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**USAID Sahel Regional Resilience Workshop**

March 17-21, 2014

Grand Hotel, Niamey, Niger

**WORKSHOP REPORT**

Reporting for:



*The TOPS Program was made possible by the generous support and contribution of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

**USAID Sahel Region Resiliency Workshop Report**

**March 17- 21, 2014**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

USAID’s Sahel Regional Office based in Dakar, Senegal, hosted a five-day workshop from March 17-21, 2014 in Niamey, Niger. The event attracted nearly 130 participants from USAID, the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso, international and national non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, FAO) and other donors (ECHO, JICA). The significance of this event was underscored by the presence of keynote speakers Franklin Moore, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Bureau for Africa; Susan Fine, Mission Director for Senegal, and Richard Bell, Charge d’Affairs, US Embassy/Niger. Other featured guests included Mr. Alain Tagnan, Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security/Burkina Faso; Mr. Abdou Kasso, Technical Advisor to the 3N High Commission, Government of Niger; Dr. Allahoury Diallo and Mr. Amadou Hassane, Initiative 3N, Government of Niger.

Conducted in French and English, participants viewed presentations that outlined the new USAID Resilience Strategy framework, the different approaches being implemented by partners, and other technical lessons learned to date. Small group sessions allowed all participants to engage in addressing some of the challenges, including issues of collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, as well as share successes and opportunities.

The first three days were for internal USAID and implementing partners (NGOs, UN and local governments), during which time they studied the strategy and results framework, debated questions on implementation approaches, and devised visual representations of what a resilient community looks like.

The final two days introduced key external stakeholders to USAID’s new investments for reinforcing resilience, other donor strategies, and the host country government plans to integrate resilience. Furthermore, it also allowed participants to build relationships and improve coordination and collaboration.

Highlights of key learning elements include:

* The presentation on *Lessons Learned from the Horn of Africa* noted that overall efforts and implementation success would have benefited greatly from just such a workshop in the very beginning stages—and a pre-implementation workshop should be considered an ‘essential step.’
* Collaboration is now understood to go beyond merely informing partners of one’s actions and plans—rather, it implies planning strategies together and acting together for a common purpose with shared accountability, risks, resources and rewards.
* Five conditions of collective impact include a common agenda, shared measurement, mutual reinforcement activities, a sustained structure for communication, and management “backbone.”
* *Resilience* is understood to be a capacity, not an outcome.
* Coordination can “potentially” impede implementation. Further analysis will be needed to determine how to achieve coordination without over burdening partners.

Highlights of key programming elements for future uptake include:

* Exemplary best practices featured crop diversification, women-centered programming, community-led NRM, and government-led structural development.
* External influencers can no longer be assigned to the ‘out-of-our-control’ column and dismissed; rather they must be mitigated at a minimum and used to comparative advantage at best.
* Increased emphasis on reducing population growth through family planning activities.

Finally, the participants illustrated both figuratively and literally what a resilient community will look like:

* A thriving community ‘sheltered’ by a symbolic shield labeled “good planning and organization.”
* A self-sufficient community connected to public services and private sector.
* A community living in harmony with an eye toward innovation.

Highlights from next steps to move the program forward include:

* Finalize the award for REGIS-AG. (USAID Action).
* Bring resilience stakeholders up to date on initiatives, findings, and key elements from the workshop (USAID Action).
* Expand the information and technology analysis for the three chosen value chains. (REGIS-AG)
* Build on the rapport and transparency established with government partners. (USAID, donors, and implementing partners)
* Construct the promised website and make all relevant documentation available in English and French. (TOPS)
* Consider the formation of a community of practice from the participants to move the work forward. (SAREL)
* Schedule a series of country-based working sessions. (USAID in conjunction with government partners)
* Design and conduct a “mini-workshop” in Burkina Faso to foster government support and participation in USAID’s resilience programming. (USAID)

**2. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

USAID is a lead agency in responding to worsening food and economic insecurity in the Sahel Region[[1]](#footnote-2). The USAID/Senegal Sahel Regional Office has the mandate to develop and roll out the new resilience initiative addressing some of the root causes of these insecurities. Strategy and programming parameters require close collaboration with other international agencies. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a report in February 2014, which outlined country-level plans and underscored the role of local governments as key partners. Other stakeholders have lent depth and description to the situation as a means to assist in designing the most suitable approach, e.g., Save the Children and World Vision’s report *“Ending the Everyday Emergency”,* and the National Intelligence Council’s *Global Trends 2030: megatrends on demographic patterns,* and *food, water, energy nexus[[2]](#footnote-3),* among other resources.

For its part, USAID established the Sahel Joint Planning Cell (JPC), with a mission to reduce risk, reinforce resilience, and promote economic growth. The JPC led a process to design a resilience strategy for the Sahel, adapt existing programs, and introduce new programs to support the overall strategy. The new resilience programs have three main goals (1) increased and sustainable economic well-being; (2) strengthened institutions and governance; and (3) improved health and nutrition status. As a cross-cutting goal, women are at the nexus of all consultation, planning, and implementation. The results framework illustrated in the Sahel resilience strategy is reflective of this approach.

USAID/SRO hosted a multi-country, multi-profile stakeholder workshop March 17-21, 2014 in Niger to introduce the overall strategy and results framework, the proposed operational approach and programs (REGIS-ER, REGIS-AG and SAREL) and associated implementing partners, and the existing OFDA and FFP partners. The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program[[3]](#footnote-4) provided facilitation support for the four-and-a-half day resilience workshop. This workshop was divided into two parts. The first three days were facilitated in English and convened USAID staff, current implementing partners in Niger and Burkina, and representatives from the governments of Burkina Faso and Niger(about 85 people) on issues of resilience programming. The final day-and-a-half was facilitated in French and was co-hosted by the Niger government with a wider group of participants (final count 130 people) with an emphasis on strengthening collaborative partnerships.

**3. PARTICIPANTS**

March 17 – 19, 2014: Internal program

Forty-two representatives attended from USAID/Washington, USAID/SRO, USAID/FFP, USAID/OFDA, USAID/West Africa Regional Office, USAID/Burkina Faso, USAID/Niger, and USAID/Mali. Women represented 40% of the USAID participants. Thirty-seven attendees represented the REGIS and SAREL implementing partners, NGOs, key government partners, and international agency partners (UNICEF, WFP, FAO). Women made up 24% of this group.

March 20 – 21: External program

The second half of the program included approximately 60 representatives from other stakeholder interest groups, including adjunct international agencies (ECOWAS), other donors (JICA, ECHO), other NGOs, and local government offices. Women represented 9% of this group.

Special USAID guests during the last two days included Franklin Moore, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Bureau for Africa; Susan Fine, Mission Director for USAID/Senegal; and Mr. Richard Bell, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy/Niger. Other featured guests and speakers included Mr. Alain Tagnan, Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security/Burkina Faso; Mr. Abdou Kasso, Technical Advisor to the 3N High Commission, Government of Niger; Dr. Allahoury Diallo and Mr. Amadou Hassane, Initiative 3N, Government of Niger; and Mr. Guido Cornalle, UNICEF representative in Niger.

Overall, women’s participation was below recommended levels and those in attendance were largely from USAID and/or international organizations. Studies show that women need to make up 30% of a group before it makes an impact on its stated objective[[4]](#footnote-5). Organizers acknowledged the gap and took note for future programs of this kind.

**4. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

March 17 – 19, 2014: Internal program

The agenda for the three-day working program with USAID and internal partners had a 3-pronged objective. This included (1) present USAID’s vision for resilience, introduce the new resilience-building investments, and begin sharing best practices, (2) determine how USAID’s new and ongoing investments will sequence, layer, and integrate their activities with focus on building a resilience package and (3) determine how information will be collected, used and shared within and outside the Coalition looking at the resilience package at a commune level.

March 20 – 21: External program

The subsequent two-day workshop introduced key external stakeholders to USAID’s new investments for reinforcing resilience, other donor strategies, and the host country government plans to integrate resilience. Furthermore, it also allowed participants to build relationships and improve coordination and collaboration.

**5. DAILY SESSIONS: PROCESSES AND RESULTS**

*Day One: Overview of USAID’s Strategy and New Investments for Resilience*

Summary

The participants in the first three days were all considered ‘internal’, i.e., predominately USAID or key implementing partners with two selected representatives from the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso. The first two USAID presentations were information-rich, and complementary. David Ratliff, Director of USAID’s Sahel Technical Office, presented the **Sahel Resilience Strategic Plan: Reducing Risk, Building Resilience and Facilitating Inclusive Economic Growth** **FY12-FY16** presentation reviewed the *Relief to Recovery Development Nexus* with a focus on helping to coordinate partners and activities in the field. The rationale for prioritizing participating countries was presented and consolidated by a set of evidence-based criteria into three key elements: (1) vulnerability, (2) comparative advantage, and (3) the enabling environment. The results framework was outlined, along with the resource composition. The program awards were announced: REGIS-ER was awarded to NCBA/CLUSA; SAREL was awarded to the Mitchell Group; and the REGIS-AG had not yet been awarded at the time of the workshop. With the presentation titled **USAID/West Africa: Supporting Resilience,** the West Africa Mission (represented by Laura Coughlin and Kathryn Begeal) described how their regional work on policy harmonization, intraregional trade and engagement with key regional institutions such as ECOWAS and CILSS support resilience efforts. , WA Mission programs offer an array of potential partnering opportunities in a variety of technical sectors and resource references. Greg Collins, from USAID’s Bureau of Food Security and a member of the Resilience Secretariat, followed with a presentation titled **USAID: Lessons Learned from the Horn of Africa.** Critical factors in the programmatic, operational, and partnering arenas that hindered progress and success in the Horn of Africa provide insight for the Sahel Region strategy and partners and should be conscientiously reviewed. Finally, a panel discussion on **USAID’s New Investments for Resilience in the Sahel** allowed the new implementers of REGIS-ER and SAREL, along with a USAID representative giving an overview of REGIS-AG, to present their conceptual approaches to the work. REGIS-ER/CLUSA highlighted how they will build on existing programs and partnerships, as well as new initiatives as per the resilience framework. REGIS-AG (not awarded) will target three value chains: cowpeas, small ruminants, and poultry. SAREL/The Mitchell Group has a mandate to support collaboration efforts, learning, and adaptation practices in the Sahel. Specifically, they will provide monitoring and evaluation services to REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG. A question and answer session followed.

The afternoon was dedicated to **Group work on Best Practices and Lessons Learned**. Group composition was multi-disciplinary with mixed country representation to elicit a wide variety of experiences. Consistent across all groups was the continuing discussion and debate over what form coordination/collaboration should take. Specifically, the challenge is to move beyond ‘coordination’ to more engaged collaboration.

Salient Points:

* The Lessons Learned from the Horn of Africa presentation noted that overall efforts and implementation success would have benefited greatly from such a workshop in the very beginning stages—in fact it should be considered an ‘essential step.’
* A key element is also to ‘step back’ and plan to create the conditions for engendering good development programming—this prepared the groundwork for the next day’s session on Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating.
* Following a presentation by USAID/West Africa mission, the importance of working with trade corridors was emphasized—development occurs organically where trade is allowed to flourish.
* The phenomenon of migration was signaled throughout the discussions; Helpful or hindering, it is a ‘given’ that must be addressed.
* Coordination is often seen as “potentially” impeding implementation.
* Collaboration is now understood to go beyond merely informing partners of one’s actions and plans—rather, it implies planning strategies together and acting together for a common purpose with shared accountability, risks, resources and rewards.
* Lessons Learned in the small group work identified some activity-centered issues, but fewer lessons drawn from approaches or methodology.
* Exemplary best practices highlighted crop diversification, women-centered programming, community-led NRM, government-led structural development.

Outstanding Questions/Issues/Concerns:

* Concerns that nutrition is reserved for the health arena, does not find its place in the proposed value chains, and is underestimated as a potential measure of resilience and improved livelihoods.
* Women are beneficiaries, but also need to be decision-makers and managers of change.
* Lack of clarity on the role and scope of SAREL—accessible to other programs? How to assure local knowledge is engaged and documented?
* How to engage youth and their entrepreneurial spirit? (Note: ‘youth’ generally understood as male).
* The role of local communities is still unclear—other than being ‘acted upon’.
* Best practices were dominated by a ‘laundry list’ of successful activities with only some examples of methods, approaches, and techniques that are evidence-based that can be reproduced under different settings and circumstances to deliver results.

*Day Two: Coordination—Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating*

Summary

The presentation **Principles of Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating (SLI)** illustrated the process of collaboration across the humanitarian and development spectrum as a means to protect resilience gains, and as a way to prevent or minimize continual humanitarian assistance (HA) needs. A fundamental premise is that the relief-to-developmentcontinuum is outdated. The presentation served as an educational orientation to guide the small group work for the day. It was critical that participants capture the importance of the SLI process. However, the time allotted was quite brief for a thorough treatment of the concepts and the questions/comments did not reflect real depth of interest. The next session, **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Assistance Coordination and Best Practices**, was a panel of presentations by current USAID partners active in the target areas. These were largely descriptive and loosely demonstrated the SLI concept in action based on realities on the ground. Questions from the participants compelled presenters to give more SLI-oriented information (reference the annexes/archives).

The day featured an Innovation Gallery Walk, which was a forum for USAID partners to showcase innovative programs and approaches already underway in development and emergency programs in Niger and Burkina Faso. Nineteen displays featured a variety of formats (video, posters, outdoor landscaping, etc.). This allowed participants to become familiar with the array of programs already operating in the geographical region and understand the different approaches and opportunities for further coordination. Participating organizations were provided a space to display posters, photographs, handouts, business cards, and samples illustrating the program. During the session, conference participants rotated through the different exhibits to ask questions and get better acquainted with the programs. A great deal of preparation and creativity went into the displays.

Participants then organized into **Small Groups** to explore the multiple aspects involved in developing an integrated resilience package. Prior to detailing the activities menu, it was necessary to consider other elements: enabling and inhibiting external influences (political/policies, persons, environment, events, behaviors, conditions) and time frames for implementation, production of results, and eventual impact. Representatives from the small groups then posted their findings into a collective matrix. When completed, this graphic captured some critical ‘*game changers and black swans’[[5]](#footnote-6)* that must be factored into an overall strategic approach: migration trends, refugee movements, election campaigns, market volatility, and population growth. A brief overview of the information generated is displayed in the Table 1 on page 10.

This exercise concluded the day’s activities, and positioned the groups for the next day’s more program-specific work.

Salient Points:

* Participants noted that the focus of presentations and discussions was heavily weighted toward Niger.
* USAID has been known to advance and proliferate the ‘argument’ for development concepts/approaches without always providing proof of concept.
* The Chief of Party of the new REGIS-ER stated that due to some of the discussions he was ‘re-thinking’ how his project will approach coordination/collaboration.
* The Burkina Faso contingent expressed the desire to have more contact and interaction with their Niger counterparts.
* The phrase of the day “coordination competes with implementation” caught everyone’s attention.
* Five conditions of collective impact include: common agenda; shared measurement; mutually reinforcing activities; sustained structure for communication; management “backbone.”
* The completed matrix on the Integrated Resilience Package illustrated that outside elements can no longer be assigned to the ‘out-of-our-control’ column and dismissed; rather they must be mitigated at a minimum, used to comparative advantage at best.

Outstanding Questions/Issues/Concerns:

* How does SLI differ from integrated rural development?
* The definition of resilience is still not a universally understood/agreed upon element and this will continue to inhibit good measurement (Oxfam’s representative inquired: whose yardstick to use as a measurement?)
* Population growth as a problem and family planning as its solution—needs more attention relative to the scope of impact the problem/solution could have.
* How to really engage governments to understand and support the work.
* Concerns about how the intervention areas were chosen—was the WFP approach considered?

**Table 1: Brief Overview of Outcomes of Work by Small Groups Organized by Country**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Existing Programs/Activities* | *Opportunities* | *Possible Players* | *External Factors* | *Comments and Observations* |
| **NIGER*****Mercy Corps & Africare, Arziki***  |
| Health: FP, Nutrition supp., WASH/CLTS, MIYN.Moringa productionWomen & youth, Livelihoods, HSS, SBCC Agriculture: irrigation, poultry millet VCs, off-season gardening, storage, improved seeds, seed production, warrantage.Wells rehabilitationNRM, EWS, S& L | Childhood illness treatmentEducationNon-ag livelihoodsAccess to financeMarket access.Moringa Value Chain ProjectLand restoration Strengthening community groups | Regis –ER SARELREGIS-ER, MSI, UNFPA, AGIR –PFSARELREGIS-ERREGIS-ERNDIWB, UNICEFNiger Government | Location (geography is destiny)Unregulated importation of medicationsCultural/religious contextPopulation growthRefugees from Mali coming to NigerReturnees from Libya and Burkina FasoElection related issues. | ‘Competing’ for beneficiaries – pressures of time and interest.Government involvement and initiatives do not appear in any of these listings.Collaborative planning towards a common goal is key from the beginning. |
| **BURKINA FASO*****ACDI-VOCA, CRS*** |
| Health: MIYN, Nutrition sup., CMAM, WASH, BCCAgriculture: market access, land tenure, seeds, irrigation, poultry/livestockWomen & youth, livelihoods, civil society, NRM, non-timber forest products, literacy, S & L,  | Information tech Family Planning Local assessment EWS Local Conventions Civil education, Elections Malaria | Regis –ER SARELREGIS-ER, MSI, UNFPA, AGIR –PFSARELREGIS-ERREGIS-ERNDIWB, UNICEF | AccessCapacity of the communePolitical situationEnvironmentPopulation growthViolence and instabilityFunding | How comprehensive are the activities? Very dispersed, a bit of everything?Government involvement/Initiatives do not appear in any of these listings. |

*Day Three: Learning and Adapting*

Summary

The day’s original schedule was altered a number of times due to the arrival and introductions of high-level USAID officials and some previously unplanned lunch meetings. Two presentations provided key information and resources (**Measuring Resilience**and**Data Collection and Monitoring**) for the follow-on group work. Of note was whether a ‘resilience-to-vulnerability index’ has credibility. The FEWS NET presentation underscored the evolution of its processes, noting that in the past they focused on acute emergencies, but now the abundance of historical data allows them to look forward for patterns, opportunities, problems, and vulnerabilities.

The first group session only peripherally used the information from these presentations in their considerations to examine data collection challenges and best practices. Some recurrent issues emerged from the groups: survey design and management can be cumbersome and complex; silo methods of process and product still occur; one Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) managed across the program would improve reporting; and SAREL baselines should be integrated into REGIS. In addition, numerous presentations emphasized the need to build on what has already been initiated.

Next, participants were grouped by expertise to address the strategic objectives (SOs) for **Coordination: The Integrated Resilience Package**, with the intention to illustrate both figuratively and literally, what an effective resilience package might look like. The *SO Agriculture and Economic Opportunity* group identified some fundamental obstacles and challenges that pervade existing programs and projects—land tenure concerns, rapid population growth, and effects of climate change, among others. Following this, the group distilled three essential activity areas: (1) irrigation, (2) natural resources management, and (3) access to inputs, meaning savings and credit mechanisms as well as agricultural and livestock inputs themselves. The *SO Health and Nutrition* group examined some of the pre-conditions that are essential for good planning—including a thorough study of the context, registering the financial reality (limitations, other assets) and analyzing previous interventions. The group then identified a ‘menu’ of potential activities: WASH, EWS, family planning, maternal and child health/nutrition, Social Change and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC), Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), Malaria Treatment and Prevention, Health Systems Strengthening, and Literacy Education. The *SO Democracy, Governance, and Conflict Resolution* group produced an inventory of some basic concepts that are the foundations of good planning, including identity documentation (i.e. birth registration, land titles, etc.), ‘do no harm’ principles for (natural) resource distribution and management, and strengthening civil society.

The follow-on group work focused specifically on developing the Resilience Package by commune i.e., geographic zones in Burkina Faso and Niger[[6]](#footnote-7). Many ‘sound bites’ were drawn from the small group presentations:

* Current programming revealed an ‘activities-driven’ approach over strategy-driven
* Activities should match the unmet needs revealed in good formative research
* The supporting environment needs to promote education, treatment of childhood illnesses, and access to off-farm livelihoods
* Population growth must be addressed
* Price volatility is a hindering factor
* Trade corridors have potential (but also have harmful effects, e.g., unregulated meds coming in)
* Many external factors that must be taken into account rather than just assigned to the ‘assumptions/uncontrollable’ category
* How to encourage/foster complementarity
* “Changing the paradigm for land restoration”
* Understand *resilience* as a capacity NOT as an outcome (this would change the way it is measured)

This concluded the internal component of the Sahel Region Resilience Strategy Workshop. A USAID-format written evaluation for the three days was completed, as well as an informal rapid assessment prepared by TOPS.

*Day Four and Five: External Partners—USAID’s Support to Country and Regional Resilience Initiatives, Discussions on Technical Approaches*

Summary

Participants heard directly from influential government representatives about the level of commitment and interest in the new Sahel Region Resilience Strategy and its components. Mr. Richard Bell mentioned US President Obama’s Sahel Initiative. Mr. Franklin Moore underscored the investment of the US government and signaled the importance of the commitment of the governments of Burkina Faso and Niger, and all of their programmatic sectors. Mr. Moore emphasized the need to engage from the bottom up and vice versa. Mr. Tagnan illustrated the severity of the situation and emphasized the importance of engaging civil society. He also spoke about the intensive investments by the government of Burkina Faso which has returned good results. Mr. Allahoury Diallo identified the regions and the four programmatic directions for concentration. He spoke of the menacing intersection between drought and food insecurity.

The UNICEF Country Representative presented the UN Communities of Convergence approach on behalf of WFP, FAO and UNICEF in Niger. The objective of this program is to unite the UN Agencies together to plan and implement projects within a single target area to achieve resilient communities. They will be targeting 11 communes in 2014, 12 in 2015, and 12 in 2016, offering a “package” of resilience activities to achieve their objective.

Panel Presentations by the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso, and UNICEF provided a stimulating and animated interactive presentation with questions and answers. There were many talking points and takeaway observations – the extremes of the operational context (climate, social, political, environment, market); the urgency of addressing galloping population growth in Niger; questions about ‘Do No Harm’, and concerns about available and qualified human resources. A theme that was reiterated by all was the need to “do things differently”. This meant looking at structural causes of malnutrition, ensuring a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach, and programming that is responsive to resilience. There should be continuity between humanitarian assistance and development programming. There were many more questions that time did not allow for responses, but were collected and displayed in English and French, and printed for distribution. Consult the annexes for the list.

The day’s small group work topic was **Defining a Resilient Community.** Thought-provoking discussions and debate ensued about the concept of resilience: What does it look like in the end? What are the pre-requisites/underlying conditions necessary to even get started?

Some pre-conditions or conditions for resilient communities identified by small groups include:

* Sensitization (especially with women)
* Assuring water supply availability for interventions (agriculture, livestock, home supplies)
* Community mobilization for motivation, access to information, openness to innovation and diversification
* Awareness of seasonality and the elements
* Attention to conflict management

Some of the obstacles to address were identified as:

* Weakness of the state to engage and manage, where is the will to act?
* Lack of coherence among donors
* Divergence between planning > acting
* Creating dependence on external incentives to get involved
* Too many meetings take up too much time
* Project design does not always take into account the operating environment

Most obstacles were matched with solutions, including:

* Better management of ‘coordination’ meetings so that they are purpose-driven and decision-oriented
* Taking a pragmatic approach to implementation (not over-simplified), mandated collaboration among practitioners
* Priority interventions/focus areas were mentioned: education, family planning, access to markets, and, of note, putting the results of formative research into the hands of community counterparts
* Access to credit was on the ‘menu’, but not savings; Access to means of communication (e.g., mobile technologies) was cited as a transformative initiative for markets, health, governance, etc.

Day Five small group work **Transforming a Common Vision into Reality**, had groups work together to demonstrate how they would actually implement the principles of SLI. Groups then presented their graphic, which in most cases was a pictogram. Some highlights included:

* A thriving community ‘sheltered’ by a symbolic shield labeled “good planning and organization”
* A self-sufficient Burkina community connected to public services and private sector
* A community living in harmony with an eye toward innovation

**6. EVALUATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Pre-workshop Survey

A pre-workshop survey was sent out, and thirty-one (out of 85) responded to the English language survey[[7]](#footnote-8). The survey intended to gauge the level of familiarity with some of the principle concepts to be discussed, as well as to identify technical and geographical areas of interest for group work. While the response rate was not enough to draw substantive conclusions, it revealed that a good number of participants were only *‘somewhat familiar’* with the USAID definition/approach to resilience*.* Participants were less familiar with Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating, and the Humanitarian Assistance and FFP programming in the Sahel. Most of the respondents expressed their preference to work in the technical sector of Economic Well-being, which includes agriculture and business initiatives. A small group were interested in Governance, and even fewer expressed their interest to work in Health and Nutrition. Later in the workshop, this same repartition was evident when participants self-selected for small group work.

The survey inquired about expectations for the workshop. Most were eager to learn about the roles of all stakeholders in the RISE Initiative, to understand how to agree on an Integrated Resilience Package for the commune level, and to grasp the programming and operational aspects of Sahel Resilience Strategy. To a lesser degree, participants were interested in promoting host government "buy-in" as part of the Resilience Package. Some respondents were interested in identifying how their organization might be involved in RISE. There were quite a few other learning expectations offered by participants who were representative of the desire/need to learn about the operational aspects—timelines, TDY and TA missions, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, among others. Some of these concerns were addressed during the workshop, while others remain to be developed over the course of implementation.

A post-workshop survey would gauge whether participants improved their knowledge on key concepts as well as determine if their expectations were largely met. This exercise is still in progress.

Daily Assessments

During the internal workshop, rapid informal assessments were conducted at the close of each day to obtain an appreciation of how participants viewed the processes, methodologies, and content development. Most of those who responded, less than half of the participants, felt that ‘presenters speaking at participants’ overly dominated the first day’s program. It should be said that Day One was designed for informational sessions in preparation for the follow-on work. Perhaps this approach accomplished its goal, as the next question revealed that respondents felt they understand USAID’s Resilience Strategy well enough to apply it in the context of their work.

For Day Two, the opportunity to engage interactively was through small groups and the majority claimed to be fully engaged in their group, suggesting an improvement from Day One. As regards the grasp of SLI concepts on Day Two, a third stated they understood it well enough to apply it in their small group. Others understood, but had difficulty applying the process in their work, and a less number only somewhat understood SLI.

Day Three assessments looked at the overall achievement in terms of some key criteria on a scale of 1 to 4, 1 being *‘fully disagree’* 4 being *‘fully agree’.* Forty-one participants took time to fill in the wall graph for the following results:

* Relevance of the strategy and its elements to your current and near-term work

21/42 (50%) gave a 3

* Clarity of concepts (evidence-based, logical, adaptable)

22/39 (56%) gave a 3

* Feasibility of Implementation (logistics, quality staffing, timelines…)

29/41 (71%) gave a 3

* Applicability to local context (cultural/social; environmental, policy)

20/41 (49%) gave a 3

* Probability of local engagement (government, civil society, community…)

19/41 (46%) gave a 3

Overall 45% of those who did the assessment rated the strategy at **3** for relevance, clarity, feasibility, applicability, and probability of engagement. Sixteen percent gave the strategy **4** and 38% gave the strategy a **2.** This would suggest that the strategy enjoys good potential and support.

**7. LESSONS LEARNED**

The Resilience Strategy: Programming

1. For USAID going into a new program model, this type of pre-start-up workshop provided a valuable opportunity to gather observations, opinions, and additional ideas from key stakeholders prior to ‘setting in stone’ a plan that may require costly and/or time-consuming revisions later on if unaddressed issues surface.
2. There are numerous actions already underway by organizations, agencies, and governments which expect to have some association, direct or indirect, with the new program; how this is managed will test the flexibility of the program.
3. Notions of coordination/collaboration/consultation/cooperation were addressed superficially, but need to be studied in depth and design.
4. It is still unclear how sequencing, layering, and integrating can actually be translated into practical recommendations and practices in the field.
5. Trade corridors and migration are two influencing factors which can be hindering or helping, and may benefit from more scrutiny for planning purposes.
6. All the external factors should be better analyzed to identify mitigating strategies, in order to diminish their potential to hinder project progress.
7. Population growth surfaced in nearly every discussion, suggesting that it can be a hindering factor across all sectors—agriculture, trade, health, economic development, governance, and conflict mitigation.
8. The community is still perceived to some extent as an entity to ‘act upon’; its role as decision-maker, contributor, and manager is under-appreciated.
9. Pre-existing conditions (cultural, geographical, contextual, etc.) can have significant influence on how a program is taken up.
10. Knowledge sharing (or lack of) emerged as a significant concern and SAREL will be expected to meet the challenge.

Workshop Design and Format

1. Use of a pre-workshop survey to gauge knowledge and skill levels, interest areas, and expectations is very helpful in designing the content and orientation, if done well in advance and communicated as ‘mandatory’ for participation.
2. While a great deal of work was done by the USAID workshop team, it was evident that there were many different contributors and planners, which had implications for the coherency of the overall direction, content, and outputs of the workshop.
3. The principal facilitator was not able to work with the presenters in advance in order to work closely with them on their materials to unite and link all the workshop pieces; had this been done, this may have helped enhanced coherency across the program.
4. The keynote presentations were valuable learning opportunities, but the material was not always taken up in the subsequent small group work, resulting in a somewhat disconnected, ‘activities-driven’ content environment.
5. Large group facilitation requires careful attention to timing while at the same time, respecting the desire and need of participants to engage and interact; Skill is needed to balance these competing realities.
6. The Gallery Walk, while filling the need for workshop attendees to learn about one another’s programs, had a tendency to draw off participants haphazardly from earlier sessions as they were pre-occupied with set-up and reduced the quality of full participation in some presentations.
7. The Gallery Walk was a useful means for allowing participants to get to know one another’s work and strengthen relationships.
8. Instructions for small group work lacked some clarity, brevity and a logical progression and, in some cases, information on paper conflicted with information communicated verbally; this led to confusion in the groups as to the end purpose and, in some cases, a superficial output.
9. The original USAID agenda did not include icebreakers or activities for participants to meet and get to know one other.
10. Small group work represented a lot of time and thought, which was not always rewarded with enough sharing time or discussion.

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Resilience Strategy: Programming

1. A pre-implementation workshop should be considered as a standard exercise for similar programs as a means to establish a spirit of collaboration and solidarity, clarify concepts, and vet concerns among key stakeholders.
2. A mapping exercise could be initiated among key stakeholders that captures and tracks the most relevant associated external actions with an eye toward anticipating potential synergies as well as to troubleshoot possible divergences/conflicts of planning and intent.
3. USAID will be expected to take the lead in modeling collaboration, and could include some metrics in the PMP to capture this.
4. The results framework should take into account external factors and influences to examine whether there are programming mechanisms that can address them to a greater or lesser degree.
5. Family planning and reproductive health should figure more prominently in the overall plan—consider formulating activities and indicators that transcend the ‘health and nutrition’ strategic objective in the results framework.
6. Community assessments should also capture local talent, knowledge, previous project successes, etc., as a means to re-define community participation.
7. SAREL has acknowledged a need to ‘broaden’ its mandate for knowledge management and will undertake to study the possibilities.
8. The role of host governments appeared as a ‘partner’ whereas status as the governing body and legislator of conditions implies both greater privilege and responsibility—and programming models should reflect this.

Workshop Design and Format

1. Workshop design, planning, and implementation is a full-time activity for the specified period which could be assigned to a unit that takes on all of the production responsibilities—the pre/post surveys, construction of the overall workshop design and session formats, designing presentation templates, scripting/rehearsing with presenters, etc.
2. All elements of the workshop (e.g. presentations, gallery walk, panel discussions) offer valuable learning points that need to be carried through from one session to the next and the format of a workshop can be constructed to direct this dynamic transfer and evolution.
3. The program and logistics agenda (‘Script’) would have benefited from even more detail to avoid last minute arrangement scrambling.

**9. NEXT STEPS**

Momentum should and will be maintained over the course of the next six months, in order to preserve and build on the energy, solidarity and goodwill generated during the five days. Participants themselves offered suggestions and directives for this purpose during the last session of the workshop. These include:

* Finalize the award for REGIS-AG. (USAID Action).
* Bring resilience stakeholders up to date on initiatives, findings, and key elements from the workshop (USAID Action).
* Expand the information and technology analysis for the three chosen value chains. (REGIS-AG)
* Build on the rapport and transparency established with government partners. (USAID, donors, and implementing partners)
* Construct the promised website and make all relevant documentation available in English and French. (TOPS)
* Consider the formation of a community of practice from the participants to move the work forward. (SAREL)
* Schedule a series of country-based working sessions. (USAID in conjunction with government partners)
* Design and conduct a “mini-workshop” in Burkina Faso to foster government support and participation in USAID’s resilience programming. (USAID)

**10. LIST OF ANNEXES AND ARCHIVE REFERENCES**

1. Workshop agendas
2. Participant list and contacts
3. PowerPoint presentations in PDF format
4. Outstanding questions.N3.BurkinaFaso.UNICEF
5. Gallery Walk presenters
6. Group work: resilient communes (illustrations)
7. Assessment: workshop production
1. See the annexes for the presentation on the Sahel food crisis, which outlines causes, data, and actions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “Ending the Everyday Emergency: Resilience and Children in the Sahel”. July 2012. Save the Children and World Vision. **GLOBAL TRENDS 2030:** ALTERNATIVE WORLDS. December 2012 NIC 2012-001 ISBN 978-1-929667-21-5. www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The Technical and Operational Performance Support Program (TOPS), is a consortium project led by Save the Children to strengthen food security program implementation. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Webinar series USAID AgLinks: Feb.2011. Sylvia Cabus, Judy Canahuati, Sharon Phillips, et.al. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. From **GLOBAL TRENDS 2030:** ALTERNATIVE WORLDS—*game changers* are questions regarding the global economy, governance, conflict, regional (in)stability, and technology; *black swans* are potential discrete events that would cause large-scale disruption. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Niger: Droum, Filingue Burkina Faso: Pissala. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The survey in French did not have all of the same questions, and only 15 persons responded. The responses are not included in this reporting. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)