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THE PARTNERSHIP FOR RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (PREG)

REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE PREG BI-ANNUAL LESSONS LEARNED EVENT



April 2018

This publication was produced by the Feed the Future: Building Capacity for African Agricultural Transformation Project (Africa Lead II) for the United States Agency for International Development.

FEED THE FUTURE: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (AFRICA LEAD II)

ENHANCING RESILIENCE AND MARKET SYSTEMS IN NORTHERN KENYA: REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE PREG BI-ANNUAL LESSONS LEARNED EVENT

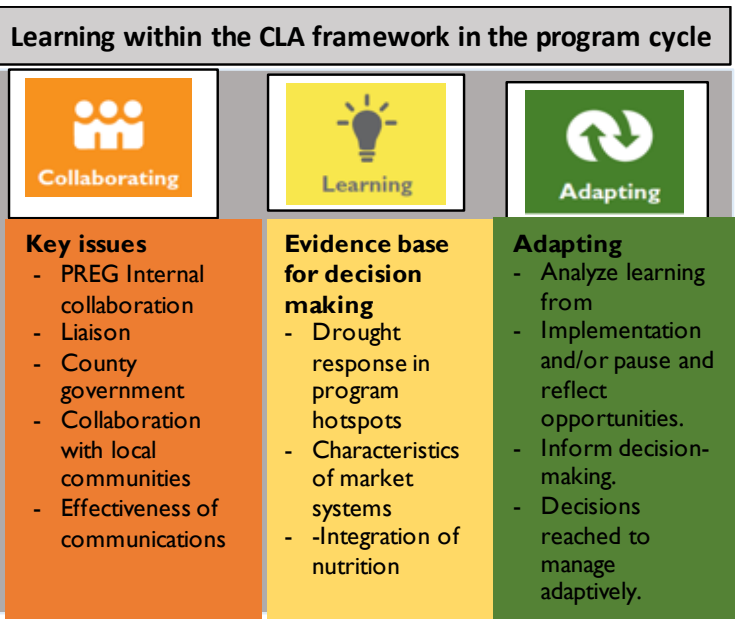
Program Title:	Feed the Future: Building Capacity for African Agricultural Transformation (Africa Lead II)
Sponsoring USAID Office:	USAID Bureau of Food
Security Award Number:	AID-OAA-A13-00085
Awardee:	DAI
Date of Publication:	April 2018
Author:	Africa Lead II Team

This publication was prepared by DAI and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-A13-00085.

I. Introduction: A Learning Brief

PREG Learning coordinated and facilitated a high level bi-annual PREG learning event from 19-23 March 2018, in Isiolo and Marsabit counties. The five-day event brought together more than 80 participants from PREG partners, non- USAID partners, and USAID. The purpose of the learning event was to provide an opportunity for PREG and other partners to engage in a participatory process of critical reflection, analysis and collective action for better resilience programming in the ASAL region.

During the learning event, emphasis was laid to three critical areas for improvement – drought response, strengthening market systems and improving communications for resilience. Using USAID’s conceptual framework for resilience and distilling the key components of the approach, all the project sites provided critical lessons learned on what partners are doing in the field to increase resilience at individual, community and systems levels where both adaptive capacities¹ and the ability to address and reduce risk through preparedness, mitigation, prevention, and protection are necessary.



- Expected outputs of the learning event**
- Partners identify gaps, solutions and approaches to improve implementation of activities.
 - PREG partners make individual commitments to take outcomes of learning visit forward and apply through adaptive management at activity level.
 - PREG joint plan of action from learning event including prioritization of key items for applying adaptive management .

¹ Adaptive capacity is the ability to quickly and effectively respond to new circumstances. This includes ensuring that social systems, inclusive governance structures, and economic opportunities are in place.

2. Summary of Lessons Learned

Five key lessons learned during the event included the following:

Lesson 1: Private sector engagement/development is a necessary component to integrate or consider for sustainable and resilient market systems. In all the market system site visits, the role of the private sector was highlighted as core. The private sector is the backbone of the economy/market system and the sustainable generator of employment. A core aspect of the market system however is the relationship and cooperation between the various actors (inputs suppliers, producers, middle-men, buyers, consumers), and functionality of the of the market system.

Illustrative examples of the potential for strong private sector engagement

- Strong evidence of multiplier effects from the livestock markets e.g., there is an evolving commodity market coming up in Merille at the dispensary where local women purchase kales and other vegetables.
- In Isiolo at Classic Dairy, the factory offers direct employment to 20 employees and jobs to 200 youths through cattle and camel delivery.
- Private sector players e.g., Classic Dairy and Kulamawe Poultry Farm has been critical in addressing gaps in the market system. They also bring about balance in demand and supply with the private sector supporting market segmentation with onward benefits to the producers and suppliers.
- There is an opportunity of including the poor in the market systems with small businesses providing opportunities for nutrition and employment.

In the case of shocks however, these relationships can sometimes be broken and can easily become non-functioning, politicized, monopolized, etc. For instance, how development undertakes humanitarian assistance can sometimes strengthen or disrupt/undermine local market systems and actors. In Kalacha, interventions of some development agencies as well as the county government in providing veterinary services and distribution of products for free undermine the place of agrovets and agro-dealers. In such a case, vouchers that work with local value chain actors and markets, as opposed to replacing them with temporary free services could be used to complement market systems.

Subsequently, the “facilitative” role of USAID implementing partners and county governments are important in supporting all the different elements of the system in ways that address the core development goals of addressing both inclusive and sustainable growth in the counties where USAID programs are implemented.

Lesson 2: Strengthening individuals and institutions within the resilience framework: It is important to ensure that all institutions relevant to a community’s resilience have the capabilities they need to discharge their roles. Understanding community contexts

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- Building stronger sustainability by creating ownership through facilitation and involvement of county government. This will be intentional, systematic and allow for adaptation.
- Invest in the improvement of emergency preparedness to boost the response capacity and effectiveness to shocks and stresses .
- Increase knowledge and application of current data and information among decision makers to improve the quality of decisions for resilience programs.

regarding risk reduction/management and building resilience can help in detecting current gaps in capacity at individual, household, community and systems levels to coordinate and act towards prevention, mitigation, response and recovery in the case of shocks.

Quite often, the bulk of efforts among implementing partners largely focus at the community, household and individual levels. In the process, there exist gaps in identifying the best and most-effective approaches to strengthen relevant systems level institutions for managing disaster risk. Institutions include, as applicable, county based-national and county government agencies as well as local development partners. Other groups also have a role to play in reducing some of the vulnerabilities, which is complementary to government measures, such as private sector organizations providing public services (depending on locale, these may include phone, water, healthcare, transporters and agro-dealers).

In almost all the discussions during the learning event, it was evident that all actors must work towards building capacities to absorb, adapt, and transform in the face of shocks which is essential and comes in many forms from the individual to the system level. At individual level, women groups have been trained and taken up poultry keeping and supply the local poultry factory even during droughts as opposed to relying on shoats. At a community level, in Kalacha, in the drought hotspots, pastoralists were neither structured to provide adequate early warnings on the impending drought nor to provide sufficient market information to enable them to sell their livestock in time. Both these two challenges are demonstrations of weaknesses in community and system level institutions that have a strong role to play in addressing and reducing risk at the community level in some of the project sites.

Lesson 3: Applying a nutrition lens to resilience programming in the food and livestock sector: Even when designing programs in livestock or agriculture, a twin-track approach, tackling immediate needs and the root causes of vulnerability is essential in fighting malnutrition in a comprehensive way and strengthening resilience. As such, this requires that acute needs in emergency situations and crises be addressed at the same time as investments for the long-term responses to tackle the root causes of vulnerability and malnutrition. However, for all these to happen, an enabling environment is a prerequisite.

The question that should concern most implementing partners is, how to strengthen the legislative and policy environment to maximize the nutritional impact of measures designed to improve resilience? In other words, how can partners help create an enabling environment for resilience-building that tackles nutritional problems.

One way of doing this is to convince policy-makers, especially at the county government level of the case, to invest in nutrition and resilience. Policy-makers concerned with resilience-building must be made aware of the social, economic and human costs of undernutrition. This will increase the likelihood that nutritional considerations are fully considered in development of policy, program and coordination frameworks for disaster risk management (DRM) and

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- Anchoring nutrition, health and women inclusion in market systems.
- Identify the indicators on nutrition resilience and increase the capacity of partners to implement programs using these indicators for performance measurement.
- Increase advocacy for sustainable financing of CHVs within the framework of the national community health strategy.

food security. Conversely, the growing political commitment to improving nutrition represents an opportunity when advocating for a resilience approach.

Integrating nutrition in resilience/DRM planning and supporting synergies with food security and nutrition policies, strategies and coordination mechanisms. In Merille Health Centre, Sololo, Kalacha and Tupendane community projects, there were clear evidence of promising nutrition results from the synergies sought between multisectoral food and nutrition interventions and processes. The efforts in these sites demonstrated that county governments and development actors can move from the often-unconnected interventions managed from different perspectives (i.e., food security from an agricultural-production perspective, nutrition from a health perspective and resilience from a disaster-management perspective) into a jointly coordinated framework under the leadership of the county government.

Lesson 4: Improve targeting – using existing USAID and other mapping tools is critical to support the drought response especially in reaching the most vulnerable populations.

A key lesson from the learning event revealed that PREG as a partnership lacks a proper criteria and procedures for the selection of sites for program interventions, even though there exist an array of tools, data and information from the GIS layering tools and other data sets that can easily support decision making in this regard.

Currently, target sites are often selected based on some predetermined criteria that is partner specific. What this means is that such categorical targeting may be used to reach one group and income poverty to target another and a different criterion for another group. When a disaster or climate shock occurs, it is likely that a different or even larger set of people will be affected. Flexible systems therefore need to be built that can respond to this increased and differentiated demand. A combination of targeting strategies should therefore be used with the key to develop criteria that is verifiable and measurable and that complement and reinforce other criteria.

Using PREG layering tools for instance can help improve geographic targeting of high-exposure areas or areas that have been affected by disaster/climate impacts. Even for humanitarian assistance which often precede development assistance, GIS maps can be used to determine areas where affected population lie and other overlays such as poverty in places where pockets of poverty or vulnerability co-exist with relatively well-off populations. Self-targeting of beneficiaries can also be used in public works programs such as construction of livestock markets, roads maintenance while ensuring that certain vulnerable groups are not left out.

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- Need for adequate emergency preparedness to boost the response capacity and effectiveness to shocks and stresses.
- Better / enhanced / systematic targeting and vulnerability mapping to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups.
- Development and application of a PREG site selection criteria for project implementation.
- Increase application of PREG layering tools for targeting.

Lesson 5: An effective communication strategy is essential in providing applicable knowledge and information on what’s working and what’s not working for learning purposes.

A challenge shared by partners within the PREG partnership and community members is how to communicate effectively and efficiently in addressing resilience. During the learning event, partners made visits to different sites each demonstrating the uniqueness of current communication challenges across multiple levels of decision making – from household to community to systems levels. In this respect, partners went beyond getting insights into additional communication challenges beyond branding and marketing and activity-level success stories.

In the reflection sessions, partners noted that there is increasing recognition that communication can build resilience by making technical information more accessible, addressing social norms and perceptions, supporting people to evaluate their choices, facilitating dialogue, prompting positive decisions and in influencing decision makers. However, the evidence base in this area remains limited to individual sectors, rather than to resilience overall, and there are no systematic reviews on the role of communication in resilience.

In most project sites, there was considerable history of using communication to provide information especially for livestock trade using the Livestock Market Information System. In both counties, radio and more recently, mobile phone services, have increased pastoralists’ knowledge of livestock information, linked them to new markets and buyers, strengthened their ability to negotiate prices and helped them to diversify to meet demands, among other things. However, there also clear cases where information and communication breakdown had been critical in exposing local communities to increased risk and vulnerability. In Kalacha, North Horr for example, local communities lacked access to date and information from the county Livestock Market Information System. Early warning and information data from the NDMA at county level had also failed to reach the local community in time.

PREG therefore identified the need to develop and establish clear objectives and a strategy for realization of what communication can achieve in the resilience program at all levels. There are opportunities to share on what other partners, county government and individuals at community level need to know. For example, partners want to know what set of actions help in addressing adaptation, to adapt to changes in climate. This information while it exists, is neither accessible nor consolidated for PREG learning purposes.

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- Digitalizing of maps in rangeland and cascade the information to the community.
- Targeting the right audiences with the different and relevant messages.
- Having a dedicated agenda on resilience in County Steering Group (CSG) forums.
- Sharing of success stories by all partners and benchmarking.
- Finalize and implement the PREG communication strategy.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

- **Strong local or county ownership and political leadership is essential for implementing resilience programs:** Political leadership is a prerequisite for the success of complex programs requiring multisectoral, multilevel and multi-stakeholder approaches. At the county level, strong political leadership enables a favorable policy environment to be created and facilitates the integration of resilience-building and even nutrition programs across different county departments such as agriculture, health, trade etc.
- **Addressing the nutrition gap:** A key question that kept emerging during the learning visit was the basic question - “How can partners enhance the nutritional impact of resilience programmes?” In other words, how can the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities of individuals, households and communities be enhanced in a way that enables them to better protect and improve their nutritional situation? From the visit, the key message that emerged was the fact that applying a nutrition lens to resilience programming first and foremost entails ensuring that resilience-building policies and programs aim to improve nutrition and include actions explicitly designed to prevent and address all forms of malnutrition, wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.
- **Market systems are complex and dynamic, and the key approaches used should seek a holistic understanding of the system** - This is also where market system knowledge products (market system analysis) are crucial. Partners currently tend to do a fair analysis of value chains, though this is sometimes done without ensuring good understanding or integrating key market system components such as, conflict sensitivity analysis, the political or war economy, do no harm analysis, climate change issues, value chain and market governance, how a market system affects both refugees and hosting, etc. Most importantly, a market systems analysis should integrate all aspects throughout the value chain, and look beyond highlighting the same old issues of social norms and culture.