Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence in Food Crisis Contexts

A Report on the Greater Horn of Africa Regional Knowledge Sharing Meeting

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

IDEAL

HORN | HORN OF AFRICA RESILIENCE NETWORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

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ACCESS	Accelerating Recovery and Resilience in South Sudan
BRCiS	Building Resilient Communities in Somalia
C4FC	Community-led Capacity Strengthening for Fragile Contexts
CARB	Complimentary Action for Resilience Building
CBCR	Cross-Border Community Resilience
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Networks
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operation Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCLD	Movement for Community-led Development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MWA	Millennium Water Alliance
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
P-DEC	Program for the Development of Eastern Congo
PREG	Garissa Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
RiPA	Resilience in Pastoral Areas
RKSM	Regional Knowledge Sharing Meeting
RLA	Resilience Learning Activity
SAGE	Strategic Advisory Group for Emergencies
SLI	Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating
SPARC	Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises
SomRep	Somalia Resilience Program
SPIR II	Strengthen PSNP5 Institutions and Resilience
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

From May 9–12, 2023, the Greater Horn of Africa Regional Knowledge Sharing Meeting (RKSM) on Humanitarian Development-Peace (HDP) Coherence in Food Crisis Contexts convened nearly 200 stakeholders in Naivasha, Kenya for 3 days of interactive sessions and 1 day of in-depth capacity strengthening workshops. Prompted by the unprecedented food crisis in the Greater Horn of Africa, this meeting responded to demands within the food security community to discuss ways to achieve HDP coherence.[1]

The RKSM brought together humanitarian and development practitioners to: (a) reflect on effective ways to mitigate enduring crises affecting the region and operational challenges faced by practitioners; (b) explore promising practices, enabling environments, key challenges, and longer-term solutions for better HDP coherence programming; and (c) strengthen relationships, coordination, and collaborative HDP efforts across organizations operating in the region. Participants came from across the region, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda. In all, 46 international and local organizations were represented, including implementing organizations, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), government representatives, and public international organizations.

The event was organized by the Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) activity and the Resilience Learning Activity (RLA) and co-hosted by USAID's Kenya and East Africa Mission and the Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and Resilience and Food Security (RFS), the Government of Kenya, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

6 Focus Countries
- DRC
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Uganda

41 Total Sessions
- 3 Panel Discussions
- 18 Country-Specific Sessions (3 per country)
- 20 Theme Sessions

186 Total Attendance
- 6% DRC
- 20% Ethiopia
- 20% Kenya
- 12% Somalia
- 7% South Sudan
- 15% Uganda
- 13% Regional
- 7% US

Attendees Activities
- 55% Humanitarian/Development/Peace
  - 28% Development
  - 55% Humanitarian
  - 28% Peace

46 Participating Orgs
- 85% International
- 15% Local
- 62% Non-Governmental
- 26% Government
- 8% Public International
- 4% Other

Utilizing a mix of plenary and small group sessions, the RKSM offered opportunities for discussion and country-level action planning. Nearly 200 people participated across 44 sessions, which included three panel discussions, 18 country sessions, and 20 themed sessions. These were led or co-facilitated by a total of 60 stakeholders. In addition, 100 attendees participated in their choice of four capacity-strengthening workshops led by the Movement for Community-led Development as well as the GAYA, PCS, PRO-WASH & SCALE, and REAL associate awards of IDEAL.

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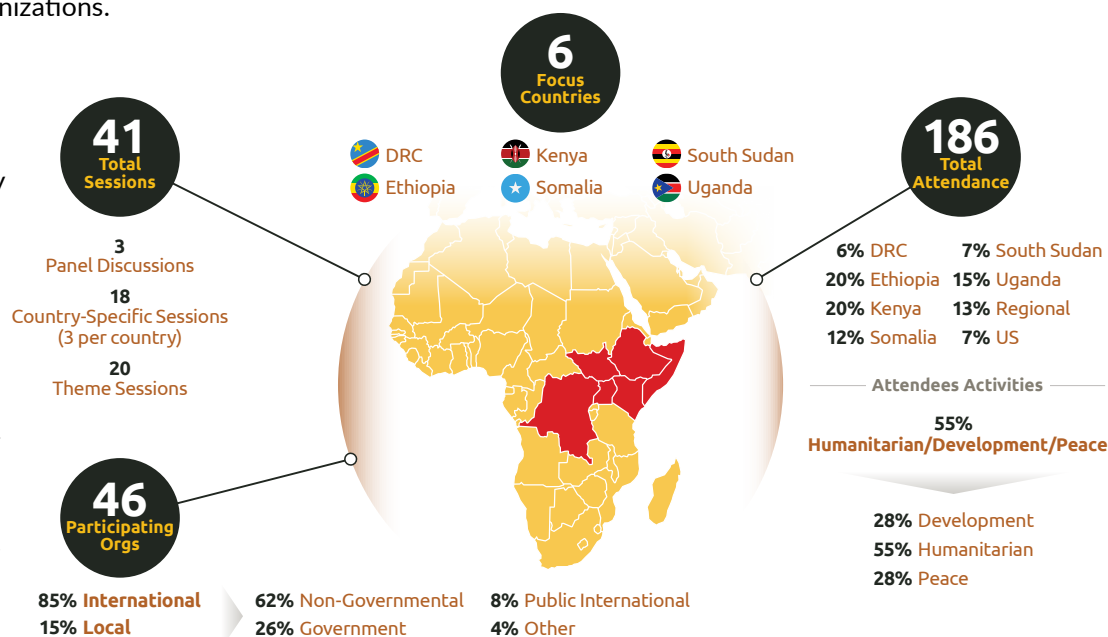
1 As defined in USAID's Programing Considerations for Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence: A Note for USAID's Implementing Partners, HDP coherence "aims to promote complementary collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peace actors…to maximize impact and sustainability of programs across different kinds of assistance and to reduce the need for humanitarian assistance (HA) over time." The principles of HDP coherence include: (1) uphold and respect humanitarian principles to ensure humanitarian assistance remains unhindered and effective; (2) plan jointly and seek a common agenda; (3) create and strengthen communication, coordination, and learning platforms across different kinds of assistance; (4) strategically sequence, layer, and integrate humanitarian, development, and peace assistance where appropriate; (5) promote shock-responsive programming and data-driven adaptive management; (6) champion conflict integration and opportunities for enabling or building peace where possible; and (7) ensure programming is with, by, and through local partners and systems. Underpinning each of these key principles is USAID's crosscutting commitment to gender equality and inclusive development.

This report presents the RKSM's primary learnings on improving HDP coherence across the Greater Horn of Africa. It highlights important moments from panel discussions with partners, key takeaways emerging from themed sessions, and country-specific recommendations for applying HDP coherence. Throughout the report there are links to session recordings and relevant resources. Click the tabs at the top of each page to quickly navigate to different areas of the document.

Panel Discussions

The RKSM launched with opening remarks from USAID's RFS Deputy Assistant Administrator Mia Beers, USAID's Kenya/East Africa Deputy Mission Director Sheila Roquitte, and the National Drought Management Authority of Kenya's Chief Executive Officer Hared Hassan Adan Lt Col. (Rtd). The opening panel on HDP Coherence in the Greater Horn of Africa explored the challenges of achieving HDP coherence in a complex and dynamic environment, focusing on the importance of conflict sensitivity actions, such as conflict analysis and integration, the role of local systems, and collaboration and coordination among actors working in these areas.

The second panel discussed implementing HDP initiatives at the cross-border level, especially those led by regional intergovernmental agencies, national, and sub-national governments. The last panel focused on how the transition from humanitarian assistance to development in a world of constant crisis is almost never linear. Panelists reflected on the importance of peace and partnerships, including the role of governments, financial institutions, and other private actors, to achieve successful and sustainable transitions.

Theme Sessions

In response to an IDEAL pre-event survey, over 190 practitioners working in the Greater Horn of Africa selected five themes for the RKSM to prioritize. Over the course of the RKSM, each of the five themes held one to two concurrent sessions per day, totaling 20 sessions for participants to choose from (they could attend four sessions in all throughout the week). Utilizing Liberating Structures facilitation techniques, themed sessions introduced participatory activities to draw out participants' experiences and expertise and encourage reflection and collaborative problem-solving. In addition to the five prioritized themes (defined below), centering local knowledge and conflict sensitivity were chosen as crosscutting themes to be emphasized throughout the event.

"A lot of great insights were shared, and practical actionable recommendations made. The discussions had a lot of examples we can all learn from."

- **Joint Planning:** Practical ways to link humanitarian, peace, and development program design and planning at a field level. Over the four sessions under this theme, implementing partners explored opportunities and modalities for implementing joint planning across HDP contexts, as well as enablers and barriers to successfully operationalizing joint planning.

- Collective Impact: Proven approaches to **sequence, layer, and integrate (SLI)** to address the food crisis in the Greater Horn of Africa. Under this theme, participants reflected on how local knowledge influences the SLI processes, how SLI approaches can mitigate shocks and stresses, and how to better integrate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding in food crisis responses.

- Improved **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)** for HDP Coherence: Promoting better analysis, utilization, and coordination of evidence and learning for timely and informed decision making. These sessions highlighted technologies for data sharing to support HDP coherence as well as how using early warning systems can reinforce anticipatory action. They also explored how integrating conflict monitoring and analysis can

improve MEL systems.

- Pathways Toward **Climate-Resilient Livelihoods**: New and creative adjustments to livelihoods programming including participant-led program design, interaction of livelihoods and migration, climate-resilient agriculture, and improved water management. This theme focused on interventions that enhance climate-resilient agricultural livelihoods, pastoralist approaches, and water management practices. Participants were also able to reflect on and discuss strategic priorities for long-term responses to migration in the region.

- **Adaptive Management:** Working flexibly to adjust programming, including processes for taking rapid action, utilizing reflective action planning processes and mechanisms, and shock-responsive approaches. During these sessions, implementing partners discussed the role of adaptive management in addressing key programmatic challenges, including local community involvement in context monitoring and contingency planning, how to quickly pivot when shocks and stresses occur, and how to improve the use of evidence for improving programs.

Country Sessions

Three country-specific sessions were held during the event, building on key learnings from themed sessions. Participants reflected on existing practices and gaps in applying HDP coherence principles in their country contexts and worked together to develop concrete, actionable ideas around a path forward. After brainstorming, each of the six country teams refined recommendations that would help advance HDP coherence in their specific context.

"The sessions were informative and insightful and there are clear ways we can deepen HDP coherence in our respective countries."
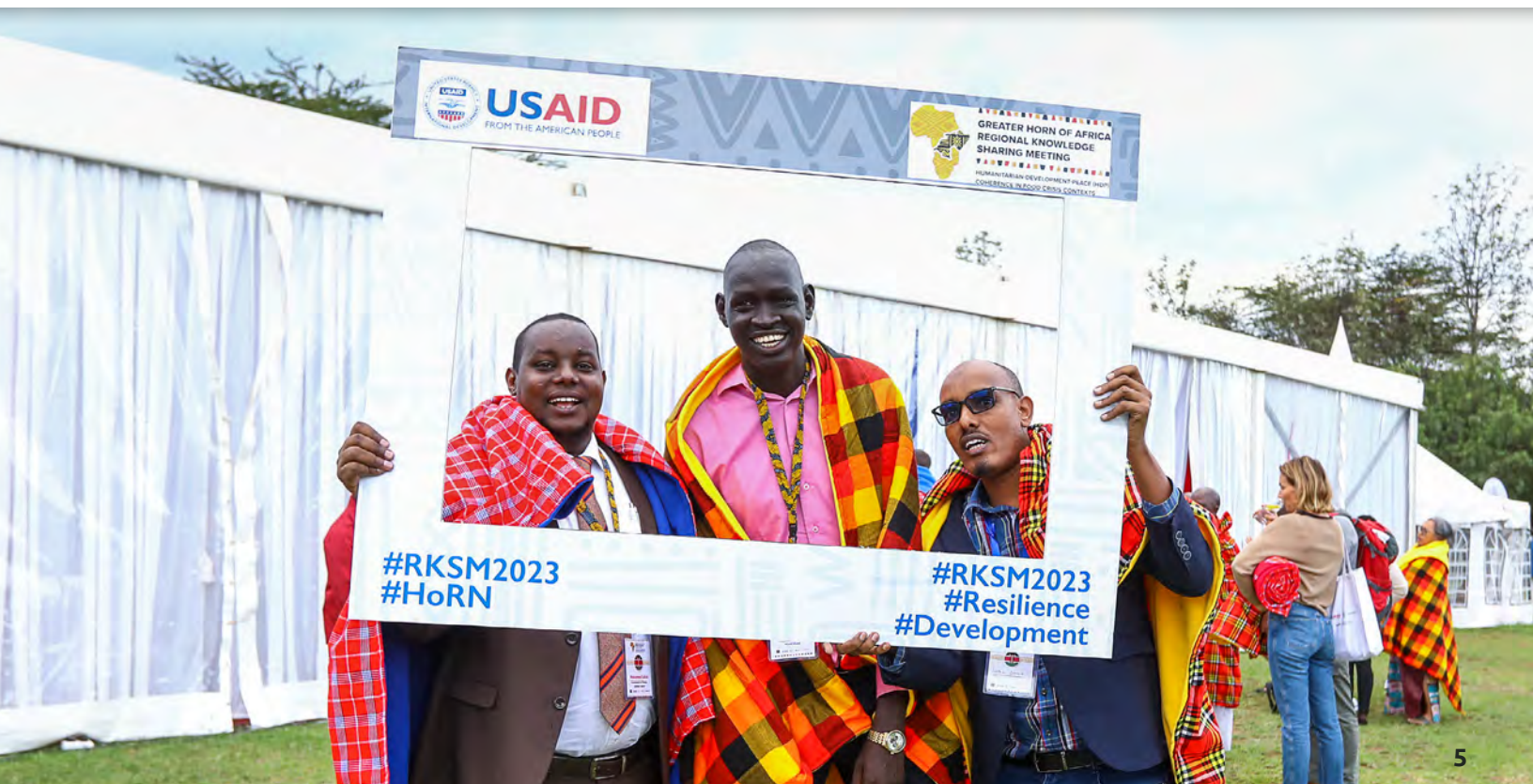
RKSM PANEL DISCUSSIONS

HDP Coherence in the Greater Horn of Africa

HDP coherence maximizes the impact of programs to reduce humanitarian need and build resilient communities able to withstand future shocks and crises. And in this panel, speakers examined how to apply HDP coherence across the Greater Horn of Africa. The discussion explored the challenges of achieving HDP coherence in a complex and dynamic environment and the importance of collaboration and coordination among actors working in these areas. There are multifaceted challenges and opportunities in achieving HDP coherence. Panelists highlighted the need for context-specific approaches, collaboration among actors, and a focus on immediate humanitarian needs, long-term resilience, and peacebuilding efforts. Conflict prevention, prioritizing localization and understanding local systems, and effective resource allocation also emerged as central themes.

Moderator: Dr. Joshua Wathanga

Panelists:
- » Tesfaye Beshah, Regional Program Coordinator, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- » Soledad Rogers, Regional Director, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance East Africa
- » Olga Petryniak, Senior Director Resilience, Mercy Corps East Africa
- » Sam Owilly, Chief Executive Officer, The BOMA Project

▶ SESSION RECORDING

LOCALIZATION
Communities are best suited to understand and identify their own needs and aspirations and often do not differentiate between humanitarian or development funding streams. Priority should be based on community needs, not the type of assistance. This can present a challenge for implementers who need funders to commit to flexible, long-term funding. However, unrestricted, multi-year funding can drive localization efforts, leading to relevant solutions responsive to local needs. For instance, The BOMA Project, a local organization initially operating in one community in northern Kenya, spent 7 years finetuning their graduation model before scaling up programming. In testing various solutions, the organization ultimately developed a context-driven, locally-led approach rooted in local capacities and resources and now operates in rural drylands across Africa.

CONFLICT
Conflict is pervasive, innate in social systems, and context dependent. Understanding these trends and dynamics is essential for mitigating conflict and sustaining development gains. The panel pointed to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on increasing conflict between communities.

> "What really worked was establishing a solution that recognizes and appreciates local capacities, is identical [sic] with local resources, and builds a shared understanding, value, and common agenda with local actors, governments, and communities."
>
> —*Sam Owilly, Chief Executive Officer, BOMA Project*

This shock impacted food prices and economies while accelerating conflict, leading to lost livelihood opportunities for youth, fewer opportunities for communities to share conflict warning information, or the ability to meet to revive peace agreements. To address conflict, practitioners must deliberately incorporate conflict sensitivity into multi-year programs and humanitarian investments, such as by strengthening social connections through cash interventions. Layering substantive peace assistance funds into areas with ongoing development work is critical. In Karamoja, Uganda, for example, the Apolou activity (development) was layered with USAID EKISIL (peace) to engage activity participants in different peace forums and youth groups alongside other interventions. As a result, conflict-affected communities were able to peacefully negotiate grazing rights on their own without programming support.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Geographically co-locating programming and partnerships is essential. "We need to get development actors out of the county capitals and closer to where the humanitarian caseload is," Soledad Rodgers of USAID/BHA insisted. The panel noted that many programs benefit from multiple cycles of investments, allowing partnerships to be effective in emergencies and enabling localized, targeted pivots. Additionally, sharing context-monitoring data can improve the ability to tailor interventions to unique conditions as shocks arise. In Kenya, for example, investments across humanitarian and development actors enabled partners to collaborate to support a community facing water challenges. Co-led by the county government, multiple development partners—including those working on USAID Nawiri and Feed the Future Kenya Livestock Market Systems Activity—worked with the World Food Programme and other humanitarian and peace assistance partners in the area to provide the labor, resources, and training to supply the community with clean water. Collaboration is central to HDP coherence and panelists advised USAID to make this a requirement.

SYSTEMS SUPPORT

In emergencies, people overwhelmingly turn to local markets and social systems for support. Which is why the most effective shock-responsive interventions recognize, integrate, and strengthen local capacities and resources. For instance, USAID Nawiri worked with women entrepreneurs to negotiate bulk purchases from food traders so they could open small markets closer to communities. In turn, community members could utilize their emergency cash transfers to support the market system. As multi-year programming will inherently face multiple shocks and operate with limited resources, it is imperative to act early and locally, utilizing anticipatory action to alleviate suffering and improve programming impact. Stakeholder mapping is also key, as understanding and mitigating power disparities between communities, government, and funding partners is central to successful programming.

> "If we are going to act locally, we need to understand how we are jointly targeting, understand where we are investing, and share context-monitoring data so that we are able to respond and tailor interventions to unique conditions in different affected areas."
>
> —Olga Petryniak, Senior Director Resilience, Mercy Corps East Africa

Inclusive and Context-Specific Design and Implementation of HDP Initiatives at the Cross-Border Level

Moderator: Kimberly Hickok Smith, Consultant, Filatec

Panelists:
   » Dr. Dereje Wakjira, Director, IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD)
   » Yasin Salah, Regional Resilience and Livestock Development Specialist, USAID Kenya/East Africa
   » Jebiwot Sumbeiywo, Chief of Party, Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity

▶ **SESSION RECORDING**

More than 100 million people live in interconnected border areas across the Greater Horn of Africa. Faced with persistent insecurity—largely driven by resource competition, clannism, and political differences, exacerbated by recurrent conflicts and climate change—implementing HDP coherence initiatives in cross-border regions is both vital and uniquely challenging. Access to these areas is often hindered by limited infrastructure, making it difficult to attract private investors. The historical focus on national development has sidelined cross-border considerations, and weak governance structures further complicate efforts. Elite capture and inequality also remain significant hurdles to overcome. But despite these obstacles, the hybrid nature of borderlands presents special opportunities for economic development and HDP coherence programming.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cross-border regions hold great potential for trade and economic development. Leveraging the interconnectedness of these areas to develop trade corridors can foster economic growth, reduce humanitarian needs, and enhance security. To succeed, all stakeholders must have strong networking, coordination, and ongoing communication. Some border locations have particularly robust networking, such as at the Kenya/Uganda border, which encourages coordination and engagement by the local governments on both sides. In 2019, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding related to cross-border programming to support sustainable peace and development. The Kenyan government has

> "What we do in development in cross-border areas we can't confine to political boundaries because it is a socially connected area."
>
> —*Dr. Dereje Wakjira, Director, IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development*

set up working groups, including a national steering committee, to bring together stakeholders to promote HDP coherence and convened development partners to address issues facing high-need populations in drought- and conflict-affected areas. In addition, Kenya has adopted regional policies and implemented them at the national level, such as policies that support the movement of people and goods across countries. Multilateral funding opportunities, such as those from the Green Climate Fund, offer financial support for initiatives in these regions.

SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

At the cross-border level, supporting local organizations to take up all three pillars of the HDP nexus is a key strategy for HDP coherence. Local organizations often fill many roles and deeply understand the cross- border context, making them well suited to implement initiatives across the HDP nexus. Long-term investments in these organizations can promote

sustainability and reduce dependency on external funding. In Uganda's Karamoja region, a long-time local organization was able to transition from exclusively working on peace assistance to include development after receiving support from the Karamoja cluster. While initially focused on building social cohesion and relationships in conflict-affected communities, the organization lost relevance as key issues, such as cattle rustling thefts, decreased. However, once the cluster started working with the organization, it became clear that their extensive local expertise made them well placed to work in a development context as well. Their in-depth understanding of the cross-border context, existing conflicts, and the necessary negotiations for activities in these circumstances, such as negotiating to move pastures, were key advantages that translated well to development work.

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC AND FLEXIBLE FINANCING MODELS

Context-specific and flexible financing models are key to addressing the multiple shocks experienced in cross-border regions. Kenya is utilizing focused financial models that factor in shock responsiveness and crisis response, such as the Kenyan National Drought Emergency Fund (implemented through the National Drought Management Authority), which looks at building resilience as well as response and recovery. Additionally, The Impact for Northern Kenya Fund brings private sector investment to rural areas in southern Kenya, while also integrating elements of conflict sensitivity and social cohesion. For instance, the Fund works with the government to set up policies related to disaster risk management, climate adaptation, and other needs. Donors should explore innovative mechanisms, such as insurance for livestock and crops, as well as integrating HDP coherence elements into multilateral funding for climate change, to ensure adequate funding for initiatives.

> "There needs to be much more information gathering and mapping of who is who and who are the stakeholders within the different contexts."
>
> —*Jebiwot Sumbeiywo, Chief of Party, Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity*

Finding Recovery in the Nexus: Is Transition From Humanitarian Assistance to Development Possible in a World of Constant Crisis?

When crisis strikes, humanitarian assistance is often at the fore in providing immediate life-saving aid. However, the ultimate goal is to help affected communities transition from a state of emergency to a more sustainable and resilient state of development. Shifting from humanitarian assistance to development is almost never linear and, in a world of constant crisis, development efforts must be adaptable and flexible, able to respond quickly to changing circumstances and emerging needs. Panelists shared their experiments with new approaches, what they have learned from successes and failures, and ways of working together with various actors to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered in a way that lays the foundation for long-term development.

Moderator: Rita Larok, Chief of Party, Graduating to Resilience, AVSI Uganda

Panelists:
- » Tracy O'Heir, USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, Deputy Director, Office of Technical and Program Quality
- » Erickson Bisetsa, Chief of Party, Accelerating Recovery and Resilience in South Sudan (ACCESS), World Vision South Sudan
- » Sarah Hulburt, Deputy Chief of Party, Livelihoods for Resilience, CARE Ethiopia

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▶ **SESSION RECORDING**

WHAT WORKS

Communities, governments, and partners often have different incentives to transition from humanitarian aid to development. Implementing partners must prioritize collaborative efforts and creative thinking across programming to understand and resolve challenges faced by various partners, ensuring progress towards development. These processes should not be sequential but rather simultaneous. Multi-year humanitarian programming, seen in the contexts of the Upper Nile region of South Sudan where short-term life-saving interventions remained necessary alongside development interventions, demonstrates the need to move away from siloed humanitarian or development phases and embrace both approaches concurrently.

> "A program can transition from development back to humanitarian assistance and backwards, we need to be able to appreciate those transitions and the flexibility."
>
> —*Rita Larok, Chief of Party, Graduating to Resilience, AVSI Uganda*

CHALLENGES

The wide-ranging impact of conflict on the private sector is a substantial challenge. Market actors often suffer due to conflict-related issues, including looting, damage to infrastructure, and limited access to finance due to bank and microfinance institution closures. The uncertainty surrounding conflict often makes households reluctant to reinvest in their livelihoods, perpetuating prolonged dependence on aid. And with each crisis possessing unique dimensions and varying impacts, comprehensive planning and adaptability is essential to address them. Peacebuilding is especially pivotal, as peace is often a prerequisite for stable markets and development.

PREPARING FOR TRANSITION

Transition hinges upon a collective commitment to enhanced planning and collaboration across the HDP nexus. Stakeholders should engage in joint planning for recovery and humanitarian assistance must incorporate well-defined pathways to recovery. Conducting timely post-disaster market assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of community needs and the context is important, demonstrating the need for collaboration between actors. Early discussions about roles and responsibilities are vital to clarify the intended direction and how each stakeholder will contribute. Investing in resilience programming is a vital step in preparing for transition from humanitarian to development phases. This investment is crucial to ensure that communities are adequately equipped to confront crises.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Empowering strong local partnerships that can be mobilized in times of need is crucial for enhancing efficiency, ensuring timeliness, fostering trust, and maintaining competency. These partnerships leverage relationships at the community level, which are essential for effective responses. Developing local capacity is crucial for successful transition. Humanitarian interventions should not default to direct distribution, as this can undermine the efforts of market actors supported by development programs. Instead, programs should seek to build upon existing livelihoods and development initiatives in the area, for example, by furnishing vouchers for fertilizers, animal health services, or seed distribution. This approach not only safeguards local markets but also prepares actors for a more effective recovery post-conflict. Long-term funding is deemed essential for this purpose, alongside earmarked funding that incorporates crosscutting themes.

FLEXIBILITY

All actors involved in development in shock-prone areas need flexibility. Through crisis modifiers to development activities, donors embed crucial flexibility in funding for when unexpected crises, such as conflict or natural hazards, disrupt planned efforts. The panel noted that there are often delays between a disaster occurring and the activation of rapid response mechanisms, and to avoid such delays, implementers must be flexible and proactively engage with local authorities for context monitoring and coordination. Collaboration identifies new ways to best address the range of community needs, both in steady state and emergencies, which can change rapidly in multi-hazard countries. Being flexible to adapt and modify within the specific implementation context amidst shocks allows practitioners to address these stresses while moving development forward.

"We frame peace around security, but it should be a community-led initiative, a bottom-up approach that seeks to address root causes of conflict."

—Erickson Bisetsa, Chief of Party, ACCESS, World Vision South Sudan

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RKSM THEME SESSIONS

JOINT PLANNING

Joint Planning—What Is It and Why Do It?

Leveraging Mapping to Improve Joint Planning and Implementation

Using Joint Work Planning to Improve HDP Coherence

Operationalizing Joint Planning in the Field Offices

SEQUENCING, LAYERING, AND INTEGRATING (SLI)

Centering Local Knowledge for Humanitarian Development-Peace (HDP) Coherence

SLI for more Crisis-Responsive Water Security

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding in Food Crisis Response

Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating for Resilient Livelihoods to Improve Food and Nutrition Security

IMPROVED MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) FOR HDP COHERENCE

Harnessing the Benefits of Data Sharing Across Humanitarian-Development-Peace: Insights from Ethiopia

Adapting Early Warning Systems to Support Early/Anticipatory Action

Technology for Data Sharing: Options for Implementing Partners Across Humanitarian-Development-Peace Pillars

Emerging Issues in MEL for Peacebuilding

CLIMATE-RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

Pastoralist Livelihoods in the Face of Climate Change

Sustainable Agriculture in a Changing Climate

Climate-Resilient Water Management Practices

Climate Change, Migration, and Livelihoods: Community-Centered Support for Populations on the Move

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Partnering with Local Stakeholders for Context Monitoring and Contingency Planning

10 Minute AM: Simple Tools for Learning and Adaptive Management when Time is Short

Building an Enabling Environment for Quick Pivots

Navigating Protracted Crises: Improving the Use of Evidence for Iterative Adaptation of Emergency Programs

Joint Planning—What Is It and Why Do It?

Joint work planning is a collaborative initiative of co-creation that uses evidence to inform and agree on joint priority areas for implementation. It aims to reduce duplication and layer and sequence interventions for collective impact—learnings from the process are used to inform adaptive management for interventions. Successful joint planning among entities serving a community helps promote all partners' alignment, effectiveness, and sustainability and ultimately results in better outcomes for the target populations. In this session the Government of Kenya, Rights Organization for Advocacy and Development International, and RLA explored a shared joint planning case study from multiple perspectives. The joint planning process was broken down into four phases: pre-planning, planning, activity implementation, and monitoring and reporting. Participants then worked in small groups to delve into what it means to jointly plan and considered the enablers and barriers to successful joint planning across humanitarian, development, and peace contexts.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Dr. Daniel Nyoro**, Strategic Programs Development Officer for the State Department for the ASALs and Regional Development, Ministry of East Africa Community, the ASALs and Regional Development

» **Dahabo Shalle**, Executive Director, Rights Organization for Advocacy and Development International

» **Mohamed Sahal**, Director Partnership and Non-state Actors Coordination, County Government of Garissa

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Pre-Planning Phase: Map key stakeholders and identify capacities and areas of expertise. Pre-planning meetings facilitate agreement on what needs to be done, how to do it, who takes the lead on what, and the mobilization of technical teams. For the Filayi Beekeeping Project (see resource case study to learn more), joint planning helped narrow a diverse set of actors down to three: Livestock Market Systems activity (focused specifically on development), the World Food Programme (focused on both development and humanitarian assistance), and the county government of Garissa. Given the project's SLI approach, narrowing the focal areas across three actors helped improve coordination. Stakeholder mapping is important in the pre-planning phase and partners should look across all sectors (including non-USAID funded, United Nations agencies, and local actors) and understand their capacity.

Partners should also develop stakeholder feedback tools to assist with adaptive management. The Garissa County Government found that by doing this, new staff within the county government were able to orient themselves to all actors while selecting key partners to maximize the existing resources reduced duplication and prevented unhealthy competition among the implementing partners. When identifying certain projects to support a joint work plan, identifying a timeframe and the general scope of its geographic area allows for strategic use of partners and available funding. Successful and comprehensive joint planning takes time which is often hard to come by in emergency contexts. However, once the process has started, teams should work on developing a joint work plan, while concurrently implementing the joint work plan that was developed in the previous financial year.

Garissa Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) Case Study

In Kenya, RLA and the Garissa Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) leadership facilitated a joint learning field visit with PREG partners and non-USAID funded partners to familiarize the eight new county executive committee members (CECMs) with the joint work planning process, showcase the value-add of collaboration, and highlight eight intervention sites. After the visit, there was a joint feedback session to provide an opportunity for implementing partners to familiarize the new CECMs on their programs, operations, and areas of collaboration with an aim of strengthening the collaborative framework between the two institutions.

Planning Phase: Co-create the activity with partners, identifying the joint priority, objectives, key outcomes, and joint indicators for monitoring progress. Specify the scope and roles of each partner, establish dates, and develop a technical work plan. In this session, Garissa County and PREG presented their experience in holding technical working group (TWG) planning meeting during the pre-planning phase that: (a) enabled all actors to gain a common understanding of the activity; (b) validated the roles of each partner; and (c) identified who might be missing. By developing a logistical plan, including proper communication, documentation, and dissemination, the TWG defined the joint plan's objectives. Working alongside the county government ensured these objectives focused on communities' priorities. As competing priorities and unclear objectives can hamper joint planning, it is especially important to clarify these during the pre-planning and planning phases. Doing this enabled relevant actors in Garissa County to negotiate the necessary approvals for changes to country development plans, then test the plan before implementation.

Implementation Phase: Execute the jointly-planned activity and conduct site visits. Partners should use a data collection tool developed in the pre-planning phase. For the Filayi Beekeeping Project, various partners coordinated to sequence, layer, and integrate their interventions during this stage. By working directly with communities, the project facilitates discussions with end users on how interventions are going. These onsite conversations facilitate community input on needed adaptations. However, the implementation phase can also raise numerous challenges, such as delays in funding or other failures to honor commitments (especially resource commitments), discovering tools developed in the pre-/planning phases may not have anticipated all emerging issues, and/or experiencing conflict and security issues that hinder implementation. However, strong coordination among the TWG can help manage these issues.

Monitoring and Reporting Phase: Conduct joint feedback sessions to further discuss the lessons learned, challenges faced, and opportunities identified during joint implementation. Part of the value gained through joint monitoring, as found in the Garissa County example, is the different perspectives of each actor. PREG helped facilitate a joint learning visit which included all PREG partners—such as the Garissa County Government with representatives from various county departments working on agriculture, trade, urban planning, and more—as well as other non-USAID funded partners, and United Nations agencies. When actors with different organizational mandates and roles collaborate, they benefit from diverse perspectives. After the visit, PREG facilitated a joint feedback session with county executives to identify any necessary adaptations. Through a richer discussion, PREG was able to better document lessons, successes, and challenging stories to inform future programming. Sustainable and regular information-sharing mechanisms are key in joint planning, ensuring programming pivots are context-informed.

RESOURCES
- Final Learning Brief Garissa Joint Learning Visit

Leveraging Mapping to Improve Joint Planning and Implementation

When joint planning, mapping can help bring diverse sets of information to the table, both through maps of geographic coverage but also through the mapping of actors and systems at play within those areas. Mapping can help implementers improve coordination with local actors, other implementing partners, and activities in response to shocks and crises. Representatives from U-Learn, USAID/Ethiopia, OpenStreetMap Uganda, and Charter for Change Working Group described their approaches to mapping for joint planning in terms of assessing, planning and prioritizing, and implementing while session participants discussed ways to apply and leverage these tools in their own work.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Kullein Ankunda**, Learning Specialist, Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability and Research Network Uganda, Response Innovation Lab

» **Mehadere Fisseha**, Program Management Specialist, Office of Relief and Resilience, USAID/Ethiopia

» **Ronald Tumusiime**, Program and Operations Manager, OpenStreetMap Uganda

» **Naomi Ayot Oyaro**, National Coordinator of the Local Coalition Accelerator Uganda Program, and Chairperson of Charter for Change Working Group in Uganda

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- The **Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability and Research Network (U-Learn)** program collaborates with the government and various stakeholders to facilitate learning, assessments, and amplify the voices of refugees. Critically, they support the development of local actor maps that provide an overview of national and settlement level stakeholders.

- **OpenStreetMap Uganda** uses location-based data to inform and advocate for local empowerment. Established in 2019, the organization utilizes a network of community volunteers to capture community data points. They have signed memorandums of understanding with each of Uganda's 46 counties, strengthening the bottom-up capacity of communities to digitally capture geocache of important landmarks.

- The **Local Coalition Accelerator (LCA) Program Uganda** is a coalition of 14 local and national organizations in Uganda that co-design and implement locally-owned solutions to address systemic, multi-sectoral problems.

- The **Charter for Change Working Group Uganda** advocates for change in humanitarian and development architecture, promoting locally-driven approaches and creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, growth, and networking among local actors.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Local knowledge is key to accurate and updated maps, and co-creating these can help communities advocate for their needs. People know exactly where their community resources are and what resources they still need. And if things change, they know how to update the map. OpenStreetMap Uganda is training communities on mapping using open-source software to enable low-cost, low-tech solutions to outdated, inaccurate community maps. This not only improves the quality of maps countrywide, but also leads to community advocacy. For example, when OpenStreetMap Uganda trained students in mapping, they discovered that one village only had two water points compared to the 12 each adjacent villages had. Visualizing this information empowered the students to go out and advocate for more water points for that village.

Similarly, community mapping played a key role in restoring an indigenous Ugandan minority group's land after forcible removal. Since the government lacked any records of their homeland, OpenStreetMap Uganda trained the indigenous communities to use mapping software to translate their knowledge of clan boundaries, grazing lands, and fishing points into a clear map that was used in returning them to their land.

Pairing a mapping system with a decision-making body enables effective shock responses. USAID Ethiopia has a Strategic Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) that fosters expedited decision making on changes to activities in the face of shocks and involves humanitarian, development, and peace representatives across the offices in the Mission, including the front office. The SAGE coordination meetings cover what is happening in the country and to what extent they may need to respond to ongoing shocks, including health-related outbreaks, droughts, and conflict. SAGE's approach to managing accurate and timely data to inform decision making continues to evolve. While they initially had a support contract helping to feed data from USAID projects into a dashboard, this proved difficult to manage. Now they are working to revamp with more open-source data which can automatically feed into their evidence base. They also maintain maps and visibility on where all USAID activities are located, from which sector and with what mandate, and which ones have crisis modifiers that may or may not have been used. This helps SAGE identify how USAID should respond to these shocks and ensures everyone agrees, reducing the shock's impact on development programs.

Maps can help donors and implementing partners find local actors. Effective joint planning—and more generally, localization—requires identifying and engaging all actors. This is especially important in ever-changing contexts, like refugee camps, where local actors are best able to reach those who need the programmatic interventions the most. U-Learn has focused on developing actor maps in Uganda, such as settlement-level actor mapping, which provides an overview of national-level and settlement-level stakeholders within refugee settlements. To do this, they recruited a refugee intern to collect information from the refugee community, ultimately identifying 400 actors over 6 months. What began as a directory of organizations working within respective camps will soon expand. U-Learn has engaged the local chapter from Charter for Change to (a) take over management of these maps; and (b) enhance the maps' information by including additional fields like strength of organization, for example, to encourage and enable more direct engagement from donors and other funding organizations.

RESOURCES
- U-Learn Resources
- OpenStreetMaps Uganda

Using Joint Work Planning to Improve HDP Coherence

Joint work planning among implementing partners, local governments, partners, and stakeholders helps align activities and support HDP coherence. In this problem-solving session, representatives from RLA and IGAD shared practical examples of challenges they faced, how they pivoted, and the lessons learned from their experiences. The examples highlighted practitioners' experiences aligning joint work plans with the goals of both government and USAID/Kenya and East Africa missions. Participants also reflected on their individual experiences, identifying worst case scenarios of a joint planning process and ways to improve.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Jim Flock**, Chief of Party, Resilience Learning Activity

» **Dr. Tesfaye Beshah**, Regional Program Coordinator, Intergovernmental Authority on Development

FEATURED ACTIVITY

- **The Resilience Learning Activity (RLA)**, funded by USAID/Kenya and East Africa under the Feed the Future Kenya Livestock Market Systems Leader with Associates and led by ACDI/VOCA, aims to strengthen resilience capacities and evidence-based resilience programming in the Horn of Africa.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Select an impartial facilitator from a local organization to identify clear objectives that tie to community needs, helping garner trust and buy-in of the joint planning process. Poor or biased leadership can sink the joint planning process, but a neutral facilitator can help elevate the needs of the local community above competing partner priorities. Moreover, an independent, locally-connected facilitator can help mitigate any skewed power dynamics between donors, local governments and partners, and even among community leaders and their constituents. RLA, for instance, had initially sourced independent consultants to facilitate joint planning with some success. However, joint planning vastly improved once they tapped facilitators from local organizations with strong relationships with the community and county government. Their talents and soft skills opened dialogue and diffused partner conflict and lack of consensus. This approach resonated with participants as most had experienced a lack of common objectives among stakeholders working in a similar area.

Develop a framework to hold partners accountable to their commitments and responsibilities. Participants raised the importance of accountability within the joint planning process. Stakeholders should engage in pre-planning to agree on a framework, ensuring transparency, a shared understanding of common objectives, and well-defined roles and responsibilities. Partners should agree on the actual template of the joint work plan and include the right people in the process.

Ensure full and inclusive participation of relevant partners, especially local partners. PEffective joint planning requires having the right people in the room—those with the appropriate technical and local expertise, sectoral representation, and the ability to make decisions. This can be accomplished through stakeholder mapping during the pre-planning phase while ensuring the planning phase is both participatory and representative. Effective stakeholder engagement can help mitigate implementation issues and increase buy-in to the process and may also help ensure the resulting joint work plan reflects the communities' needs. It is critical that all partners understand what each has to offer and where capacity strengthening may be needed in order to best leverage skills and resources.

Operationalizing Joint Planning in the Field Offices

Joint planning requires effective communication and coordination within organizations and with external stakeholders. In this session, participants explored ways to create the conditions for teams in the Greater Horn of Africa region to break down internal and external silos, work across technical areas, and coordinate with external stakeholders in the same area, such as the government, private sector, and other organizations.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Christine Banga**, Senior Consultant, Vision Quest, Kenya

FEATURED ACTIVITY

- **Vision Quest** is a leading consulting firm specializing in regional systems strengthening, program evaluation, research, and capacity development in East, Central, and West Africa.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Ensure community voices are heard at the leadership level. Ideally, soliciting input from the community would include robust public participation. But when this is not possible, using representative bodies (e.g., projects that have consulted those individuals and organizations at the community level) can lead to a better-informed plan. Importantly, these bodies must be consistently present throughout the process to best support knowledge retention of the joint work planning process, learning for adaptive management, and fulfillment of commitments. Participatory processes that capture community-mapped data are also useful, especially during the pre-planning phase, to identify stakeholders, private sector partners, and implementing partners working across donors and sectors. Vision Quest, for example, initiates these participatory processes first at the village level, gaining consensus within and across villages. Vision Quest then elevates these inputs to the county level where, using the county assembly as a representative body, they validate the plans, allocate budget, and appropriate the funds for implementation.

Share leadership and ownership of joint work plans to maintain activity momentum and foster a sense of collective responsibility and individual accountability. While governments would ideally lead these efforts, they may lack strong enough processes to do so, making collective leadership and ownership all the more important. Interpersonal skills and relationship building can help ensure all parties fulfill their agreed-upon responsibilities and are responsive to joint accountability. Partners must also be accountable to the effort and what they committed to spend. Additionally, while unsynchronized planning cycles can complicate working across actors, joint monitoring, reporting, and learning can help, especially when input and community priorities are aligned. These can be aligned through various methods, including sector working groups focusing on coordinating investments and interventions within the key sectors.

Maintain budget transparency and flexibility for effective joint planning. Critical projects are defined at a high level and must match the community's diverse needs, requiring flexibility from joint planners. Budget planning, transparent investment increases, and investment into key sectors are important. The pre-planning stage should consider what resources partners have and whether they already have common plans and timelines in place. Partners should also commit to ceding some resources to fund joint activities. While budgets can be rigid, partners must find resources somewhere—even at the policy level. While Vision Quest has found the government willing to negotiate on budget, it largely relies on the trust built in the pre-planning phase and the strong relationships established with government counterparts. Partners can have roundtable negotiations during the co-creation phase to align/re-align priorities, resources, and budgets.

Collect the right data for effective joint planning. Data is key to identifying priorities, even beyond the government level. Joint plans need to be evidence- and output-based with consecutive planning, monitoring, and implementation. Joint planners also need to consider the difference between observational field-based visits and measured indicators. Joint plans need joint monitoring systems as unmonitored activities will not be implemented in the future since partners cannot invest in something without evidence and without an accountability framework.

Involve the private sector. The pre planning phase can be used to identify private sector partners for inclusion in the joint planning process. Vision Quest's experience is that businesses have a social responsibility and can be incentivized to participate if they can identify opportunities where it is profitable to get involved. In some cases, companies may have a non-profit arm which can be directly engaged.

Ensure partners continuously engage with the joint planning work process. Partners should define an onboarding strategy early in the pre-planning process. For Vision Quest, attendance and partner continuity, especially within the county government, facilitated the joint planning process—so critical to its success. Vision Quest's position as a local organization was key in facilitating this process after initial attempts through outside consultants failed.

Centering Local Knowledge for Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Coherence

Centering local knowledge is foundational to enhancing resilience and sustainably improving food security. This session recognized that HDP coherence is a construct of assistance and considered how programming approaches can be best sequenced, layered, and integrated to effectively respond to community needs in ways that center local knowledge and embrace community-led development. In this session, participants explored productive strategies and barriers to centering local knowledge in intervention design and implementation across humanitarian, development, and peace assistance. Representatives from local and international organizations working across the Horn of Africa highlighted the critical role local knowledge played in their own work, identifying strong, scalable practices that implementers can utilize.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Yikunoamlak Teklebirhan**, Program Manager, Biruh Tesfa, CARE

» **Abreha Gebremariam**, Agribusiness and Marketing Expert, Biruh Tesfa, SNV

» **Gunjan Veda**, Director, Collaborative Research, Policy and Practice, The Movement for Community-led Development

» **Taremwa Albert**, Executive Director, Local Sustainable Community Organization

» **David Malual Kuany**, Program Manager Social Cohesion, Pathways to Resilience, Catholic Relief Services

» **Stellah Nyaga**, Senior Program Manager, Community-led Capacity Strengthening for Fragile Context (C4FC), World Vision

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Biruh Tesfa** as a USAID-funded project under the Livelihoods for Resilience (L4R) activity led by CARE in collaboration with partners REST and SNV in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The project aims to provide agriculture, economic recovery, and food security support to conflict-affected communities. Their experience highlighted a more effective pivot to humanitarian assistance thanks to the strong foundation local partners had in place with communities, as well as prioritizing local knowledge in making localized design decisions for layering in humanitarian response.

- The **Movement for Community-led Development (MCLD)** empowers communities to take charge of their own development, recognizing that individuals have the right to be involved in decision making that affects their own lives. With 75 global members and over 1,500 community-based and national chapters across Africa, the Americas, and Europe, the MCLD works to facilitate collective action and shift power back to affected communities.

- The **Local Sustainable Community Organization (LOSCO)** is a Ugandan organization that works to promote community transformation through partnerships and networks with other like-minded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies. These organizations aim to create positive change by engaging community members, fostering local leadership, and promoting sustainable practices.

- **Pathways to Resilience (P2R)** is a USAID/BHA-funded emergency food security activity led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in South Sudan. The activity addresses the multiple challenges faced by communities affected by conflict, displacement, and food insecurity, with the overarching goal of building resilience and enabling communities to withstand shocks and recover from crises. Centering local knowledge in the program's approach and through its own staff engagement led to identification of an additional programmatic approach layered into the emergency food security program, adding community connector projects and referring services for trauma healing and psychosocial support.

- The **Community-led Capacity Strengthening for Fragile Contexts (C4FC)** is a capacity-strengthening activity implemented by World Vision (WV) in a consortium of five international agencies: WV Somalia (led by SomReP), WV Sudan, WV South Sudan, CARE Somalia (also member of SomReP), and Sada University (Somalia). Working with 31 local organizations from Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, C4FC promotes community-led development in fragile contexts. The methodology centered local knowledge of specific, contextual risks as the foundation for community-based adaptation plans.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Building networks of local partners and working closely with communities in advance of a crisis is critical for humanitarian access, local coordination, and contextually tailored design. Communities should map their resources before crisis begins and aid actors should integrate them into program design. In Ethiopia, local NGOs and community members led in identifying households to target for Biruh Tesfa's humanitarian interventions. Meanwhile, local staff were key in continually assessing conflict and other dynamics, allowing for quick pivots.

Communities should be involved in co-creating programs, ensuring they are rooted in local knowledge and trusted by target communities. Partners should be multi-sectoral in responding to crises and utilize community-led development to break out of silos, leveraging local expertise to deliver programming. For instance, in South Sudan, CRS saw a desire among divided communities to resolve conflict among themselves and supported this process through the Connector Project. Now, communities fully own, implement, and protect this project themselves. CRS' continuing work in South Sudan champions local institutions and community-led initiatives. The program also focuses on strengthening local capacities, including community-based organizations and local government structures, to effectively respond to crises and drive sustainable development.

Tools and processes must be structured from the beginning to prioritize local knowledge. For instance, community-based disaster risk reduction plans can form the basis of crisis-modifier designs and qualitative study methods, such as community consultations, can help bring local knowledge to the fore. Notably, participants called for greater flexibility in approaches, describing how re-examining the language lexicon, power dynamics, and perception toward local knowledge is critical.

Sequencing, layering, and integrating efforts become more meaningful and impactful when guided by local knowledge. Intentionally engaging local stakeholders and leveraging their knowledge to inform SLI efforts not only enhances the relevance and sustainability of interventions but also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among the local population. It allows for a deep connection with the community, building trust, and facilitating meaningful collaboration. Respecting local traditions and knowledge systems is essential for successful program implementation. It ensures that interventions are culturally sensitive, avoiding unintended consequences. By valuing and incorporating local knowledge, programs can tap into the collective wisdom of the community, harnessing their insights and experiences to drive positive change.

RESOURCES
- Community-led Development Assessment Tool
- CRS' Connector Project Guide

SLI for More Crisis-Responsive Water Security

Crises like slow-onset droughts or rapid population movements present stark challenges for immediate and longer-term water security and other critical drivers of food security. This session explored how sequencing, layering, and integrating a variety of mutually reinforcing water security approaches—like rehabilitating water points, adapting payment schemes, and strengthening natural resource management—can build resilience to shocks and stresses. Participants reflected on practical strategies and critical enablers to align development and emergency water security-related programming to meet the immediate and long-term needs of households and communities (stationary, displaced, or migrating) facing recurrent crises and food insecurity. Participants also identified promising practices that facilitate effective collaboration to advance a common agenda for water security.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Mohamoud Duale**, Executive Director, Taakulo

» **Styvers Kathuni**, Kenya Country Representative, Millennium Water Alliance

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- The **Millennium Water Alliance (MWA)** is a coalition of humanitarian, research, and business organizations united in their objective to enhance global water access and sanitation. What sets MWA apart is its effective integration and promotion of HDP coherence, aligning and coordinating efforts across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors to achieve sustainable outcomes.

- **Taakulo** is an NGO operating in Somaliland, Somalia, and the Somali Region of Ethiopia, dedicated to supporting humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives in the region. Taakulo combines conflict sensitivity efforts with water aid interventions to address the complex challenges caused by recurring droughts and conflicts over water resources. The organization also works with local actors to ensure long-term sustainability, such as through training the community and government on sustainable construction materials and infrastructure maintenance, which are eventually handed over to their control.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Intentionally outline the SLI rationale in relation to shocks and stresses to enhance water security approaches and outcomes. Deliberately connecting water programming strategies across the spectrum of humanitarian and development approaches is critical to reduce risk factors in advance of shocks, facilitate better coping and recovery, and ultimately enable local systems to respond more effectively, independently, and sustainably over the long term. When looking at water's different purposes—water for productive use, safe consumption, or environmental resource protection—singular program strategies may be mutually reinforcing when intentionally sequenced, layered, and integrated. When considering shocks and stresses like drought, flooding, and conflict, SLI of water security strategies becomes even more important.

In Kenya, MWA's investments strengthened local water service provider capacity (including technology, information management, consumer relationships, and business model planning) alongside strengthened local governance frameworks for water services. When drought conditions spurred increased demand for water supply from outside sources, the bolstered local governance frameworks and water service provider capacity aided in quickly layering in additional interventions (water vouchers; monitoring) through the local service providers, reinforcing—rather than overtaking—their system, while relieving immediate water needs.

Prioritize long-term investments that address systemic issues and foster collaboration among multiple actors, creating a platform for collective response and adaptation to shocks. Long-term investments help create sustainable solutions that can withstand future challenges. When collaboration frameworks begin during an emergency, they often face challenges sustaining in the post-drought period, undermining opportunities to build resilience in advance of the next drought. By addressing systemic issues and strengthening ongoing collaboration among various actors, water security investments, among many others, can better adapt during shocks and contribute to sustainable solutions. Data sharing, joint planning on water resource management, predictive modeling for climate-adapted planning and early warning, and mechanisms to integrate local knowledge all increase shock preparedness and the success of a response. Information sharing at multiple scales is especially important. Implementing partners must also recognize that proactive efforts should be undertaken even when specific challenges are not currently affecting populations, as this creates a platform for collective response and adaptation to future shocks and uncertainties.

Establish a common, long-term vision for defined areas that extends beyond the immediate goals of water provision and management. Collaborators need to have a shared, multi-year vision to improve water security that includes planning around shocks and stresses. This can help identify what interventions—like emergency water access, multiuse systems for water resource supply, hygiene and sanitation, and water resource management—need to be adapted and how they can reinforce each other during major hazards. This vision guides the distribution of resources, improves coordination, and promotes the long-term well-being of the population being served. Layering and integration is particularly essential for water security in drought contexts.

RESOURCES
- USAID Technical Brief on Humanitarian-Development Coherence in WASH and Water-Resource Management Programs
- USAID Social Behavior Change for WASH Technical Brief
- US Global Water Strategy 2022-2027

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding in Food Crisis Response

Operationalizing the "P" within the HDP nexus can be a challenge in food security interventions. This session covered lessons and strategies for integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into development and humanitarian food security activities in the Horn of Africa. Participants discussed practical models for assessing, implementing, and monitoring conflict-sensitive interventions and shared examples of emerging approaches.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Tut Gatkek**, Peace Building Coordinator, Nile Hope

» **Kizito Fernando Muhindo**, Markets Systems and Private Sector Engagement Manager, Program for the Development of Eastern Congo Peacebuilding, Mercy Corps

» **Josue Bagaya**, MEL Manager, Program for the Development of Eastern Congo Peacebuilding, Mercy Corps

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Nile Hope** is an NGO tackling challenges faced by communities in the conflict-affected and food-insecure areas of the Upper Nile region in South Sudan, focusing on food security, livelihoods, nutrition, peacebuilding, protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and youth empowerment. Through its comprehensive approach and commitment to HDP coherence, Nile Hope strives to meet the immediate needs of conflict-affected communities while fostering-term development and peace.

- The **Program for the Development of Eastern Congo (P-DEC)** is a USAID-funded development activity led by Mercy Corps in the eastern region of Congo. P-DEC works with local communities to mobilize and prevent conflict, adopting a multi-strategy that combines community involvement, governance enhancement, and economic assistance to address the underlying causes of conflict.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Integrate peacebuilding into program implementation. It is imperative to evaluate how program activities align with peacebuilding principles and objectives, recognizing their interconnected nature. Ensuring that food security and peacebuilding initiatives are intrinsically linked contributes to community stability and well-being. Rather than an isolated endeavor, peacebuilding should be a fundamental component woven into program design and execution. By allocating resources and effort to foster peace, programs play a role in building resilient and sustainable communities. This involves addressing the root causes of conflict, encouraging dialogue and reconciliation, and nurturing relationships based on trust and mutual understanding while upholding accountability. To promote peace and minimize harm, supporting and strengthening local stakeholders is essential. Collaborating with local organizations, community leaders, and relevant stakeholders enhances the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. Empowering these actors allows programs to leverage their local knowledge, networks, and expertise, which are indispensable for sustainable peace promotion. This collaboration not only ensures a more holistic approach but also nurtures community ownership and builds enduring peacebuilding capacities. Session participants emphasized the need for implementers to extend their conflict-sensitive practices to enhance local peace capacities, stressing the importance of community co-creation, partnerships, and knowledge sharing in supporting food systems recovery.

Integrate gender-transformative approaches and trauma healing into peacebuilding efforts. When pursuing comprehensive and inclusive peacebuilding efforts, it is paramount to seamlessly integrate gender-transformative approaches and trauma healing strategies. This multifaceted approach acknowledges the complex nature of food crises and their varying impacts on different individuals, with a pronounced focus on the vulnerability of women and girls who are often disproportionately affected by such circumstances.

For peacebuilding initiatives to be both effective and equitable, gender sensitivity must be the core of the approach, right from program inception. This entails actively engaging communities, not only preventing the marginalization of certain groups but also reducing the potential for conflict escalation. Establishing inclusive targeting committees and implementing social behavior change interventions stand out as indispensable tools, providing a framework for fostering understanding and cooperation among diverse community members. Furthermore, implementers must address the widespread trauma that often persists in the aftermath of conflict, delivering psychosocial support and trauma healing programs alongside local communities. This approach recognizes that healing is not just a collective process but also a deeply personal one. By addressing the psychological scars left by conflict, it becomes possible to create a solid foundation for sustainable peace. This emphasis on the individual's healing journey underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, one that encompasses the emotional well-being and resilience of communities affected by conflict.

Build peace from within. Empowering local peace champions and collaborating with local bodies, community leaders, and stakeholders is a cornerstone of a holistic peace integration approach. This integration extends beyond traditional boundaries to encompass both small- and large-scale dimensions of peace. By leveraging their local knowledge, networks, and expertise, programs can advance sustainable peace, harmoniously blending food security and peacebuilding efforts. Beyond this, prioritizing community co-creation, partnerships, and knowledge is critical, as collaborating with local stakeholders reinforces peace promotion efforts, creating sustainable and accountable communities and bolsters food system recovery.

In regions susceptible to conflict, strategic analysis becomes paramount. Here, linking peacebuilding with program implementation is essential. Rigorous evaluation of how program activities align with peacebuilding principles enhances community well-being and overall stability. Furthermore, active peace integration is not an isolated entity but an ongoing part of program design. By allocating resources to address core conflict issues, foster dialogue, and build trustworthy relationships, implementers ensure a comprehensive approach that cultivates resilient communities underpinned by accountability.

While striving for peace and the recovery of food systems, it's crucial to strengthen peacebuilding capacities. Beyond practicing conflict sensitivity, implementers must prioritize community co-creation, partnerships, and knowledge exchange. These actions not only bolster peace promotion but also facilitate the recovery of food systems, ensuring a more secure and harmonious future.

RESOURCES
- Integrating Conflict Sensitivity into Food Security Programs
- Feed the Future and Conflict Integration: A Toolkit for Programming

Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating for Resilient Livelihoods to Improve Food and Nutrition Security

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Hussein Noor Abdille**, Chief of Party, USAID Nawiri, Mercy Corps

Layered and sequenced programming investments can enhance risk-diverse livelihood pathways in the Greater Horn of Africa. Through group work and individual reflections, this session explored what factors contribute to building resilient livelihoods for food security, evaluating what combination of resilience capacities best addresses the needs, roles, and responsibilities of various household members when targeted for interventions. Participants discussed how to address multiple targets and outcomes through sequencing, layering, and integration to build resources, relationships, and capacities for resilient livelihoods and food and nutrition security.

FEATURED ACTIVITY

- **USAID Nawiri** is USAID/BHA-funded resilience food security activity (RFSA) led by Mercy Corps in Samburu and Turkana counties, Kenya. The initiative sequences, layers, and integrates context-informed interventions aimed at addressing persistent acute malnutrition in shock-prone, arid, and semi-arid regions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach so humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives can work in harmony and create sustainable impact. Applying a HDP framework in area-based programming facilitates coordination, collaboration, and joint planning, creating an enabling environment for SLI across different sectors, levels, and actors. Participants from Uganda shared how they are collaborating with governments and various initiatives to layer malnutrition and protection interventions. COVID-19 was a turning point for many implementers, and participants shared how growing delegation of decision making has resulted in greater community involvement in program planning, timelier responses from governments, more contextualized policies, improved coordination mechanisms, and more relief to communities. In Kenya, USAID Nawiri is working with county-level governments to support this process. Responding to rising food prices and deteriorating livelihoods, especially for pastoralists, implementers in Kenya are also working across sectors and actors to integrate livestock interventions into health and nutrition outreach. Carefully sequencing interventions to address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable long-term development is critical to HDP coherence. Implementers should layer various program components, such as livelihood support, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding activities, to create a synergistic effect.

Adapt livelihood models for resilience in changing circumstances. Implementers from Uganda shared how climate change, rising conflict, and epidemics and diseases have disrupted productivity, led to influxes of refugees, and heightened rural-urban migration, particularly of youth. This has greatly impacted livelihoods, and implementers have adapted by focusing on off-farm opportunities. In Somalia, implementers have partnered with technical and vocational education and training institutions to support migrants entering new livelihood pathways and worked closely with local NGOs to access hard-to-reach areas particularly affected by insecurity. Through collaborating with local institutions and adapting livelihood models for mobility (including cross-border), implementers are addressing food insecurity and drivers of conflict. Participants raised the importance of layering malnutrition and protection programs, digitization, and collaboration with private sector actors, governments, and research initiatives as key adaptations.

Understand that crises impact different household members differently. Women, men, and youth all face unique challenges and implementers must respond with nuanced and targeted programming. Livelihood strategies should encompass both challenges and opportunities, including enabling specific groups and achieving specific targets. Women, for instance, are impacted by crises in different ways and are shifting their livelihood strategies to respond. In the DRC, women are taking up more and different economic activities to feed their families, such as small commerce, and implementers have adapted by supporting capacity strengthening for business marketing for women. South Sudan has seen an uptick in gender-based violence as well as increased pressure on livelihoods and food security, prompting implementers to integrate gender-transformative approaches into their programming. Additionally, localizing community resources for livelihood models is necessary to account for differences in household roles.

Integrate social cohesion and conflict sensitivity into livelihoods interventions. Participants working in the DRC discussed how youth are responding to and contributing to the conflict where they are increasingly extracting natural resources from natural reserves and joining armed groups. Implementers have targeted youth for skills-building interventions, helping push youth towards livelihood activities that don't exacerbate conflict. By combining these trainings with social cohesion interventions, communities are now seeing a marked uptick in youth participation in community meetings where they rarely participated before. By integrating conflict sensitivity components into livelihood programs, implementers can ensure better food security and nutrition outcomes while promoting social cohesion and conflict resolution.

RESOURCES

- "Kenya drought: Pastoralists suffer despite millions of dollars used to protect them—what went wrong?", The Conversation

Harnessing the Benefits of Data Sharing Across Humanitarian-Development-Peace: Insights from Ethiopia

Sharing data across organizations, programs, and activities can have transformative effects, enhancing the coordination and implementation of various interventions. In this session, three implementing partners working within Ethiopia discussed their experiences sharing data across HDP pillars. What began as a simple email exchange between Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP), Ifaa, and Strengthen PSNP5 Institutions and Resilience (SPIR II) led to an in-depth and longer-term collaboration collecting resilience data through the Monthly Interval Resilience Analysis (MIRA) approach. Session participants also reflected on the successes and barriers to deeper collaboration, the values around data sharing, and explored potential next steps to improve data sharing within their organizations.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Greg Makabila**, Deputy Chief of Party, Ifaa, Catholic Relief Services

» **Ashenafi Alemu**, Program Manager, Early Warning and Risk Reduction, Joint Emergency Operation Program, Catholic Relief Services

» **Retta Gudisa**, Monitoring & Evaluation Lead, Strengthen PSNP5 Institutions and Resilience, World Vision

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Ifaa** is a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by CRS in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. Ifaa aims to improve the food security of at-risk households in targeted Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) communities, contributing to a sustained reduction in rural poverty in Oromia.

- **Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP)**, is a large-scale food security consortium funded by USAID/BHA and led by CRS in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia. It intends to respond to the acute food insecurity needs of approximately 8.5 million people across Ethiopia.

- **Strengthen PSNP5 Institutions and Resilience (SPIR II)** is a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by World Vision in the Amhara and Oromia regions of Ethiopia. SPIR II supports implementation of the fifth phase of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP5), providing additional graduation model programming through complementary gender-sensitive livelihood, nutrition, and climate resilience activities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Working in overlapping implementation areas and tracking common indicators supports efficient data sharing. When organizations operate in the same geographical areas and collect data on similar indicators, it creates opportunities for collaboration and data sharing. Within overlapping implementation areas, data sharing between different activities enhances data quality, knowledge sharing, and reporting and coordination, in addition to reducing data collection burden and resolving data inconsistencies. This facilitates more comprehensive data analyses, helping implementers better understand the contexts they operate in.

Partner and stakeholder consultations are essential to determine information needs and opportunities for data sharing. Ideally at the start of a program, organizations working in the same areas should engage with relevant stakeholders and communities to understand specific data needs and requirements. JEOP, an emergency program, and SPIR II and Ifaa, development programs, successfully shared their data because (a) their program areas overlapped; and (b) they continued to utilize existing communication channels inherited from an informal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) discussion group that was created to discuss challenges with BHA and other M&E practitioners in the country. In knowing each other's data needs, they could track common indicators and avoid data collection duplication. By focusing their efforts on collecting and sharing relevant information, they generated a more complete food security picture.

Fostering strong relationships strengthens data sharing. Building solid collaboration efforts, supporting joint planning, and creating partnerships can establish trust when sharing resources and aligning data collection efforts for HDP coherence. While prompted by BHA to communicate routinely and share technical information, Ifaa, JEOP, and SPIR II began meeting periodically to discuss data issues in more depth. This not only enabled more detailed collaboration and sustained data sharing, but also promoted learning and innovation. By experiencing the successes and pitfalls of one another's M&E systems, each was able to adapt their own strategies and technologies for improved programming.

Robust data sharing protocols and mechanisms are crucial to ensuring that personal and sensitive information is protected throughout the data-sharing process. Sharing and aggregating data between organizations raises concerns about data privacy and security. Standardizing and harmonizing data across multiple organizations can be a complex task. As a step forward, organizations should develop and adopt common operating frameworks for data collection, analysis, sharing, and storage, to ensure compatible and aligned data collection approaches. Centering organizational cultures around collaboration and partnerships would also foster trust and help establish shared goals, transparency, and collective learning.

RESOURCES

- Monthly Interval Resilience Analysis (MIRA)

Adapting Early Warning Systems to Support Early/Anticipatory Action

Early warning systems are essential for enabling anticipatory action. This session explored how Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) successfully developed an early warning system to address short-term humanitarian needs, prevent crises, and protect resilience gains. Throughout the session, BRCiS emphasized the importance of continuously adapting early warning systems to local contexts and using data to inform anticipatory action. Participants also brought their own thoughts forward, discussing how to develop cost-efficient systems as well as ways to ensure community involvement when developing and utilizing early warning systems.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Mohamed Hussein Nasib**, Economic Recovery and Development Coordinator, Building Resilient Communities in Somalia, International Rescue Committee

FEATURED ACTIVITY

- **Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS)** is a multi-donor funded, humanitarian consortium that takes a holistic approach to supporting Somali communities in developing their capacities to understand and manage hazards and shocks so that they can build a better future for themselves.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Centering efforts on community engagement, community ownership, and capacity strengthening helps build integrated and adaptable early warning systems. BRCiS invested significant time and resources in community engagement, building relationships and establishing trust with local actors. The consortium leveraged integrated programming models that combined the expertise and resources of both local and international organizations. This collaborative approach facilitated the development and implementation of the early warning system by combining diverse perspectives, skills, and knowledge. BRCiS also engaged stakeholders through annual reviews, surveys, and qualitative workshop sessions, which supported community ownership of action plans and empowered community resilience committees to monitor early warning indicators, coordinate with authorities and NGOs, and implement early action and response activities. Representation of at-risk groups resulted in equitable participation and targeted interventions. BRCiS embraced a bottom-up model of decision making, ensuring that the early warning system was designed to meet the specific needs and priorities of the local communities, enhancing its effectiveness and relevance.

Accurate and timely data is crucial for effective early warning systems. The process of data collection, especially at the community level, can be time consuming and may result in delays. For BRCiS, the data flow process from collection to flagging sometimes took 10 to 15 days, impacting their system's ability to provide timely warnings. To overcome this challenge, BRCiS developed a participative early warning system to address shocks, which can be used depending on the severity. BRCiS also collects indicator data monthly and visualizes and analyzes their findings alongside the local committee to determine if a response is needed.

Working with local actors can provide credibility to and reduce the costs of early warning systems. Implementers face numerous challenges, often lacking the resources needed to develop a strong early warning system, such as technology and staff capacity. BRCiS conducted cost-benefit analyses to prioritize resource allocation based on the level of impact. They included contingency funds and created separate evaluation mechanisms for small and large-scale shocks. These approaches were made possible through flexible and adaptive funding mechanisms facilitated by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the European Union's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Budget revisions based on community priorities and emerging shocks ensured funds were allocated where they were most needed.

This, in turn, provided credibility and ensured the early warning system functioned effectively. Working with local community actors for data collection and action can also significantly reduce the financial burden on an activity.

RESOURCES

- Session slides
- BRCiS Early Warning for Early Action Technical Brief
- Early Warning for Early Action Stories
- BRCiS Real Time Risk Monitoring for Early Action Infographic
- BRCiS Early Warning Early Action Dashboard

Technology for Data Sharing: Options for Implementing Partners Across Humanitarian-Development-Peace Pillars

Programs often struggle to share data and incorporate technical innovations. Session participants grappled with these challenges, sharing their experiences with different software technologies for data sharing—emphasizing HDX, Sharepoint, and Azure, among others. The JEOP consortium in Ethiopia also shared how they used Power BI to increase coordination, as well as the steps they followed to select the technology. Additionally, Roger Hunwicks, Chief Data Architect on the Famine Early Warning System Networks (FEWS NET) activity highlighted technologies and platforms for sharing data and discussed the feasibility of various data-sharing approaches along with guidance on how to determine which technology to use. Participants also highlighted platforms and databases such as Open Data for Africa and Apache Superset as key tools.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Ashenafi Alemu**, Program Manager, Early Warning and Risk Reduction, Catholic Relief Services

» **Roger Hunwicks**, Chief Data Architect, Famine Early Warning System Networks Learning and Data Hub activity

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP)** is a large-scale food consortium funded by USAID/BHA and led by CRS in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia. It aims to respond to the acute food insecurity needs of approximately 8.5 million people across Ethiopia.

- The **Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)** is a leading provider of early warning geo-spacial data and analysis on acute food insecurity around the world. FEWS NET informs decisions on humanitarian planning and responses in 30 of the world's most food-insecure countries. It monitors the increasingly complex factors influencing food insecurity, such as weather and climate, conflict, agricultural production, markets and trade, and nutrition.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Understand the needs of stakeholders and partners when sharing data. While donors usually pre-select platforms for implementers to use when sharing data, it is essential to first understand the needs of partners and other stakeholders. JEOP, along with its partners, conducted stakeholder consultations to determine which platform to use, which data to share, its format, and the frequency of sharing. Doing so ensured that data was accessible to all users, including RFSA development staff, local government partners, and the communities themselves. In working collaboratively to improve data sharing, JEOP and its partners across the nexus strengthened HDP coherence.

Ensure staff have the capacity to effectively use data-sharing technology. Activities should organize trainings to strengthen their staff's proficiency in utilizing the chosen technology. JEOP organized sessions to improve staff's familiarity with Microsoft Power BI. Power BI serves as a platform for data sharing among various implementing partners. It enables partners to centralize and visualize data from multiple sources, providing a unified and accessible view of activity progress and outcomes. This promotes collaboration, data-driven decision making, and transparency, as implementing stakeholders can securely access, interact with, and analyze shared data in a timely fashion, fostering a more coordinated and effective approach to achieving project objectives.

Costs and resources needed to maintain a data-sharing platform once activities end, remain a challenge in data sharing for HDP coherence. To overcome these barriers, implementers should consider: (a) working with other activities to step in and continue the data collection and sharing efforts;(b) working with the government and other organizations

to continuously track indicators so data is publicly available; and (c) using repositories including USAID's Development Data Library, United Nations Office Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Humanitarian Data Exchange, and FEWS NET's own data warehouse technology so that data can live on for use by a variety of actors. These technologies are supported by larger organizations and are more likely to sustain operations in the future.

Standardization and data governance could help establish a common data sharing framework for activities. Promoting and developing consistent templates and frameworks is important to facilitate collaboration among different activities across HDP pillars, but also to simplify data-sharing processes. Suggestions provided by FEWS NET and JEOP included: (a) government agencies could standardize technologies and platforms to use, so implementing partners would not have to make that selection; and (b) analysis of implementing partner data needs should be conducted to develop a selection criterion for which technologies to use.

RESOURCES
- Session slides
- FEWS NET
- Humanitarian Data Exchange
- Open Data for Africa

Emerging Issues in MEL for Peacebuilding

Incorporating peacebuilding into HDP programming has large implications for monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities. In this session, implementing partners with extensive experience in social cohesion and conflict sensitivity presented key considerations for peacebuilding monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL), before leading small groups into discussions around MEL for peacebuilding and conflict assessment. Speakers highlighted how conflict assessment should inform program design and showcased ways to integrate peacebuilding elements across theories of change (TOCs), including MEAL frameworks. Participants also heard about the importance of qualitative, quantitative, and context indicators and the disaggregation of these across conflict-affected areas, as well as explored innovative practices in MEAL.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Valarie Vat Kamatsiko**, Technical Advisor for Justice & Peacebuilding, Catholic Relief Services

» **David Malual**, Program Manager for Social Cohesion, Pathways to Resilience, Catholic Relief Services

FEATURED ACTIVITY

- **Pathways to Resilience (P2R)** is a USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance-funded multi-year emergency food security activity led by CRS and Vétérinaires sans Frontières Germany in South Sudan. The activity covers two states in South Sudan: Jonglei (Duk and Akobo counties) and Eastern Equatoria (Kapoeta North and Budi counties).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Integrate peacebuilding initiatives into TOC and MEAL frameworks. Activities should develop a clear TOC that demonstrates how peacebuilding activities intrinsically align with other sectors and contribute to their overall goal. This helps create an enabling environment for holistic change. David Malual of P2R stated that "peace is to humans what water is to fish," an essential and integral element of existence jeopardized by protracted conflicts. Peace is essential in protecting gains made by humanitarian and development activities and incorporating peacebuilding elements into the MEAL framework ensures that the progress and impact of peacebuilding activities are effectively measured and monitored. This includes using both qualitative and quantitative indicators and disaggregating data across lines of division or conflict.

Build strong relationships with stakeholders within the communities to support MEL peacebuilding initiatives. Conflict-affected areas and communities may include different ethnic groups, displaced populations and/or refugees. Implementers should develop a good working relationship with communities to improve communication, data collection, and sharing.

Peacebuilding activities may benefit from a mixed-methods approach to MEL. Rapid shocks and contextual changes can happen with little warning, affecting implementing partners' ability to adapt. To address the challenge of measuring the intangible and non-quantifiable nature of the change fostered by peacebuilding activities, CRS adopted a mixed-methods approach for MEL. This approach involved developing a dedicated set of indicators designed specifically for peacebuilding and a social cohesion barometer.

Adaptive management and context monitoring are key in MEL for peacebuilding. Regularly monitoring and assessing shifts in contexts, including social, political, and security dynamics, allows for timely adjustments of interventions. CRS' use of annual conflict analysis assessments has led to continuous context monitoring across implementation areas, informing decision making and program design. It's important to note, however, that donors should also adapt their policies to better support activities in responding promptly to contextual change.

RESOURCES

- Session slides
- CRS' Mini-Social Cohesion Barometer
- CRS' Social Cohesion Indicators Bank

Pastoralist Livelihoods in the Face of Climate Change

In the context of climate change, humanitarian and development programs are exploring different approaches to enable long-term resilience of pastoralist livelihoods, including using modern methods and tools to bolster livelihood systems and, where necessary, promoting a transition to alternative livelihoods by retraining pastoralist community members. Participants in this session heard from Nelson Owange, Director of Programs at Mercy Corps in South Sudan, regarding recent research conducted by Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC) on the effects of climate change and conflict on pastoralist livelihood systems. Representatives from Resilience in Pastoral Areas (RiPA) North and RiPA South also shared their attempts to balance traditional approaches with diversification of livelihoods. Participants reflected on the impact of gender and age on pastoralist livelihoods and the importance of balancing community-led and market-based priorities in pastoralist programs.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Nelson Owange**, Director of Programs, Mercy Corps

» **Will Baron**, Chief of Party, Resilience in Pastoral Areas North, Mercy Corps

» **Ameha Tadesse**, Chief of Party, Resilience in Pastoral Areas South, Global Communities

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARK)** is a 6-year program aiming to generate evidence and address knowledge gaps to strengthen the resilience of millions of pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and farmers in Sub-Saharan African and Middle Eastern communities. SPARC was commissioned by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom. The program's member organizations are Cowater International in partnership with the International Livestock Research Institute, Mercy Corps, and Overseas Development Institute. Additional donors and partners include the International Development Research Centre and Jameel Observatory.

- **Resilience in Pastoral Areas (RiPA) North** (led by Mercy Corps in partnership with Care) and **RIPA South** (led by Global Communities in partnership with GOAL and iDE) are USAID/Feed the Future resilience activities in northern and southern Ethiopia that take a systems-based approach to improving the resilience capacities of households, markets, and governance institutions, especially in pastoral communities that experience environmental and health shocks, swells in population, and increasing risks of conflict.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Pastoralists are dynamic, rational actors who display natural resilience and adaptation. One of the most resounding takeaways from this session, as expressed by many participants, was the need to support pastoralists' self-determination. Points made by speakers from SPARC and RiPA North reiterated this idea—pastoralists have indigenous knowledge of the adaptations they need to make in response to challenges or shifting situations, from reallocating resources to temporarily relocating. They can adjust their livelihood strategies based on dynamic circumstances, making them resilient in the face of challenges. Pastoralists' adaptations are naturally inclined to foster HDP coherence in that they allow for informed transitioning of livelihoods strategies between emergency, early recovery, and longer-term development conditions. Given these considerations, aid actors should respond by empowering pastoralists' decision-making abilities rather than using aid to incentivize specific outcomes.

Collaboration and partnerships between the private sector, governments, and other local actors are essential for supporting pastoralist livelihoods. For RiPA North and RiPA South, partnering with a variety of actors and institutions in their communities created broader support and buy-in for their interventions. Engaging in dialogue and building systems that are responsive to the community's context and priorities can help create sustainable solutions.

Climate change, conflict, and gender have varying impacts on pastoralist livelihoods. SPARC's research demonstrates that climate change and conflict are changing pastoralists' livelihoods systems in ways that can vary between communities and between households. This results in a variety of individualized adaptations and encourages non-prescriptive or generalized aid. RiPA North and RiPA South representatives discussed how higher numbers of women and youth are entering non-pastoralist livelihoods as a response to changing situations. Households can meet the challenges posed by shifting contexts and conditions by diversifying roles, with women and youth often supporting their pastoralist home or community through other work.

Pastoralists strive to balance market-driven adaptations to their livelihoods with community needs and norms. The demands and requirements of market forces and community or household needs around livestock are often different and sometimes at odds with each other. For example, market demand for livestock is strongly focused on young, healthy animals for human consumption, while traditional herding norms tend to favor holding onto animals as long as possible to maintain a large herd size. The importance of this balance was an overarching discussion throughout the session. Most participants agreed that both approaches must be prioritized, and that the context of each situation indicates which might be more necessary. They can also complement one another; they are not mutually exclusive. Refining this balance will continue to be a challenge for pastoralist communities as they define what these approaches look like in their contexts and how they can be used to meet their communities' needs.

RESOURCES
- Session slides
- SPARC Technical Report: Dynamism in the Drylands

Sustainable Agriculture in a Changing Climate

Given climate change's impact on agricultural livelihoods, it is critical to adapt and incorporate new approaches to mitigate these effects. Presenters reflected on the impact of climate change on their programming and the steps they have taken to address these challenges. Participants also discussed how to encourage the uptake of new practices and ensure their sustainability over time. Small groups also evaluated the importance of considering adaptation over the longer term as agroecological conditions continue to evolve—something that sustainable agriculture practices are designed to do, where farmer observation, iteration, and adaptation are built into the approach. Additionally, while many of the examples highlighted in the session were drawn from the drought-prone Horn of Africa, the principles and practices shared in this session are applicable to flood-prone areas.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Marcel Nibasumba**, Agriculture & MSD Manager, FSP-Enyanya, Mercy Corps

» **Daniel Kanyerere**, Agricultural Technical Advisor, Somalia Resilience Program, World Vision International

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Somalia Resilience Program (SomRep)** is a multi-donor funded resilience-building consortium that has operated in Somalia for over 10 years. SomRep partners with local stakeholders, including community members, local government, the private sector, and local civil society. Its programming aims to help communities mitigate the impact of shocks, adapt to climate change, and diversify and adopt sustainable livelihood strategies.

- **FSP-Enyanya** is a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by Mercy Corps that operates in the South Kivu region of the DRC. It works with households, community leaders, the Government of DRC, and other development programs to improve the food and nutrition security and economic well-being of communities in South Kivu.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Integrating gender and youth considerations and conflict sensitivity improves interventions' sustainability. SomRep and FSP-Enyanya intentionally included these considerations from the beginning of program development to encourage sustainability and inclusivity. Both involved women and youth in decision-making processes and provided gender-sensitive climate capacity assessments. Their involvement ensured interventions were tailored to their needs, enhancing the potential of the interventions to flourish over the long term. Both also held conflict sensitivity trainings for their staff, demonstrating effective HDP coherence programming. These trainings allowed staff to mitigate conflict during negotiations or discussions over land or resources, and promote agreements that benefitted all parties, creating a more sustainable environment for agricultural livelihoods to prosper.

Engaging the local community and collaborating with government services can ensure interventions are tailored to the context and encourage increased adoption of practices. After struggling to achieve community buy-in of their interventions, especially from youth, SomRep and FSP-Enyanya are now working closely with farming households and communities to understand their needs, aspirations, and knowledge. Their tailored approaches increase the community's sense of ownership of the interventions, making them more sustainable and likely to succeed long-term. SomRep and FSP-Enyanya also engage with government institutions and integrate government services into their programming. They are able to work within these systems to incentivize uptake of new practices, disseminate knowledge of sustainable agriculture techniques to a wider audience, and access additional resources. Collaborations with government partners are also critical to sustaining the interventions post-program.

Capacity strengthening and knowledge sharing foster resilience and the adoption of sustainable practices. SomRep and FSP-Enyanya provide training and knowledge-sharing opportunities, such as Farmer Field Schools, where farmers can learn from each other and practice new techniques. By empowering farmers to share and build knowledge and skills and creating a community that they can learn and draw support from, SomRep and FSP-Enyanya are supporting community resilience to future shocks and encouraging adoption of sustainable practices.

Factoring climate change into program design and implementation is essential for resilience and sustainability. Climate change is a reality for agricultural communities and their livelihoods. Communities see real changes in the environment that are hard to ignore, including drought, flooding, and loss of biodiversity. Consequences can include the loss of crops or livestock, soil erosion and infertility, malnutrition, and displacement. FSP-Enyanya and SomRep are addressing these challenges by centering climate change mitigation practices in their programming. For example, both are working to improve soil fertility and structure despite flooding or erosion—SomRep uses irrigation and post-harvest management practices to improve soil structure, and FSP-Enyanya employs its "Hill Approach" to support land reforestation and regeneration. Making similar adjustments to agricultural practices can help communities protect and increase development gains and become more resilient in the face of environmental challenges.

RESOURCES

- Assessment of the "Hill Approach": A Resilient Agriculture Food Security Project in DRC
  - » Brief: Piloting a Hill Approach for Resilient Agriculture in South Kivu
  - » Webinar: Hill Approach Study Results
- SCALE Resilient Agriculture Resource page, including multiple tools and resources related to Resilience Design in Smallholder Farming Systems Approach and the Permagarden Approach
- Addressing the Climate-Conflict Nexus: Evidence, Insights and Future Directions, Mercy Corps, 2021
- Addressing Climate Drivers of Conflict: Mercy Corps' Approach, Mercy Corps, 2019
- SomRep Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) video, crisis modifier case studies for Somalia and Somaliland
- Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration: A holistic approach to sustainable development
- Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration in a Somali context: Practitioners' manual
- The social, environmental and economic benefits of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration

Climate-Resilient Water Management Practices

As climate change intensifies the likelihood and severity of drought and other extreme weather in the Greater Horn region, supporting climate-resilient water management is critical for food security, sustainable agriculture, and livelihood development. The session highlighted challenges and solutions, examining localized and sustainable water management and ways to balance competing priorities within water management practices.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Rafa Volanarisoa**, Health, Nutrition, and WASH Team lead, Budikadidi, Catholic Relief Services

» **Radhika Singh**, Consultant, International Water Management Institute

» **John Abdu Essa**, Deputy Director Program Implementation, Drought Response, Save the Children

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **Budikadidi** is a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by CRS that operates in the DRC. Since 2017, it has been improving sustainable access to drinking water and has built 245 water points (35 boreholes, 210 spring sources) in rural communities.

- The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** is an international, research-for-development organization, with offices in 15 countries and a global network of scientists operating in more than 55 countries. IWMI targets water and land management challenges faced by poor communities in developing countries, and through this contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of reducing poverty and hunger and maintaining a sustainable environment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Integrating water management across various institutions and actors, and facilitating strong collaboration between them, allows for rapid responses and adaptations to shocks. After 2 years of implementation, Budikadidi suddenly faced a cholera outbreak, but their strong relationship with the government in DRC and other development and aid actors helped control the outbreak. They leveraged the government's early warning system, used a CRS response team to quickly transport resources, mobilized and transitioned funding to address the emergency, and engaged local care groups and community workers. Their relationships with government and social actors prepared them to address and move beyond the emergency. Budikadidi's response is an example of how leveraging existing platforms, joint planning, and complementary efforts can help control and respond to outbreaks, address gaps, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Involving local communities is critical for the sustainability of water management systems. Communities often oversee water management, but this can become burdensome when funding for equipment or systems, technical expertise, or government support are absent. Local communities must be represented in water management committees or bodies from their inception as well as empowered to coordinate with the local government or the private sector in addressing their water management needs. This ownership over the water management systems will prepare the community to maintain them in the long term, underscoring why aid organizations must design programs with community leadership at the center.

Water management programs must balance long-term development with addressing emergencies, especially regarding climate change. Water is an essential resource, but climate change is impacting access to it in various ways. This session explored ways to improve water management amidst these challenges, such as using generators for access to water supply and systems while simultaneously transitioning to solarization and using clean energy. Ensuring that communities are aware of climate change's impact on water sources and availability will help them manage it sustainably in the long term. Flexibility and adaptive management are necessary to create an enabling environment for the long-term development of water management while still addressing shocks.

RESOURCES

- Humanitarian-Development Coherence in WASH or WRM Programs, USAID, 2021
- Water Resources Management, USAID, 2021
- PRO-WASH Resource Guide, 2022
- SCALE Resource Guide, 2022
- Private-Sector Engagement and Water Supply Systems: An Example from Ethiopia, SPIR and PRO-WASH, 2021
- Vegetable Irrigation for Climate Resilience Toolkit for Mali and Ethiopia, IWMI, 2022-2023
- The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations?, Oxfam, 2019
- Natured-Based Solutions in Sub-Saharan Africa for Climate and Water Resilience, World Resources Institute, 2022
- Towards Climate Resilient Environmental and Natural Resources Management in the Lake Victoria Basin, World Bank, 2020
- It takes a village! Accounting for women in building and strengthening climate resilience, World Bank, 2023

Climate Change, Migration, and Livelihoods: Community-Centered Support for Populations on the Move

Climate-related migration increasingly impacts programming across the HDP nexus, as individuals and families migrate to access better livelihoods or receive aid. Participants in this session aimed to understand migration motivations, including both short-term factors and permanent changes in the Horn of Africa region, and the potential priorities of a long-term regional response. To guide conversations, this session convened representatives specialized in various sub-topics, including:

- migration and its implications on gender and youth;
- migration and displacement projection and data use;
- aid as a push/pull factor in migration;
- regional programming lessons for migration activities;
- rural-to-urban migration patterns; and
- community-led responses to seasonal extreme weather events.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Bruny Laguerre,** Gender and Youth Director, FSP-Enyanya, Mercy Corps

» **Laura Bennison,** Durable Solutions Consortium Coordinator, International Office of Migration, Somalia

» **Jebiwot Sumbeiywo,** Chief of Party, USAID's Cross-Border Community Resilience Activity

» **Will Baron,** Chief of Party, Resilience in Pastoral Areas, Mercy Corps

» **David Okutu,** Team Lead for Collaborating, Learning, Adapting, and Monitoring and Evaluation, Resilience in Pastoral Areas, Mercy Corps

» **Anthony Akwenyu,** Chief of Party, Complimentary Action for Resilience Building, Norwegian Refugee Council

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- The **International Office of Migration (IOM)** is an intergovernmental organization working in emergency situations to develop the resilience of people on the move as well as strengthening capacity within governments to manage all forms and impacts of mobility.

- **FSP-Enyanya** is a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by Mercy Corps that operates in the South Kivu region of the DRC. It works with households, community leaders, the Government of DRC, and other development programs to improve the food and nutrition security and economic well-being of communities in South Kivu.

- **Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR)** iis a USAID-funded activity led by Chemonics and ACDI/VOCA in cross-border clusters of Karamoja, Moyale, and Mandera. The activity aims to address conflict, bolster livelihoods and food security, and reduce the risks of shocks and stresses through empowering local communities, governments, civil society, and other entities to implement targeted interventions.

- **Resilience in Pastoral Areas (RiPA) North** is a USAID/Feed the Future resilience activity led by Mercy Corps in northern Ethiopia. It takes a systems-based approach to improve the resilience capacities of households, markets, and governance institutions, especially in pastoral communities that experience environmental and health shocks, swells in population, and increasing risks of conflict.

- **Complimentary Action for Resilience Building (CARB)** is a USAID/BHA-funded project led by the Norwegian Refugee Council in South Sudan. The project integrates multisectoral activities to build resilience among people affected by conflict and climate change. Innovative, climate-smart agriculture, disaster-risk reduction, and conflict-sensitive interventions are among its several activities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Understanding migrants' contexts, including their place of origin, motivation for migrating, and skills, is necessary to develop a program's purpose in addressing migration or assisting migrants. Migration is driven by a combination of factors, including climate-related, economic, and social motivators, and the group best placed to understand this variety of factors is the impacted individual and their household. Their gender and age also affect how they experience migration, such as the opportunities available to them in their new residence. Considering this is important, as the experiences and needs of a woman or youth migrating to an urban area to seek more diverse job opportunities differ from those of a family migrating to escape conflict or drought. Incentives for migration vary, including familial connection; better opportunities for livelihoods or education; environmental shocks such as flooding or drought; lack of basic services in the place of origin; provision of humanitarian aid; and potential conflict in the place of origin. Implementers must also consider migration's trend toward permanent rather than temporary displacement when constructing a strategy and a response.

Community-led joint planning with aid organizations and local governments enables communities impacted by climate-related migration to effectively respond and adapt. The drivers of migration vary per community, as do the skills and capacities of the migrating individuals, making them experts on their own needs and how to respond. Humanitarian agencies should channel resources to provide an enabling environment and facilitate conversations as local communities engage in action planning. The stakeholders involved in these conversations must be representative of the impacted communities, including women and youth, which are among the most common groups to migrate, according to FSP-Enyanya and RiPA North.

Local government involvement can facilitate community-led responses and make aid interventions more comprehensive. Local governments have a responsibility to address climate-related migration alongside aid organizations and local communities. Local governments should advocate for impacted communities and oversee efforts to provide them with resources or assistance. As countries handle migration differently, it might be best for aid organizations to work with and through the governments. Strong communication and partnership between local governments and local communities or aid organizations assists all parties in supporting migrants and the communities that receive them.

Urbanization is a consistent migration pattern with unique challenges. Many discussions highlighted the continuing trend of urbanization as people migrate from rural to urban or even semi-urban areas. IOM has used data to see displacement hotspots, many of which are in areas where aid, specifically cash aid, is provided. They use data to project migration trends, which can be further used to anticipate and address population needs. Regardless of the motivation for migration, it is important to push beyond providing aid to urban centers or intermediate towns, as continued urbanization can potentially overwhelm cities and diminish access to resources. Given the spectrum of rural-to-urban areas, connecting with villages and dispersing aid to smaller, locally-led organizations can begin to address this issue. However, services and support to migrants in urban areas are still inconsistent or absent. Often without any familial support, the experience can be economically and psychosocially challenging for migrants, especially women and girls, who tend to face greater barriers to access to information than men and boys. This challenge has prompted many questions about program design and outreach to best determine how to meaningfully support migrants.

Partnering with Local Stakeholders for Context Monitoring and Contingency Planning

Collaborative context monitoring and contingency planning can be critical components of adaptive management for HDP coherence. When partners and project participants jointly monitor the context, identify emerging challenges, and develop contingency plans, they create a shared understanding of the situation, enabling early response to implementation challenges and timely adjustments. Participants in this session explored promising practices in partnering with local stakeholders to monitor changes in context as well as create and activate contingency plans. Representatives from Save the Children Somalia presented a case study outlining their approach to working with local partners close to communities for improved context monitoring and joint contingency planning. Participants also reflected on promising practices to balance the advantages of collaboration with limited time and to improve collaboration with local stakeholders.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Suleiman Abdi,** Program Director, BHA Emergency Activity, Save the Children

» **Hamda Hersi**, Country Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Manager, BHA Emergency Activity, Save the Children

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Collaborative context monitoring and contingency planning are facilitated by regular touch points and active information sharing with local stakeholders. Discussions revealed a persistent challenge in effective adaptive management: information is inconsistently shared across stakeholders and contingency planning is conducted on a haphazard basis instead of as an intentional planning and preparedness tool. Ways to facilitate regular touchpoints include frequent planning and reflection meetings with implementing partners and government ministry partners for decision making, security-monitoring clusters to regularly monitor conflict, and joint security assessments before activating crisis modifiers or responses.

Data and information from context monitoring needs to be accessible at all levels and triangulated for use in activating contingency plans. Local stakeholders may have limited resources and expertise, which can hinder their ability to effectively participate in monitoring and planning activities. To counter this, implementers should engage and train local stakeholders from the beginning of a program in the process of choosing indicators for reporting and context monitoring as well as shaping tools for data collection and planning for contingencies, including establishing triggers for activating crisis modifiers and adapting implementation strategies. Additionally, projects can establish centralized data collection systems that are accessible to all partners, including community standing committees. Local stakeholders have access to valuable qualitative information that can give context to and validate monitoring data, helping project staff determine if additional assessments may be necessary to inform decision making for adaptive management.

Positive power relations and meaningful, non-extractive partnerships with local partners improve communication, programming, and adaptive management. Power dynamics within partnerships can be challenging, particularly when engaging with local stakeholders. However, by fostering a culture of open dialogue and actively seeking ways to build better relationships, organizations can enhance collaboration, trust, and information sharing among stakeholders. Projects can start by leveraging existing community mechanisms to strengthen relationships and collaboration and establish community standing committees for regular, two-way information flow. By sharing information and validating findings with communities, trust is built and programming can be improved and adapted to address community needs. Monitoring and exchange visits can include local government authorities and community representatives as a way to

balance power and ensure inclusion of a variety of perspectives. When local stakeholders are engaged as equal partners with valid perspectives, they may be more willing and confident to share accurate information and take active roles in adapting programming during crisis.

RESOURCES
- Session slides
- IDEAL's Introduction to Scenario Planning short course in Kaya

10 Minute AM: Simple Tools for Learning and Adaptive Management when Time is Short

Adaptive management does not have to be complex—it starts with building moments for reflection, learning, and connection into things we are already doing. Participants in this session reflected on simple adaptive management approaches and considered how they might apply them in their own contexts to improve learning and adaptive management for HDP coherence. The session showcased three simple tools and methods used by implementing partners in the Greater Horn region:

- a market stall approach for collaborative learning and adaptive, enhanced programming;
- a quality improvement verification checklist to build a learning culture; and
- learning to action guides.

SESSION PRESENTERS

» **Ailish Byrne,** Strategic Learning Lead, USAID Nawiri, Catholic Relief Services

» **Florence Randari**, Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Lead, Apolou RFSA, Mercy Corps

» **Rodwell Sibanda**, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Specialist, Nuyok RFSA, Catholic Relief Services

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

- **USAID Nawiri** is a USAID/BHA-funded, activity led by Catholic Relief Services in Kenya. The activity seeks to sustainably reduce levels of persistent acute malnutrition in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands.

- **Apolou** was a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by Mercy Corps in the Kaabong, Karenga, Kotido, Moroto, and Amudat districts of Karamoja, Uganda. Apolou sought to boost food and nutrition security for 310,000 people, working with households, community leaders, the Ministry of Karamoja Affairs, the Government of Uganda, the private sector, and others to address underlying causes of chronic food and nutrition insecurity and build community and household resilience.

- **Nuyok** was a USAID/BHA-funded RFSA led by Catholic Relief Services that sought to build resilience to shocks, enhance livelihoods, and improve food and nutrition security for at-risk rural families in the Karamoja sub-region of northeastern Uganda.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Successful adaptive management is a balance between deliberate, intentional planning and seizing opportunities for reflection and learning. One of the major barriers to adaptive management is general preoccupation with planned activities and a lack of prioritization for learning activities. Heavy workloads and personal fatigue make it challenging to allocate time for reflection and learning, which hinders effective decision making and adaptive management. Reflection can be accomplished by taking 10 minutes to do an informal pause and reflect or an after-action review during a regular meeting. Learning can also be captured through a structured framework or tool, such as the Learning to Action Guide or a quality improvement verification checklist and incorporated into monthly or quarterly pause and reflect meetings. Using interactive learning techniques at events, such as photo market stalls, encourages deliberate engagement and captures critical questions, allowing teams to identify opportunities for improvement and adaptation. As a first step, implementers should examine a project's current workplan and M&E processes and find places to insert manageable reflection and learning activities.

Adaptive management is facilitated by empowering staff with tools for learning and the power to make decisions. Discussion in the session revealed that many find it difficult to respond promptly to and prioritize challenges in the field and incorporate them into management and technical decision-making processes. Presenting on quality improvement verification checklists, Florence Randari of the Apolou activity highlighted the need to consider the level at which decision making occurs and how it translates practically on the ground. Creating a learning culture for program quality involves empowering frontline staff with learning guidance that supports deliberate actions and adaptations. This shift in power decentralizes decision making and enables staff to advocate for change. Apolou's quality improvement verification checklists and Nuyok's learning to action guides capture real-time information as frontline staff visit communities. These collaborative approaches and tools can ensure that decisions are informed by stakeholders' perspectives and effectively implemented at the community level.

Leadership plays a crucial role in supporting learning opportunities and modeling learning behavior for adaptive management. Allocating resources and time for training, workshops, and learning events is essential for fostering a learning culture within a project or organization. Leaders can create a supportive environment where learning and experimentation is valued, encouraging employees to share knowledge and experiences and try new techniques, such as a market stall approach at a learning event. By modeling a growth mindset, seeking feedback, and adapting strategies based on new information, leaders inspire their teams to embrace challenges and continuously learn and improve.

RESOURCES
- From the Community Toolbox: Making the Jump from a Lesson Learned to Adapting an Activity
- Using a Quality Improvement Verification Checklist to Build a Learning Culture
- USAID Nawiri Annual Learning Event—Market Stall Activity Guidance

Building an Enabling Environment for Quick Pivots

The nature of humanitarian, development, and peace programming is complex and unpredictable. The most well-designed activities will need to pivot due to a sudden change in context. When a major catastrophe strikes, responding organizations must be ready to navigate unforeseen crises that occur as the recovery work progresses. Using their own experiences, session participants explored factors that create or detract from an enabling environment for quick pivots in programming during complex crises. Participants then worked together to generate lessons learned and recommendations for improving the preparedness of future activities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adaptive management, especially in emergencies and crisis situations, is facilitated by flexible funding and resource allocation. Contract or policy requirements from donors and governments often create situations where programming pivots are not possible without approval—frequently a long, complicated process. However, having flexibility in funding sources, including discretionary resources, enables organizations to allocate funds quickly to address emerging needs or pivot their activities. Diverse funding streams and the ability to reallocate resources as necessary through mechanisms such as crisis modifiers facilitate agile decision making. One participant cited how a crisis modifier enabled their multi-purpose cash assistance project to cover a gap in the minimum expenditure basket provided to households that was created as a result of inflation and the failure of a private donor to provide promised funding. Programs can also build contingency planning into project design and create budgets that reserve resources for potential shocks or context changes.

A deep understanding of the local context, including environmental data, cultural norms, socio-economic dynamics, and existing community structures, is crucial for effective pivoting. It allows organizations to tailor their responses and strategies to the specific needs and challenges of the communities they serve and pivot with this in mind. Programs can foster collaboration and information sharing among actors to access a broader range of data sources. Regular monitoring and evaluation, including context monitoring through community structures and other sources of data, provide feedback loops that provide evidence to help identify when a pivot is necessary and support decision making for adaptive management. One participant described how they pivoted their targeting approach for skills training with women based on work done to better understand the local context and the needs of women. Another example from Ethiopia demonstrated how accurate information regarding water availability during a drought helped the program to pivot their WASH infrastructure projects to accommodate people who were displaced due to the drought. The program began water trucking and was able to provide additional water points to accommodate displaced people.

Community engagement in decision-making and planning processes increases community acceptance, support, and ownership. Important factors to consider in successful community engagement include working with community leadership and involving a diverse group of community representatives, including youth and women, in decision-making processes. Participants emphasized that trust is built with communities by maintaining timely, consistent, and transparent engagement. One example from Kenya cited the inclusion of a wide variety of community stakeholders in the decision making around the implementation of an emergency cash transfer program alongside existing funding support to households in need. A few participants reported unintended consequences around negative feelings from community members that were not assisted by the activity as a part of pivots, which may be mitigated by community engagement and clear, open, two-way communication.

Setting up formal and informal coordination and information sharing mechanisms among stakeholders early on helps ensure regular, established communication for adaptive management. Involving key stakeholders such as local communities, government agencies, donors, and implementing partners in decision-making processes and maintaining strong collaborative relationships can enhance the ability to pivot quickly. Engaging stakeholders throughout the project cycle fosters trust, improves coordination, and ensures collective ownership of the pivot process. Additionally, well-established coordination mechanisms, such as coordination platforms, technical working groups, and community forums, can be leveraged to facilitate rapid response and enable organizations to pivot smoothly through information sharing, collaboration, and collective decision making.

Navigating Protracted Crises: Improving the Use of Evidence for Iterative Adaptation of Emergency Programs

Emergency program funding is inherently short term, typically lasting from 6 to 24 months. However, the recovery process often lasts longer than traditional longer-term development programs, with new emergency activities funded year after year to continue recovery activities. The cyclical nature of these iterations disrupts the learning process for program improvement and disincentivizes proactively embedding learning and adaptive management processes across multiple activity iterations. In this problem-solving session, participants considered how to refine, grow, and improve their use of the evidence base to enhance the design, connectivity, and coherence of emergency programs facing an iterative life cycle.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Improving operational research questions to gather the right data to inform intervention adaptations makes them more efficient and impactful. The evidence base informing HDP coherence programming is small. Existing evidence is generally spread thinly across interventions and outcomes and normally clustered around food, cash, and in-kind transfers. In many countries vulnerable to climatic and humanitarian emergencies there is little evidence on the effects of interventions and few or no impact evaluations on several key types of disasters. Humanitarian and peace activities would especially benefit from more and better designed operational research. An example of a good operational research question from an impact evaluation in post-typhoon Philippines was, "What is the best way to design an unconditional cash transfer to both promote recovery while strengthening the longer-term resilience of communities at risk of disasters?" Sub-questions included: "How many payments should a transfer be split into?" and "Should a financial literacy overview be paired with the transfer?" The results showed that lump sum payments led to more investments in productive assets. In addition, the program was able to drop a 1-hour financial overview because it did not change the savings behaviors of beneficiaries. Mobile-based savings encouragement led to changes in usage of both informal and formal savings products for program participants who reported receiving a series of voice messages.

Reflection and learning at the right time with the right people using the right data improves the use of evidence for adaptation. To ensure that data from multiple sources is used intentionally for learning, adaptive management, and design, participants formulated some recommendations involving data management and reflection processes. Program planning should intentionally embed processes for how data will be discussed and used by key actors. Key actors can include a wide array of stakeholders such as donors, other NGOs, government, and community representatives. The program's detailed implementation plan should include internal and wider pause and reflect meetings and learning events aligned with the program's data gathering schedule to maximize collaborative reflection on and learning from data. Lastly, program staff and partners need guidance and support to actively use the program's knowledge management system. A strong knowledge management system is also helpful.

Establishing strong connections and communication among activity teams and leadership facilitates effective adaptation. Breakdowns in communication between implementation teams and project design teams is a key challenge. For learning from a current emergency program to inform the design of a follow-on program, all leadership and teams must intentionally plan and communicate with each other. For emergency activities, a donor representative mentioned that they often receive applications/proposals from implementing partners' program teams that put forward interventions and approaches without collaborating with MEL specialists on the M&E plan. This results in operational research questions that seem disconnected from the proposed interventions. Some participants felt that deliberate opportunities to build relationships and open lines of communication would help with information flow and allow for

better review and planning. Participants agreed that this can be built into the program cycle through a big picture, long-term reflection and learning plan. Implementing partners should look at the program cycle and identify key points at which different teams should interact with each other, like before and during proposal writing, at the start of implementation, and annually during implementation.

RESOURCES
- Session slides

RKSM COUNTRY SESSIONS

During the event, three country-specific sessions convened implementing partners to reflect on the current practices of HDP coherence in their context, question some of the gaps and barriers in applying HDP coherence principles in practice, and explore potential recommendations for improved HDP coherence. Participants received a "reflection & learning notebook" to capture their thoughts and ideas over the course of the RKSM.

The first country session invited participants to reflect on existing practices of HDP coherence, how their activities already exhibit such principles, as well as identify one key challenge relating to HDP coherence to address in their country. To get the most out of the RKSM, participants ultimately agreed on a strategy to ensure a well-balanced country representation in each session.

The following day, participants in the second country session shared and processed what they learned in the theme sessions and began developing potential recommendations. By the end of the session, country teams brainstormed practical actions to apply in their own work plans or activity designs. They also considered collective actions and support needed from other actors to work towards improving HDP coherence.

The third and final country session on the last day of the event culminated in refining, categorizing, and prioritizing key recommendations to share out in the closing plenary to all stakeholders. Participants focused on the application of individual- and group-level solutions at country scale. Most recommendations included specific and actionable elements, such as identifying who, when, and how. Overwhelmingly, country teams called for more knowledge sharing and/or coordination meetings, a more focused strategy on leveraging local knowledge and local communities, more intentional inclusivity of women and youth in program designs, as well as systematic integration of conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches in food security programs.

KENYA	ETHIOPIA	UGANDA	SOMALIA	SOUTH SUDAN	DRC
44 participants	37 participants	28 participants	26 participants	13 participants	12 participants

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Among implementing partners working in DRC (11), several noted that technical interventions in WASH, agriculture, social and behavior change, COVID-19 response, and youth, already integrate HDP coherence principles. Other programmatic actions included resilience pathways and focus zones, as well as consultations and capacity strengthening with community and local partners. To the question "What is one change that you think would make the biggest impact to improve HDP coherence in the DRC?", participants highlighted strengthening government involvement, coordination between actors, community engagement, adaptive management, and youth agribusiness. They also noted that the contexts and environments in DRC are very diverse between regions, and as a result, recommendations should target country, regional, and local levels depending on the context.

Collectively, participants from the DRC identified several recommendations, categorized under (a) collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA); (b) MEAL; and (c) co-creation. They noted the need to enable better activity coordination between sectors and emphasized the importance of stakeholder coordination and integration into program designs. Participants ultimately prioritized the following four recommendations:

| **Organize a knowledge-sharing meeting on qualitative methods to collect data on peacebuilding, gender, and resilience.**

| **Organize a restitution meeting of key learnings from the RKSM 2023 to all implementing partners.**

| **Organize an advocacy workshop on HDP coherence at the province-level.**
   » This recommendation focused on supporting provincial-level governments to improve coordination among HDP actors. Potential regions included Kasai, Ituri, Tanganyika, and North and South Kivu.

| **Include crisis modifiers in upcoming awards, starting with future projects in Kasai.**

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Respondents from DRC have shared learnings within their own organization and collaborated with others they met at the RKSM, but the recommended meetings have not yet been organized.

Ethiopia

Participants in the Ethiopia country group (37) first discussed existing programs that contribute to HDP coherence. They quickly agreed that HDP coherence is important, but participants wanted to focus on specific ways to operationalize HDP coherence. They noted the role of civil society organizations, which can leverage their positions to request funding to layer humanitarian and development activities, as well benefit from funding flexibility. They also highlighted efforts such as World Vision's social cohesion approach (assessing contributing factors to conflict and working with stakeholders to design activities that do no harm), or the RiPA natural resource management approach that established agreements between host and migrating communities to avoid conflict over resources.

In terms of changes with the biggest impact on HDP coherence, the group discussed the need for purposeful and coordinated planning and response at the national level; stronger collaboration between humanitarian and development actors; flexible donor funding; increased focus on peace; and enhanced commitment to locally driven approaches.

> "We know the WHAT and WHY of HDP coherence. But I'm here to know the HOW.
> — *RKSM Participant*

Collectively, the Ethiopia country team identified eight high-level recommendations and voted on prioritizing the themes of (a) joint planning; (b) stakeholder engagement; and (c) peace. The group highlighted the importance of governance in pursuing HDP coherence at both the national and local level. They prioritized the following three recommendations.

| **Organize an initial joint planning meeting on HDP coherence [to clarify and agree on] next steps.**
  » This meeting would convene USAID, the RLA Ethiopia working group, implementing partners, as well as key government representatives.

| **Endeavor to be more context-driven by mapping and engaging community and local stakeholders.**

| **Establish a "Peace Hub" to integrate conflict sensitivity into programs and institutions, in partnership with national entities such as Ethiopia Institute of Peace (EIP) and Haramaya University.**

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Four implementing partners from Ethiopia responded that, since the event, they have started working towards some of the country-level recommendations. One participant highlighted that they have shared learnings that resulted from the RKSM and are considering adaptations to their 3-year country strategy to better integrate HDP coherence considerations into their humanitarian interventions.

Kenya
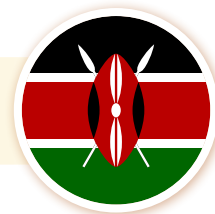
During the first country session, partners working in Kenya (44) brainstormed on key methods and tools that could improve HDP coherence in their context. Ideas included: (a) the creation of a joint risk assessment tool around vulnerability of populations; (b) organizing knowledge-sharing events to spark collaboration between organizations; (c) strengthening collaboration with and capacity of local partners; and (d) joint work planning at the country level.

Partners focused on the changes they would like to see happen in Kenya to improve HDP coherence, such as advocating and innovating to strengthen longer-term approaches that empower communities; working closely with leaders and government entities to ensure they understand the importance of HDP coherence and strategically coordinate with development partners; convincing donors to provide more funding flexibility and move away from institutional, agency, sectoral, and professional territorialism and competition; and collaborating with donors to develop common frameworks for HDP coherence towards collective goals and impact.

Collectively, participants from Kenya reflected on various aspects of programming that would advance HDP coherence, including behavior change among organizations, leveraging convening platforms such as PREG and the Council of Governors, and influencing county and national governments to take leadership. They shared the following six prioritized recommendations:

| **HDP coherence should be rooted in intentionality and inclusiveness, keeping in mind shocks when doing scenario planning in theories of change, monitoring & evaluation, and adaptive management.**

| **Focus on communities.**

| **Strengthen work plan committees and award-level planning process.**

| **Get buy-in for HDP coherence from leadership at country/national level.**

| **Build an evidence base for HDP coherence.**

| **Make use of existing mechanisms like RLA, IDEAL, and sectoral level working groups.**

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Six implementing partners from Kenya responded that they are applying and/or strengthening some of the above recommendations, including working closely with partners on issues of localization, deliberately planning for HDP coherence, and designing multisectoral country programs for the upcoming years.

Somalia

Participants working in Somalia (26) discussed areas that would improve the application of HDP coherence principles in the country. Key topics included integrating conflict sensitivity in livelihoods resilience approaches; focusing on multi-year projects and systems-level approaches; coordinating with government, donors, and partners at the early stages of a program; mapping stakeholders; and creating joint work plans.

The group also concurred on what would make the biggest impact in Somalia. This included effective sectoral integration and complementary programming between activities and organizations (especially those targeting the same location); working across various levels of the Somali government and within local communities to share a common understanding of HDP coherence and strengthen coordination efforts; making informed decisions based on evidence and recommendations generated by field-level staff; and more funding flexibility, including multi-year emergency and humanitarian investments.

The Somalia country team's recommendations centered on integrating peacebuilding approaches within any humanitarian or development intervention. This should include incorporating conflict analysis into the design phase of any activity. Participants also noted the central role of coordination and collaboration (through CLA) to improve stakeholder participation, buy-in, and shared priorities, providing special attention to local knowledge, data and information sharing, and adaptive management. Participants prioritized the following six recommendations:

> "HDP should be changed to PHD because everything else makes sense when there is peace."
>
> — *RKSM Participant*

- Strengthen adaptive management and do it in real time.

- Advocate for donors to deliberately work towards common approaches and incentives for SLI and HDP achievements/outcomes.

- Programs to accept and build in provision and space for mistakes/failure. Map HDP actors in Somalia.

- Tap into existing structures and empower them to take up the joint planning assignments (Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS), Somali Resilience Program (SomReP), Somalia Resilience Platform (SRP)).

- Start at the system (USAID).

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Respondents who participated in the Somalia country sessions have all stated that the RKSM improved the quality of their work. They have shared learnings within their own organization and collaborated with others they met at the RKSM. One participant is planning to use a study led by RLA Somalia through the Somalia Resilience Platform that will help partners understand how SLI can be implemented in the context of Somalia.

South Sudan

Participants in the South Sudan country sessions (13) reflected on the existing applications of HDP coherence in their context. They emphasized the role of multi-year emergency programs such as Pathways to Resilience (P2R), Accelerating Recovery and Resilience in South Sudan (ACCESS), and CARB, as well as food security and livelihoods clusters. They also highlighted that CLA working groups and community-led action planning support HDP coherence across organizations and activities in the country.

The group also identified challenges and areas of improvement for HDP coherence in South Sudan. These include working towards better inclusion of women and youth in program design, integrating peacebuilding or conflict sensitivity in humanitarian and development activities, aligning geographic focuses across sectors, and mainstreaming community-led resilience agendas as the basis for joint work planning.

Collectively, participants from South Sudan made several recommendations focusing on peacebuilding, knowledge sharing, including crisis modifiers in HDP activities, and the development and adoption of shock-responsive community actions plans. The three main recommendations include:

| **Organize a South Sudan Knowledge Sharing Meeting across all regions of the country.**

| **Incorporate HDP coherence into the USAID strategy review at national level.**

| **Integrate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding in programs across all USAID-funded counties.**

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Respondents all indicated that they are working towards the above recommendations in their activities. One participant used their key takeaways from the event to develop a proposal for the second phase of their project. Another participant noted that they have shared their learnings during a quarterly joint meeting of USAID's South Sudan implementing partners and will continue to advocate for HDP coherence.

Uganda

Partners working in Uganda (28) discussed the most impactful measures to improve HDP coherence across their organizations. Specifically, their conversations centered around (a) strengthening inclusivity of people with disabilities, women, and indigenous groups; (b) reinforcing knowledge sharing and dialogue across organizations, especially with local partners and communities; (c) improving research and analysis, including food security and conflict assessments and analysis; and (d) encouraging community-centered interventions to better respond to local needs.

During the sessions, participants also exchanged ideas on how to reduce duplication of efforts and better layer areas of expertise and/or programs for improved outcomes, using existing coordination mechanisms. They noted the importance of sharing data to achieve common goals, especially in border areas where collecting data is challenging, such as in Karamoja.

Collectively, the group explored several ideas that would support HDP coherence efforts in Uganda under the overarching themes of localization, coordination, and government leadership. Participants prioritized the following recommendations:

| **On localization:**
  » Work with USAID towards a common understanding of localization.
  » Raise awareness of what localization is and the localization agenda.
  » Identify measurable metrics for localization.
  » Engage stakeholders in joint planning, learning, and implementation.
  » Advocate for government leadership in advancing a localization agenda with a clear strategy to integrate localization into HDP programming.

| **On coordination:**
  » Jointly plan.
  » Use existing platforms like Charter for Change Working Group Uganda, learn from and scale up local partners.
  » Map stakeholders.

  » Understand entry points and allies.
  » Include language of collaboration (joint planning and design) at implementation and in agreements/ contracts.

| **On leveraging government leadership:**
  » Encourage the implementation of the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP).
  » Identify allies.
  » Form a multi-stakeholder secretariat.
  » Leverage the Global Refugee Forum roundtable (taking place on May 30, 2023).
  » Lobby and influence government engagement and coordination leadership through the Humanitarian NGO Forum and NGO Forum.
  » Highlight peacebuilding in strategy, entire program cycle, mainstream in all activities.
  » Mainstream water resource management.

Feedback from the post-event survey sent to participants in August 2023

Nine respondents from Uganda shared that they are working towards the above recommendations. Six of them have focused on centering local knowledge and advancing a localization agenda within their programs. One participant shared that they have organized a regional meeting in Karamoja with district-level leadership to discuss and align USAID missions in the region.[1] In addition, following the RKSM, Charter for Change Working Group Uganda[2] began to conduct geographic information system mapping of local and national actors in humanitarian and disaster-prone areas of Uganda to inform planning and collaboration, and establish a network of local and national NGOs toleverage partnerships and coordinate responses.

1 The Karamoja Learning event was held in September 2023.
2 Read about this participant's experience at the RKSM and what learning she plans to take forward at the Charter for Change Working Group Uganda.

GREATER HORN OF AFRICA REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING MEETING

HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE (HDP) COHERENCE IN FOOD CRISIS CONTEXTS