



# Introduction to Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

USAID Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity

# Session Objectives

## **Goal of this workshop:**

- Participants are introduced to the main principles of CLA and the CLA framework

## **Workshop Objectives:**

**By the end of this session, participants are expected to:**

- Understand the main principle of CLA
- Learn how CLA fits within the program cycle
- Be familiar with the CLA framework
- Understand the importance of CLA

## What often goes wrong in development...



Data & evidence stay on the shelf—programs have weak evidence base



Coordination is lacking, synergy is lost



Outdated practices are still used



Programs fit poorly with the context



Plans & implementation approaches remain static, even as things change



Development is donor- driven, not country-led or community-owned



Influence is not used strategically



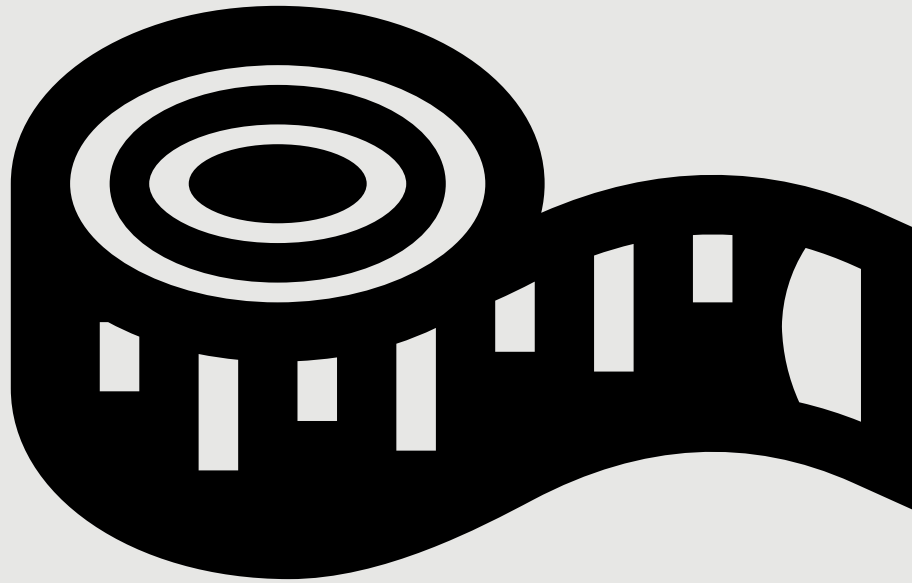
Implementation modes assume passive “beneficiaries” vs. active development agents

...collaborating, learning, and adapting can help!

# What is CLA?

- Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) is a set of practices that help us improve our development effectiveness.
- Learning has always been part of USAID's work, and most USAID missions and implementing partners are already practicing CLA in some way
- Our aim now is to make CLA more systematic and intentional throughout the Program Cycle, and to dedicate the resources necessary to make it happen.

...collaborating, learning, and adapting can indeed be helpful? Let's hear from those who tried it....



## Why CLA?



- Improve the quality and relevance of USAID's programs by grounding them in evidence
- Make programs adaptive to new learning and changing contexts
- Extend an organization's influence through sharing knowledge and collaborating with other development actors
- Catalyze learning among country development actors to build capacity and facilitate country-led development

# Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting



**Collaborating** intentionally happens when colleagues and stakeholders identify areas of shared interest and potential cooperation.

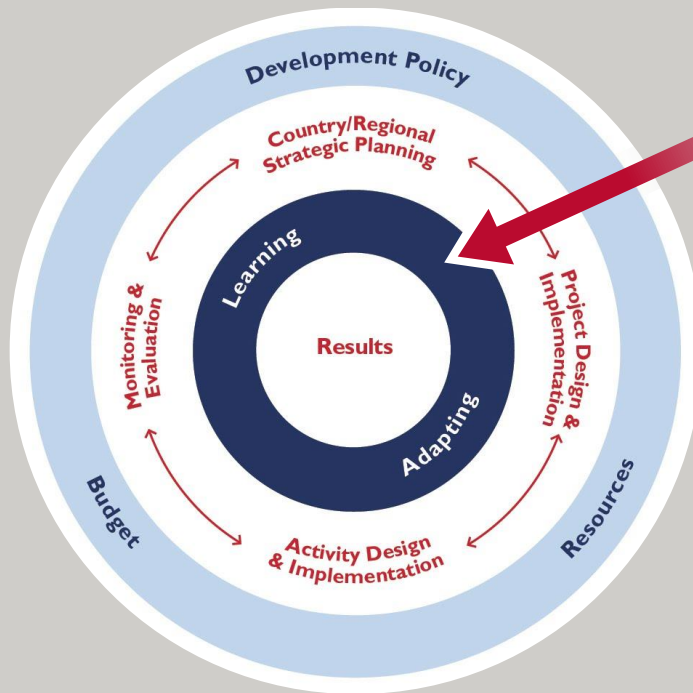


**Learning** systematically happens when we and our stakeholders utilize performance monitoring data and take time to pause & reflect on implementation.



**Adapting** effectively happens when we and our partners apply learning and make iterative course corrections and improvements during implementation to accelerate the impact of development assistance.

# CLA in the Program Cycle



“Strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management link together all components of the Program Cycle.”

ADS 201.6.5

CLA is how USAID operationalizes adaptive management



# Exercise (20 minutes)

In small groups discuss the following:

- What resonated with you about CLA?
- What pitfalls/challenges do you anticipate?
- What do you need as an implementing partner to achieve CLA?
- What examples of collaborating, learning and adapting have you seen?



# CLA in the Program Cycle



# CLA Framework



# Collaborating in the CLA Framework

## Key Considerations

- Identify stakeholders who could have the greatest impact on our planning and implementation
- Make decisions about what form collaboration should take with these stakeholders
- Collaborate effectively based on decisions reached and in an ongoing fashion.



# Learning in the CLA Framework

## Key Considerations

- There is a shared and articulated **theory of change** that is being actively tested and reviewed
- There is an existing **evidence base** that is being tracked, leveraged, and expanded
- **Scenario planning** is integrated into ongoing strategic planning and implementation
- **M&E data** is used **for learning**, decision-making, and adaptation





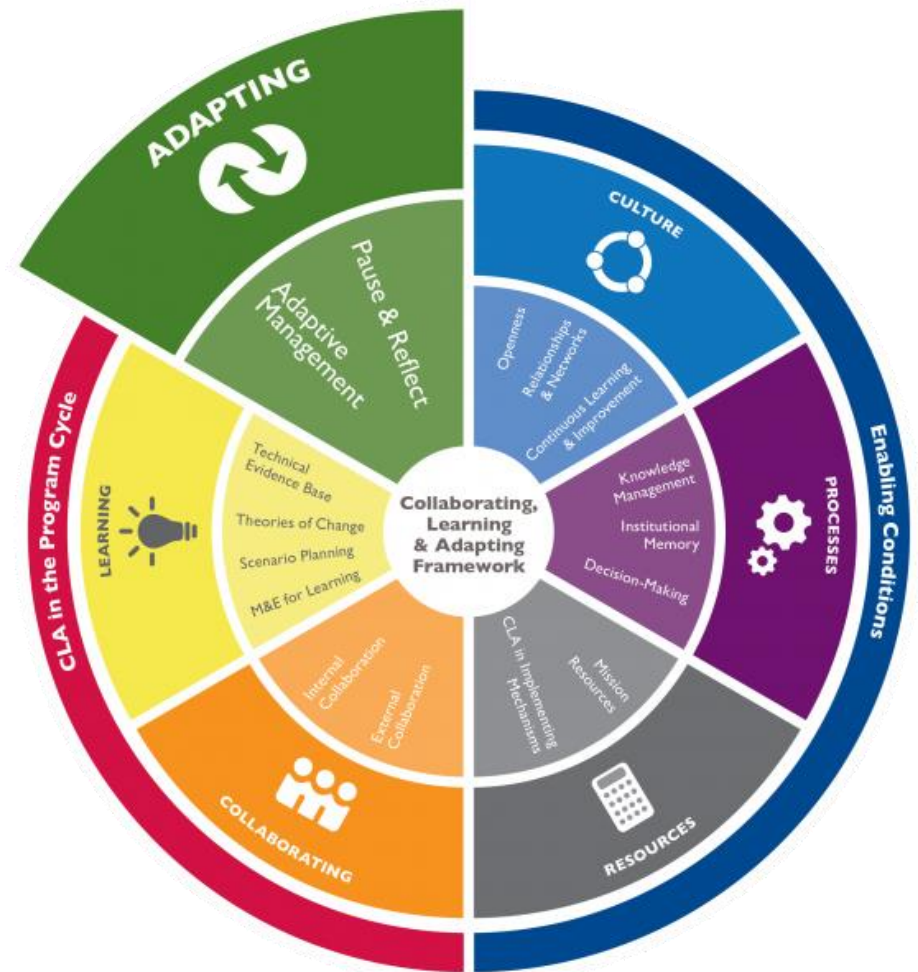
# Adapting in the CLA Framework

## Pause & Reflect

- Reflection is critical to adaptive management.
- Use proven methods and approaches to reflect.
- After-Action Reviews, communities of practice and learning sessions.

## Adaptive Management

- An intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context



# Enabling Conditions



**Culture** our organization's unspoken norms in terms of being comfortable sharing opinions and ideas, hearing different perspectives, taking action on different ideas, and continuing to improve.



**Processes** having the processes in place to operationalize learning. We generate a lot of information, but are we adopting appropriate knowledge management practices to capture, distill, and share what we learn?



**Resources** what resources exist to support our CLA efforts (e.g., a learning advisor, support mechanism) and do they meet existing needs?

# Culture in the CLA Framework

## Openness

- Being able to share opinions and ideas
- To hearing alternative perspectives
- To take action on new ideas

## Relationships & Networks

- Intentional focus on building Networks and Relationships
- Active exchange of up-to-date information





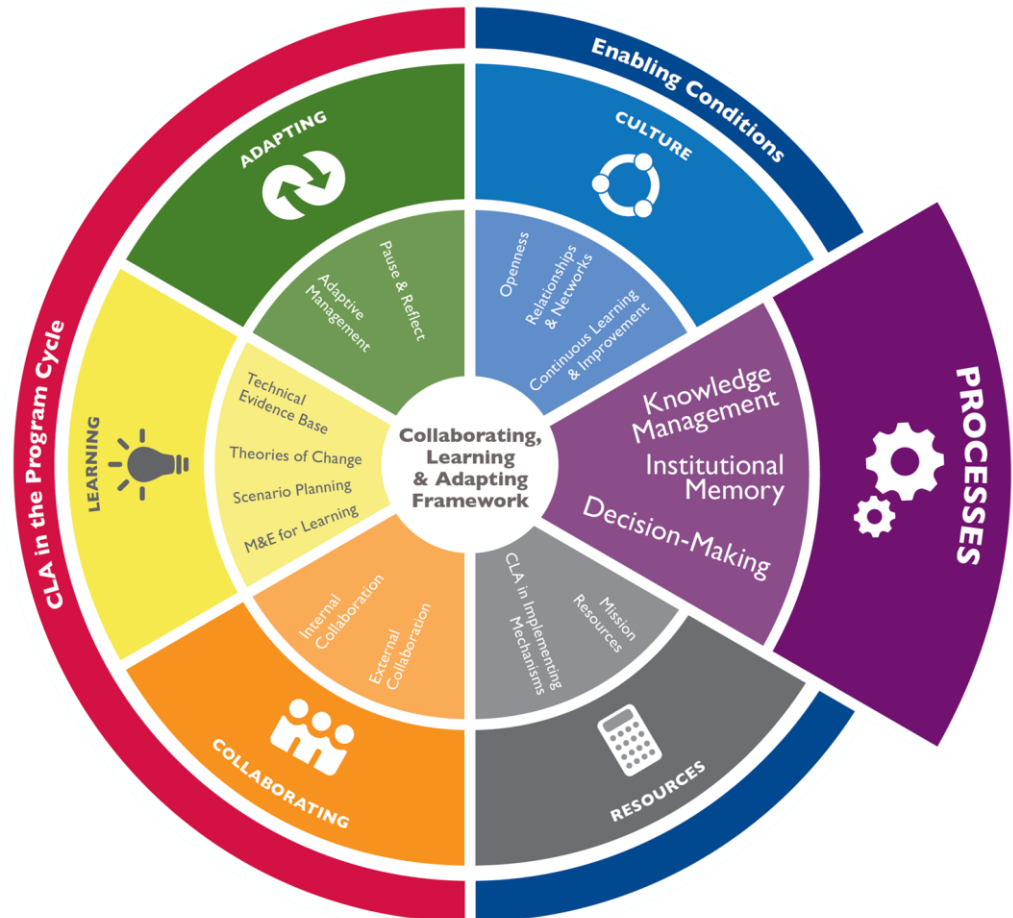
# Processes in the CLA Framework

## Knowledge Management

- Source various types of knowledge
- Distill and package knowledge
- Share knowledge with stakeholders

## Institutional Memory

- Capture and transfer institutional knowledge
- Onboarding processes
- Role of local staff



# Resources in the CLA Framework

## Resources

- Including financial resources for things like space, travel, and staff time
- The necessary staff skill-set

## Implementing CLA

- What else is needed to ensure that there is a mechanism in place?



Don't forget to check these useful resources!

LEARNNG LAB

[WWW.USAIDLEARNINGLAB.ORG](http://WWW.USAIDLEARNINGLAB.ORG)

PROGRAMNET

[PROGRAMNET.USAID.GOV](http://PROGRAMNET.USAID.GOV)



 CLA  
TOOLKIT



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# Thank YOU

Please help us by completing a short evaluation