earning trust which led to further motivations to participate.
 Adaptability	The hub is flexible to the needs of organizations and played a supportive role so that activities could be adaptive and responsive to local needs.
 Perceived Value	Taking part in the activity allowed members to work more efficiently towards the technical objective, gain access to networks and build relationships with actors that they continue working with outside of the activity.
 Commitment to Action	Although there was a need to clearly define roles and responsibilities earlier in the project, the hub was able to align members' objectives with the overall project's goal.



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COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement

NIGERIA (2014-2019)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE) activity was implemented with the goal of strengthening Nigerian civil society’s ability to influence the development and implementation of key democratic reforms at the national, state, and local levels. The activity achieved this by setting up multiple regional coalitions with a broad contingent of civil society organizations (CSOs) to improve their ability to influence policy development, increase public awareness, and advocate for economic reform around local civic issues.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Prior to the activity, CSOs often engaged the government in isolation with limited effectiveness. National, state, and local stakeholders knew that government actors were more likely to engage on civic and social topics if multiple organizations participated in advocacy activities, highlighting the need for a coordinated approach. To accomplish this, SACE specifically identified social sectors such as education, disability, and gender where Collective Action could be used as a mechanism to influence government.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: SACE employed a “Cluster / Anchor” model based on research by subcontractor Root Change on the efficacy of collective impact initiatives and other collaborative efforts. The approach is based on the concept that advocacy organizations build and use social capital to navigate a network of relationships within a community of peers and other demand- and supply-side stakeholders. SACE organized 18 “clusters” (coalitions) of CSOs working on clearly defined issue areas with shared visions for change. Each coalition was facilitated by an “anchor” organization (convener, hub and facilitator) charged with managing collaboration, strategy alignment, and communication. Working in this way, the Cluster/Anchor model aimed to strengthen the social capital of CSOs, improve their ability to form common agendas and coordinate strategies, and build a more resilient and nimble Nigerian civil society.

Collective Action Initiated: SACE identified CSO partners through a collaborative and rigorous selection process, ensuring representative geographic focus across Nigeria. The anchor organizations were selected based on their reputation in the local context, their institutional capacity to act as a hub and facilitator, and potential to provide sectoral leadership in their thematic area. The activity prioritized the inclusion of previously excluded groups (e.g., youth, women, and persons with disabilities) to help address a wide variety of advocacy issues related to governance, transparency, and accountability.

Collective Action Structure: The activity provided the 18 anchor CSOs with multi-year grants and training to support facilitation of the coalitions and to strengthen their organizational capacity to collectively engage key government and non-government stakeholders on shared issues. Each anchor organization then convened a diverse group of stakeholders around their shared issues and collectively planned how they would structure their effort, including what roles each organization would play in the coalition. The coalitions were supported by adaptive management practices and training provided by the implementing organization. That organization employed a suite of ‘lighter-touch’ operational tools (e.g., political economy analysis, advocacy strategy matrix) that could be used on a continual basis to evaluate and adapt each coalition’s strategies towards civic engagement.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Nigeria

Focus: Governance and Civil Society

Hub: Local NGOs

Key Reflections

- Understanding local accountability ecosystems is key to designing effective collective approaches by seeing where political will and economy lie within a network.
- Building in effective Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) practices from the onset can help members trust that the approach will adjust when needed.
- Flexibility and space to innovate are needed at all levels of activity leadership to ensure that the coalitions are responsive to local needs.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

The SACE approach proved to be effective at influencing government policy development and implementation by achieving a multitude of significant policy outcomes across twenty-five of Nigeria's states. Simultaneously, the activity also substantially improved the skills and capacity of local CSOs not only to advocate with local government, but also to apply for, absorb, and manage donor funds. Since the activity close-out, multiple CSOs have secured grants from other international donors to continue work initiated during SACE. Many organizations are also participating in USAID's follow-on "Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement" (SCALE) activity, which likewise seeks to strengthen the financial, managerial, technical and advocacy capacity of local CSOs in Nigeria through a collaborative approach.

Challenges

Despite this success, CSO capacity development was not uniform and some continued to face challenges meeting project requirements for grants management. Staff turnover, especially of finance staff, required SACE to make training an ongoing piece and to bring in external expertise. The project also had to work within a challenging and dynamic political environment, including responding to the transition of key policy decision-makers in the wake of nation-wide elections. Implementers also noted the challenges of working to build-in an adaptive and iterative approach within a five-year donor-funded cycle with pre-defined project indicators.








Lessons Learned

Overall, the activity was able to achieve its goals and learn along the way due to capable and flexible leadership at all levels including the implementing partners, anchor organizations acting as the hubs, and USAID mission staff, in particular the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). The implementers credit the accountability ecosystems that were built into the process for ensuring that the Collective Action intervention delivered on its goals while simultaneously practicing genuine adaptive management. SACE also demonstrated the efficacy of using the social capital of anchor organizations to act as hubs and support the capacity building of smaller, more nascent organizations. With 18 clusters, the project showed that this Collective Action approach has potential to scale even in large and complex political ecosystems such as Nigeria.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Intervention	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	Sub-National	 Time Period	Moderate

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Implementer leveraged leadership of anchor organizations to build legitimacy of clusters.
 Government Buy-in	Approach varied by cluster; implementers built trust through existing relationships with local government.
 Funding for Activities	Only anchor organizations were funded for collaborative projects within each cluster.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Cluster / anchor structure led by organizations with strong operating capacity and leadership.
 Adaptability	Project employed an adaptive-management approach, allowing members to plan their own work and reflect at regular intervals.
 Perceived Value	Members valued the opportunity to work with others in their advocacy space, training and skills from the implementer, and increased access to funding resources.
 Commitment to Action	Activity used a cluster feedback tool to provide transparency on performance assessment and incorporate feedback into future performance, leadership, and programming decisions.



CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Sanitation for Health

UGANDA (2018-ONGOING)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Uganda Sanitation for Health (USHA) activity’s goal is to increase the number of people with access to improved and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, ultimately leading to improved health and nutrition outcomes in focus areas and population groups in Uganda. The activity seeks to achieve these goals by developing new management models for WASH services, promoting safe hygiene behaviors in schools and health care facilities, and strengthening WASH sector policy reforms. To address policy reforms, the implementing organization combined field research with a Collective Action approach to develop a National Sanitation Marketing Strategy (NSMS).

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Prior to the start of the project, sector actors were aware of gaps in the supply side of the market-based sanitation (MBS) service chain in Uganda. While local private sector actors and NGOs had piloted various approaches to improve the sanitation market, they were not able to scale-up these efforts. Taking a collective approach, the project sought to address system-wide barriers within the sanitation market by fostering collaboration to inform, develop, and later oversee, a national strategy for market-based sanitation.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: To facilitate the development of this strategy, USHA used a Collective Impact approach that was facilitated by subcontractor FSG, supporting implementing partner Tetra Tech. The Collective Impact approach focuses on five conditions to catalyze alignment among stakeholders in order to produce meaningful results: (1) a common agenda; (2) shared measurement systems; (3) mutually-reinforcing activities; (4) continuous communication; and (5) backbone support, typically a delegated group or organization that provides logistic, administrative, coordination and management functions. Using this framework, the intervention aimed to help organizations actively coordinate their actions, create alignment among coalition members, and share key lessons learned across sector actors.

Collective Action Initiated: Members of the coalition for NSMS were identified at the beginning of the intervention through the implementers’ existing connections in the Ugandan WASH sector. After the potential members were identified, FSG and Tetra Tech convened an initial group of 30 stakeholders to better understand the MBS system, align coalition members’ perspectives around a common vision, clarify roles and responsibilities and form a steering committee to guide the work of the coalition. The national-level steering committee was tasked with leveraging the coalition members’ expertise to collectively develop a national strategy for MBS. FSG facilitated the steering committee to explore relationships among actors, identify barriers to MBS, and investigate where power lies among the sector’s stakeholders.

Collective Action Structure: The Collective Impact process followed a highly-structured approach with the steering committee providing the backbone support (as the hub) with approximately 20 regular members. The implementers, supporting the hub and also playing the role of facilitator, established a working group to lead the research and development of the NSMS. To support the steering committee and research subcommittee with a deeper understanding of the drivers and barriers to MBS in Uganda, Tetra Tech conducted an in-depth study of MBS in Uganda. Later in the project, after completion of a draft NSMS, the steering committee

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Uganda
Focus: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
Hub: International NGO transition to Government

Key Reflections

- Coalition used a highly-structured collective impact approach to produce tangible and meaningful results in a short time frame.
- Stakeholders had a history of past collaboration and shared responsibility through existing working groups, which was leveraged to convene and align members.
- Key members central to the network were able to easily identify and convene other actors, even those who operated outside of the existing network.

also set up task forces (i.e., working groups) to focus on key thematic areas of implementing the NSMS including delivery models, sales and marketing, financing, policy, and products.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

Within a year, the Collective Action effort had engaged a wide range of actors from national government, NGOs, private sector, donors, and multilateral organizations to successfully develop a NSMS. The group presented the strategy to the Ministry of Health for approval and then quickly transitioned to setting up task forces to guide the implementation of the new strategy. Additionally, the steering committee was absorbed into the National Sanitation Working Group and intends to meet quarterly to continue its work on advancing MBS in Uganda.

Challenges

Although the steering committee completed the NSMS in 2019, as of 2022 it has yet to be formally adopted by the Ministry of Health, due mainly to the Ministry’s focus on Uganda’s COVID-19 response. While this process is largely viewed as a formality, the setback continues to delay the implementation of the NSMS. Once it is approved, steering committee members note that approaches for implementing and fully realizing MBS remain a challenge to the sector; an issue that will need to be addressed for the NSMS to truly have an impact on sanitation customers in Uganda. Additionally, a shared measurement system proposed by the steering committee has yet to be fully utilized, which may indicate a lack of commitment to collective monitoring.

Lessons Learned








FSG and Tetra tech achieved their Collective Action goal in a short period of time due to a well-facilitated collaborative structure, a network of stakeholders with pre-existing relationships, and the convening power and political capital of key members of the coalition. Because of this, the coalition was able to quickly align stakeholders around a common vision, solicit input on key drivers and barriers for MBS, and translate those insights into an actionable national strategy.

The collective approach was aided by past experience with ‘shared responsibility’ in the sector exemplified through the National Sanitation Working Group. This network of over 50 organizations had existed since 2003, and its members had collectively produced a national sector performance report each year. Many participants in the steering committee were also members of the National Sanitation Working Group, and a key member of Tetra Tech’s leadership was the chairperson of this committee. This individual’s unique experience and knowledge of members in the sanitation network allowed him to act as a “catalyst,” greatly facilitating the process of identifying and convening prospective coalition members, even those who were not part of the National Sanitation Working Group.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Intervention	 Range of Actors	Targeted
 Geographic Scope	National	 Time Period	Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Implementer leveraged key sector actors’ networks to identify and convene partners.
 Government Buy-in	Government brought in early on and participated in all phases of the process.
 Funding for Activities	No funding for individual organizations; funds provided for research subcommittee to support the coalition’s work.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Experienced leaders, delegated working groups, and external facilitators. The team also conducted detailed preparations for meetings well in advance and produced highly detailed documentation of each session.
 Adaptability	Work was guided by a task force that provided research to the coalition with insights to adapt its approach.
 Perceived Value	Value propositions identified up-front, including members’ ability to learn from others, leverage their work, engage with non-typical partners, and improve adoption of MBS.
 Commitment to Action	Collective impact approach included clear roles and responsibilities for members; the coalition facilitator (FSG) assigned homework between meetings and followed-up with individual members.



CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group

BANGLADESH (2014-2016)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: In 2014, six activities came together and formed the Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group (BLCG) to address the need for coordination in leveraging collective resources for improved livestock production in the country. The goal of the coalition was to significantly impact beneficiaries within the USAID-supported Feed the Future Zone of Influence whose livestock sector was least developed in the southern region of Bangladesh. In organizing the collective effort, the coalition also recognized the need to harmonize capacity building efforts across the six activities in order to have a more coordinated and synergistic effect.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Prior to the BLCG, the majority of donor-funded livestock projects had no plans or intentions to collaborate with others due to perverse incentives around competition for future funding. Even in cases where activities had similar interventions, implementing organizations tended to work in silos. At the same time, the challenge was high as livestock production within the Feed the Future Zone of Influence was marginal due to unfavorable weather conditions for livestock production when compared to other parts of the country.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: The coalition was created as a way for implementing activities to coordinate their work, identify potential opportunities to leverage resources, and where appropriate, synergize interventions to maximize their collective results. Members of the coalition – implementing organizations, NGOs, donors, civil society organizations, and private sector actors – came together to share information on their projects, challenges they were experiencing, and lessons learned that helped them to better explore technical assistance opportunities to improve their work.

Collective Action Initiated: The program was convened by USAID/Bangladesh and after two months of stakeholder consultations, USAID brought the relevant activity partners together to commit their time and technical expertise to the BLCG coalition. A key approach that BLCG utilized for convening members was to focus on interventions common to all the projects which could be implemented collectively.

Collective Action Structure: With USAID acting as the hub and facilitator of the coalition, members came together for regular meetings with each of the coalition members hosting meetings on a rotating basis. USAID's collaboration approach was intentionally flexible. For example, meetings and collective activities could be adjusted by consensus of the coalition's members. Additionally, each member (representing a separate USAID activity) used its own funds to support its participation in the coalition. For challenging issues outside of the coalition's scope or expertise, USAID brought in technical experts for training and capacity building activities.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Bangladesh

Focus: Agriculture, Livestock

Hub: USAID

Key Reflections

- Member connections established prior to the coalition helped in convening members by building on existing relationships.
- Working with different project, activity, and donor priorities and timelines requires a flexible and adaptive collaborative approach.
- For donors to better support collaboration, they need to be more flexible and include collaboration explicitly in the activity objectives.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

Through its collective efforts, the BLCG was able to engage with major players in the livestock sector who expressed willingness to work with the coalition, but who had previously been working in isolation. The coalition managed to organize and execute multiple inter-activity projects, a development that was unheard of before the formation of BLCG. As a result of the coalition, farmers from the less developed focal region of the country received more training than previously available to them and are now using improved technologies and approaches in their livestock work.

Challenges

Because the coalition brought together multiple externally-funded activities, the members each had different priorities, which led to the need to focus on a common agenda. However, the members' donor's priorities restrained their flexibility in working outside of their individual activity's goals. Later, a terrorist attack in 2016 in the area resulted in the exodus of many members of the coalition and led to restrictions of movement for those who remained. This unfortunate development abruptly ended the coalition's work. The group was thus not able to implement many of its collective efforts or create sufficient documentation of its work.








Lessons Learned

After the abrupt exodus of many donor staff from the country, the longevity of the coalition was dependent on the capacity and availability of the remaining implementing partners, which was limited. Additionally, although the coalition took a flexible approach to its organization and processes, some members noted that more clear roles, responsibilities, and objectives would have benefited the coalition's work. This was especially true when defining the value proposition for members of the coalition. Furthermore, members reflected that while donor-led coalitions are a welcomed change, collaboration needs to be included in individual activity's objectives, otherwise they will not have an incentive to spend resources to support such collaboration.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Project	 Range of Actors	Targeted
 Geographic Scope	National	 Time Period	Short

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	USAID, as a hub, was able to convene other donors' activities. The individual "catalyst" from USAID had a network, good reputation, passion for the topic, and energy to organize the group. The hub also leveraged convening power from another member of the group.
 Government Buy-in	Members lobbied the government on policies relevant to their work which motivated engagement. However, the government did not take part in the collaboration.
 Funding for Activities	Each member funded its own participation, and its own work. USAID, as a hub, provided resources for training by experts.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Experienced and strong individual leadership understood members' work and needs.
 Adaptability	Collaborative approach changed based on group consensus.
 Perceived Value	Collaboration helped fill members' capacity gaps, provided an opportunity to work with other actors in the sector and share information and approaches on their common goal.
 Commitment to Action	Hub ensured that members fulfilled their required tasks before next steps were taken.



CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

CORE Group Polio Project

HORN OF AFRICA — KENYA & SOMALIA (2014-2024)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: In 2013, the outbreak of wild poliovirus (WPV) in the Horn of Africa (HOA) triggered a coordinated national and regional response to interrupt continued transmission of the virus. In response, the CORE Group Polio Project (CGPP) which was created in 1999, initiated polio eradication activities on the Kenya-Somalia border beginning in 2014 because these border areas were deemed a high risk for polio spread.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Due to insecure borders with the possibility of armed conflicts, combined with weakened health systems lacking resources constraining Kenya and Somalia's governments, it was clear to regional stakeholders that cross-border collaboration was needed to realize truly effective immunization activities. Under the leadership of the respective Ministries of Health (MoHs) of Kenya and Somalia and in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the CGPP decided to lead a collective effort to fill the collaboration gap in this region.

These meetings led to the formation of the Cross-Border Health Initiative (CBHI). The purpose of the CBHI model is to support joint inter-country coordination efforts in disease surveillance and response. The initiative also seeks to bridge surveillance gaps by forming partnerships across institutions, agencies, and communities in cross-border areas.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: The CGPP sought to leverage existing partnerships within the sector by bringing together representatives of government agencies, implementing agencies, civil society, and NGOs. Acting as a hub, the CGPP secretariat is built into CORE Group's working model. This entity is independent of implementing agencies and functions as a technical resource, oversees work to ensure quality, and facilitates coordination. In order to discourage competition within the coalition, members present 'bundled' (i.e., collaborative) proposals to secure funds for joint polio eradication efforts. During CGPP's early years, it worked with the USAID mission in Kenya and Somalia as well as local Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) to focus on polio eradication efforts. Thus, to further the collaborative effort, the CGPP developed agreements with each country's national governments in close collaboration with the WHO and UNICEF.

Collective Action Initiated: The initial idea was proposed by USAID mission personnel who recognized the role that NGOs have in filling gaps in service delivery programs and the important role they play in collaborative coalitions. They developed the bundled proposal request in which several organizations and agencies submitted the proposal to USAID on behalf of the CORE Group NGO members. This same model was used for the CGPP, in which INGOs and national NGOs interested in collaborating on polio eradication submitted a bundled proposal to receive funding. Participants were identified based on their work in polio eradication and established working relationships with communities. In collaboration with WHO and the Kenya and Somalia MoHs, the CGPP in the Horn of Africa has five international and one local NGO as implementing partners.

Collective Action Structure: CGPP is not a stand-alone organization which is formally registered but rather a long-running project. This CGPP structure was operationalized through the formation of in-country secretariats, which act as hubs and neutral working groups across partner NGO networks. These secretariats work closely with key stakeholders such as NGOs and governments to

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Kenya, Somalia

Focus: Healthcare

Hub: Secretariat

Key Reflections

- An independent, secretariat model was utilized to effectively coordinate donor-funded projects, NGOs and civil society to work towards a shared common goal.
- Collaborative approach has gained the ownership of country governments, helping to ensure collaborative success as the government is the key actor within healthcare service delivery.
- Clears roles and responsibilities, codified in government documents, help to support, guide and improve the efficacy of the initiative.

coordinate work and facilitate interaction among coalition members. In the Horn of Africa, the secretariat worked closely with the two MoHs to draw up terms of reference for the CBHI to structure regular meetings and outline roles for reporting and implementation of action plans. Members come together monthly to do joint workplan, reporting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), training review, and learning.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

The CBHI meetings resulted in harmonizing collective efforts to strengthen surveillance, routine immunization, and supplementary activities to prepare for a region-wide response to any polio outbreak. The CBHI has improved information sharing between countries on polio eradication by identifying and addressing surveillance and immunity gaps in high-risk mobile populations, and by developing plans to synchronize work along the border regions. Because of these actions, the CGPP in the horn of Africa has successfully interrupted the spread of the wild polio virus in the region. Since its formation, the CGPP has built ownership among both national government and border community actors, further increasing its credibility.

Challenges

Cross-border work in insecure contexts can be highly challenging and dangerous. Thus, there is a need for further support in terms of funding, resources (such as bullet-proof vehicles), personnel, and safety planning. Work can be volatile as areas can be suddenly occupied by armed groups. As different actors come together to share workplans, there is mistrust and suspicion that members might encroach and take over others' work. In some cases, some entities have tried to push their own agendas to influence CGPP's work and that of the partner country governments. Additionally, some members noted issues with security concerns in certain regions where the intervention was working. However, the flexible approach of the hub and willingness of members to work together helped to overcome these issues.








Lessons Learned

For CGPP's work to fully realize its successes, the network had to be recognized and accepted by the respective national governments. However, working with governments is not sufficient for this work to be successful. There is also a need to include NGOs to fill in capacity and human resources gaps. For major agencies such as USAID and the government, dealing with one secretariat within an established collaborative structure is a time- and cost-effective approach which encourages buy-in from key players.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Activity	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	East Africa, Cross-border	 Time Period	Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	CORE group leveraged its own convening power with support from government and WHO.
 Government Buy-in	Government initiated a request to USAID for cross-border collaboration; key ministry representatives joined as members of the coalition. The activity was not possible without involvement of the government, the main health service provider.
 Funding for Activities	Members submitted a bundled proposal to USAID; all partners received funding.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Government-led with secretariat maintaining close coordination with the coalition.
 Adaptability	Members able to change and adapt their ways of working; needed remote pivot due to COVID-19.
 Perceived Value	Members valued collaboration on technical support for field activities especially in inaccessible locations where siloed work is ineffective.
 Commitment to Action	Roles and responsibilities were clearly communicated to members, with regular reporting to the secretariat.

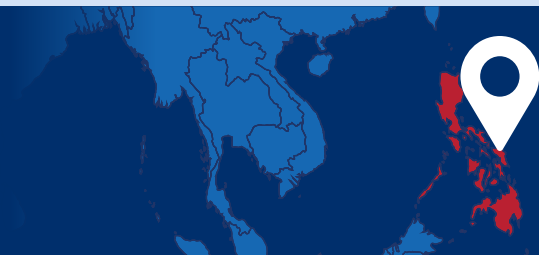


CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev)

PHILIPPINES (2013-2019)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: The Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) Program was a six-year activity targeted at addressing challenges and opportunities facing vulnerable out-of-school youth (OSY) in eleven conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, Philippines. The activity sought to do this by strengthening the social and civic connections between local government and OSY with a wide array of activities, including an intervention called local Youth Development Alliances (YDAs). The YDAs served as the foundation for program implementation by encouraging local ownership and sustainability of OSY programs and service delivery.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: Due to a wide variety of stakeholders in different social sectors, there was a lack of coordination among actors and organizations that supported OSY programming (e.g., education, government, private sector) in MYDev's targeted communities. In the initial stages of the activity, the implementing organization, Education Development Center (EDC), recognized a clear need to bridge these gaps in order to improve OSY outcomes. To ensure that vulnerable youth are at the center of MYDev programming, EDC sought to establish a mechanism for inter-agency, public-private, civil society collaboration focused on youth development that treats youth as partners, not merely beneficiaries.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: MYDev established each YDA as a new coalition that was registered and formally recognized by the city or municipality where it was set up. This mostly occurred through the use of executive orders from the mayors' office or by local council resolutions. The design of the YDAs with dedicated OSY representatives ensured that youth engagement was on an equal level with government, private sector and civil society actors. The focus of each YDA varied but was guided by a common goal among members of the coalition within each context.

Collective Action Initiated: Potential members of each YDA were identified through initial consultations with local stakeholders in each context. At the launch of each YDA, EDC along with local partners including OSY, conducted multiple baseline data gathering activities to understand the local context and factors affecting OSY. Six MYDev youth leaders, three females and three males, served as youth representatives and were selected by their peers using a participatory process during youth network formation events.

Collective Action Structure: The YDAs were chaired by the local government executive (the city or municipal mayor) or their designated representative. Members included representatives of national government ministries, private sector, local chambers of commerce, NGOs, academia, and youth themselves. The size of each YDA varied between 10-20 members. The coalitions benefited from well-defined leadership roles, written annual plans, monthly reviews, and transition plans for continuing the work of the YDAs beyond the USAID project cycle.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Philippines

Focus: Youth

Hub: Local Government

Key Reflections

- Local coalitions brought together a wide array of actors, with an emphasis on equal youth-representation, the intended program participants.
- Each Youth Development Alliance (YDA) was established and chaired by local government officials, ensuring buy-in from the outset.
- YDAs received minimal funding from the activity, instead working to leverage existing government, private sector, and civil society resources, further demonstrating the value of each coalition.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

The YDAs were able to leverage over \$1 million in resources outside of the MYDev activity budget to support programming and services for OSY. At the local level, the alliances also successfully mobilized counterpart resources such as financial assistance for learners' transportation expenses, provision of training venues, and purchase of products from youth-led self-enterprises. This was accomplished by using innovative assessment tools to identify under-utilized resources within each community. The YDAs were also successful at highlighting the multi-dimensional challenges and opportunities facing OSY by placing them at the center of the conversations about their own outcomes. Ultimately, the YDAs helped to strengthen the social contract between vulnerable youth and their respective communities.

Challenges

At the end of the project, each of the 11 YDAs established by MYDev was in a different operational state ranging from "developing" to "fully functional." The differences in the status of each YDA was due to multiple factors, including operating in conflict-affected areas, and a lack of dedicated or well-equipped learning venues in rural areas. Additionally, there were some challenges with the turnover in youth members, as they were only participants while involved in short-term training programs associated with the MYDev project.








Lessons Learned

The YDAs were able to obtain government buy-in early on in the process by formally establishing each group within the framework of the local government. This ensured that they had the support of local leaders and that representatives of the relevant local and national government offices could participate in the YDAs. The YDAs were also able to operate effectively with only limited financial support from the MYDev activity itself. This demonstrated that the coalitions did not need large amounts of dedicated funding to convene stakeholders or encourage members' participation. The YDA's youth-focused approach also demonstrated that coalitions can be led by 'uncommon' actors, who may not have the strongest political economy in a given context.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Intervention	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	Local	 Time Period	Short-Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	Alliances formally established by mayors' offices, motivating other local government institutions' participation.
 Government Buy-in	Government convened, chaired, and supported alliances from the beginning; YDAs demonstrated the value of the approach, further promoting buy-in.
 Funding for Activities	Alliances leveraged existing under-utilized government funding mechanisms, local YDA member resources and private sector funding. Minimal funds were provided directly to the implementer.
 Capable Leadership Structures	Alliances led by local governments with official mandates issued through executive orders and legislative resolutions.
 Adaptability	Each alliance chose its own approach; adaptation supported by regular use of an assessment toolkit.
 Perceived Value	Government actors valued that more resources were being utilized by OSY, quality of service improved, informed by OSY, and extremism reduced; private sector actors valued improved quality of workforce; youth valued improved livelihoods outcomes.
 Commitment to Action	The roles and responsibilities of the members of the alliance were outlined in executive orders and resolutions, including that of government and private sector.



CASE STUDY

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN USAID PROGRAMMING

Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth

(2014 - ONGOING)



BACKGROUND

Technical Objective: USAID/Kenya initiated the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) coalition in 2014 with the objective of coordinating and harmonizing activities in resilience-building among key humanitarian and development actors in the arid and semi-arid lands in Kenya. Working with diverse partners whose activities focus on the same groups of people in shared geographies, PREG’s objective is to apply member-driven approaches to strengthen livestock value chains, enable access to water sources, enhance sanitation and hygiene services, increase conservation measures, address conflict issues, and promote inclusiveness and gender responsiveness.

Existing Conditions and Collaboration Rationale: A 2010-11 drought exposed a weakness of USAID programming as the Agency lacked a systemic approach to mitigate such crises. The USAID mission in Kenya realized that existing activities were siloed and a collaborative resilience-building approach across multiple actors and sectors was needed to improve the efficacy of the programs overall. USAID recognized that the complex problem of resiliency required a systemic – and collaborative – approach instead of more traditional, siloed technical approaches. Thus, PREG focused on enhancing collaboration within USAID and among implementing partners and other key external stakeholders, including the National Drought Management Authority, national ministries, and individual county governments.

APPROACH

Collective Action Design: PREG was set up as a new coalition and was initially designed to improve internal collaboration among USAID technical offices and USG agencies. The coalition evolved to include external collaboration with implementing partners, host country government, and other donors. The collaboration works across a broad portfolio of USAID-funded activities in various technical offices including health, economic growth, and environment in 23 counties with the highest risk of drought and conflict.

Collective Action Initiated: PREG was launched with the goal of coordinating resilience and economic growth activities more holistically. The coalition was established in 2014 by USAID, with Food for Peace and Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), in partnership with the National Drought Management Authority. It then engaged each of the USAID-funded activities working in the 23 arid and semi-arid counties, along with the county management structures in each of these counties. It also engaged relevant national ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Water and Sanitation, and Ministry of Health. The coalition selected members based on their involvement in implementing resilience-building, economic growth and humanitarian activities at the county and national level.

Collective Action Structure: At the start of PREG, USAID played the role of hub. As the effort grew, the Africa Lead (PREG Learning) activity served as a hub during its award, with USAID acting in a central role of the leadership for Collective Action. Later the Resilience Learning Activity (RLA) took over the hub role, with USAID maintaining a strong presence as the coalition’s lead. USAID continues to coordinate and closely oversee PREG activities. The coalition also has technical working groups at the national and county level where members have an equal opportunity to contribute to decisions of the group.

SNAPSHOT



Background

Mission: Kenya and East Africa
Focus: Resilience
Hub: USAID, transition to International NGO

Key Reflections

- Coalition integrated complementary humanitarian and development assistance by coordinating diverse partners and multi-sectoral activities located in the same localities.
- Long-term collaboration platforms require time, resources, and incentives for effective, continuous adaptation.
- Partnerships that are continuous and not bound by funding cycles or activities have more time to mature and benefit from collective gains.

REFLECTIONS

Successes

One of PREG's key successes is that regional partners in both the humanitarian and development spaces now regularly discuss their work, and even conduct joint planning, analysis, and monitoring activities. The coalition's members have embraced PREG's integrated model, acknowledging that individual activities cannot improve regional resilience working in isolation.

The coalition has also delivered significant value to its members by establishing strong networks, providing implementing partners with opportunities to leverage funding from each other, and promoting knowledge sharing across activities. Although the PREG coalition began as a mechanism for USAID's internal collaboration, it has since expanded to include external stakeholders and as a result has become more responsive to other related development challenges.

Challenges

Within USAID, it was initially challenging to collaborate with activities that had related, but different, mandates and thus did not feel it was appropriate to join the coalition. According to implementing partners, there were no resources allocated for participation in PREG activities, in particular for travel and labor because these expenses were not considered during the design or award of activities, or in subsequent budgets or work plans. In 2019, USAID designed the Resilience Learning Activity (RLA) specifically to provide backbone support to PREG. However, the history of competition between and among the RLA implementer and other implementing partners created tension that, according to members, continues to affect the operation of the coalition.








Lessons Learned

A key lesson learned from PREG is that new coalitions that develop organically can benefit from structuring and formalizing the Collective Action effort over time, even if its operations are flexible at the outset. PREG's ability to adapt by incorporating CLA principles was critical for creating value for members and meeting the coalition's technical objectives. The PREG experience also demonstrates that partnerships which are ongoing and not bound by a single program cycle have more time to mature and benefit from cumulative gains.

Design Options

 Entry Point	Project	 Range of Actors	Diverse
 Geographic Scope	National	 Time Period	Long

Collective Action Factors for Success

 Convening Power	USAID utilized soft and persuasive power to bring actors to the table, created buy-in at the mission level, and motivated participation based on shared values.
 Government Buy-in	Government was an early and core partner; USAID aligned itself with county-level planning.
 Funding for Activities	USAID provided dedicated backbone support using buy-in mechanisms as the initiative grew; implementing partner coalition members had funding from their awards.
 Capable Leadership Structures	USAID played key roles as facilitator, funder, and convener with responsibilities delegated to a backbone organization. Over time, the backbone (awarded to an implementer) took more responsibility.
 Adaptability	Coalition used a CLA approach; frequent adaptations grounded in a commitment to adapting based on changing contexts and circumstances, and a robust learning agenda.
 Perceived Value	Members valued access to data, technical expertise, knowledge sharing, strong networks, ability to leverage funding from each other and joint monitoring activities.
 Commitment to Action	Members motivated by a shared sense of responsibility and a common objective of collaborative resilience-building across actors and sectors.