Hi. I'm Stacey Young, Senior Learning Advisor with USAID's Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research in the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning. I want to tell you about the draft Program Cycle Learning Guide we've developed to help missions and implementing partners develop specific concrete approaches to integrating strategic collaboration, continuous learning and adaptive management through USAID's programs as a way to make those programs more effective.

We've noticed that development efforts often fall short of what we think they could accomplish. Often, this is because we duplicate what others are doing instead of coordinating with them or because we don't combine insights from across different sectors in addressing thorny development challenges or we don't share what we've learned so that other folks can apply it, and we don't take advantage of what they've learned.

One of the biggest reasons our efforts can fall short is that we're not keeping track of how a country or region or a sector is changing during the course of our program, and even if we do understand the changes, we can have a really hard time acting on their implications for our programs because we're tied to static strategies and implementation plans where folks found targets that were set at the beginning or defining success in terms of staying the course or our funding mechanisms don't leave room for us to adapt.

The Learning Guide is part of a broader effort we're undertaking to make our development programs more effective through collaborating, learning and adapting or CLA as it's known among a number of the missions that are adopting this approach. The CLA effort is part of the larger set of program cycle reforms that USAID is implementing. To learn more about the program cycle reforms, you can have a look at the short video about the program cycle here on the Learning Lab. If you work for USAID, you can learn about it in depth on the internal program net website where you can also get help on all aspects of the program cycle, and of course, anyone can read the revised 200 series of the ADS which captures USAID's policies and procedures.

What is CLA and is it really new? Of course, missions and partners have always collaborated, learned and adapted, and this guide built on those efforts. What's new about the CLA approach is that it's a more systematic, comprehensive approach to learning that's more fully integrated into our substantive work. It draws on best practices developed outside of USAID in the broader field of knowledge management and learning for international development, and most of all, it emphasizes iterative adaptation of our programs rather than the kinds of static approaches we've used in the past, and it addresses practical implications for supporting learning through budget, staffing and program management.

We think this approach has great potential for changing the way USAID does development and making our efforts more effective by grounding them in evidence, ensuring that they remain relevant as new learning emerges or the broader context changes and making their impact deeper and more sustainable.

Developing a mission wide plan for collaborating, learning and adapting or CLA is encouraged but not required under the new Program Cycle guidance. One way to decide whether it's right for the work

you're engaged in is to have a look at this learning guide. It describes the rationale for taking a CLA approach to our work and discusses what that entails and what it means for mission staff and implementing partners. Most of all, it offers a wide range of specific actions that missions and partners can take to improve coordination and collaboration, fill gaps in our technical knowledge, take advantage of learning that comes out of implementation as well as learning that comes from other development institutions, monitor and analyze on an ongoing basis the complex and dynamic county contexts we work in, build flexibility into our plans and processes so we can adapt as we learn or as things change and catalyze learning among the people we intend our programs to benefit.

The guide is structured along the program cycle, so it talks about what can be done in the course of first developing and then implementing a country strategy. It talks about CLA and the project design process and throughout project implementation. It talks about monitoring for learning not just monitoring for a narrow definition of accountability and about ways to synthesize and apply evaluation findings to our work, even as it's ongoing. And it discusses a learning center development methodology called facilitation which we can use to go beyond service delivery and promote truly systemic change.

As you move though the guide, you'll see that the first section, which, right now, is about 14 pages, provides an overview of CLA throughout the program cycle. Throughout that section are hyperlinks that take you in two directions. One direction is to a much longer annex to the guide that has much more detailed advice about methods, models and tools that you can use to operationalize CLA across the components of the program cycle. The other direction is out from the guide to the large and growing set of examples, methods and tools that we're compiling in the Learning Lab and that we're linking to elsewhere on the internet.

You'll learn about how to engage local thought leaders in your strategic planning process, how to map the efforts of other donors and other development actors that are working in the same country and how to analyze which of those relationships are important to you and how strong they are as a way to plan for collaborating and coordinating as well as influencing how these other institutions use their development resources.

You'll learn about ways to fill gaps in the knowledge and evidence base that you're building your programs on, methods for making portfolio reviews and partner meetings more effective learning events, ways to design projects and manage implementation so that continuous learning and adapting on the basis of what's learned is a central part of a project's purpose, rolling project design models that support adaptive approaches to emerging development challenges, ways to structure funding mechanism and language to include in those mechanism to facilitate partners in sharing knowledge with each other, coordinating their efforts, tracking changes in their sectors and adapting as they go.

And you'll learn about some of the approaches that missions and partners have taken to staff and budget for CLA, the roles and responsibilities across missions and partners for CLA to work comprehensively to support development objectives and goals and models and mechanisms that support CLA within missions and among implementing partners.

This guide is in draft, and we can use your help in improving it. It lives here on the Learning Lab, and the Learning Lab's interactive functionalities make it easier – easy for you to provide feedback and to contribute additional models, tools and other resources that you found valuable and would like to share with others. You can also connect directly with other learning experts and champions through discussion forums and peer assist opportunities.

Currently, the guide is a hyperlinked document. Soon, we'll be transferring it into a Wiki which will help it stay easily navigable even as it grows and will also help us draw on your knowledge and experience in expanding this resource and making it more useful in support of the broader CLA approach. We're really excited about learning at USAID, among our partners and in the countries in which we operate, and we're excited about the ways that this guide can support this agenda. Please have a look, tell us what you think and help us build the guide and the CLA approach. Together, we can do development better.

Thanks and see you online.

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