Managing and Implementing Resilience Programs

***Number of participants***: 13

Discussion highlights and conclusions

* Appreciation and Partnership
  + What is USAID doing well to manage and implement resilience programming?
    - With Sabal is involving of the partner in the program, is open for dialogue and discussion.
      * Field visits are effective
    - Lots of information given to make effective decisions
    - Most of the time USAID is very supportive of the process and helps facilitate discussion with HQ
    - Very good communication and reaching out, especially in the Rural areas
    - Constructive feedback
    - Supportive in targeting most vulnerable
    - Have tried to carve out a space/platform for resilience learning
      * Lots of good will in exploring what resilience means, esp. in the Nepal context
    - Involved in the ToC review process, thoughtful interventions and engaged
  + What are the implementers doing well to manage and implement resilience programming?
    - Putting effort forward at the different levels and working to understand the different process, layering
    - Testing different approaches, whether new or existing groups, and trying to uncover what that means in regards to resilience
    - Looking at community based approaches and linking with systems
    - Constantly reflected and improved on what resilience means
    - Started to implement true reflection meetings on a quarterly basis,
    - Created a true partnership (not a contract) it is open and a good discussion
  + What do *we* need from USAID still to be effective implementers?
    - Simplify and speed up some of the approval processes
    - Related to M&E systems developing/implementing more useful data in the decision making process (the indicators are not effective at monitoring resilience)
    - Unfortunately the data gathered (monitoring) is not used to messaging and understanding (data is going to a database, but there is not findings or story telling around this data) across all the DFSAs
    - Data vs stories (may use small communities to illustrate a point, which may not represent the whole data)
      * The story whats the right message, need to be what we need to show and share based strongly in qualitative and quantitative
    - Feedback from USAID HQ to IPS
  + What do we need, reflecting on your own work, as implementing partners?
    - There are still struggling with monitoring tools, esp. with resilience
    - Translating design to execution for resilience and integration of activities
    - Holisitic approach to targeting
    - Adaptive implementation
      * Feedback to design
    - However, need to work on documentation and sharing of these true reflection meetings
    - Still need to come up with our own indicators. So IPS end up coming up with own tools
    - Explore consortium partner management
      * Two different levels of consortium partners (government, IP, USAID is one, then one across IPs)
* Recommendations
  + Knowledge Hubs/ Backbone Support
    - Incentive structure for IPs and how they work together, on the workplan with the budget
      * Having IDEAL to help facilitate the discussion and support around the CLAs and the backbone support
    - Joint processes and onboarding of new partners can strengthen collaboration and communication (needs to happen at the beginning of design)
  + Flexibility for adaptive management
    - IP and FFP (both sides need to be flexible)
    - IDEAL could host a conversation about what adaptive management means throughout the program cycle
    - Set up experience/observations with IP/USAID that allows us to change based on what we are seeing on the ground
    - What as IPs are we doing internally to keep our systems flexible (budget/finance)
  + Create an agreed upon, simplified vision for what success looks like (ToC? Indicators)
    - What do we need to know? What do we need to share? What are the right measures?
    - Creating that trust, so if the IP tells USAID it is doing something there is the trust to move forward
    - Willingness to try new approaches
    - Learning Agenda
      * As early as possible
  + Monitoring and Evaluation
    - Joint engagement with IPs about baseline/midline/endline
    - USAID should give feedback to IPs
    - Data should be linked to what information we need linke to TC and build in info on shocks and stresses
    - Lead us to a better and smaller set of indicators
    - Set up pause and reflect to really prioritize
    - Annual data call, clarity in what we need to provide the right message to the right audience
  + Consortium Management
    - The bigger the consortium the more likely you will work in silos. Not having so many large international partners and large amounts of local partners
    - Language in sub-awards to change so partners are involved outside of their tech areas of expertise. May need also time and budget to do so.
    - Criteria for selecting bids around efficiency of partnerships rather than trying to cover all potential needs to be competitive
      * Capacity building of local partners also needs to be planned and budgeted
      * Regular assessment of partnership
      * Exit strategy for international NGO to hang over to national NGO
        + Phased approach to this