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USAID/ETHIOPIA RESILIENCE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Brief:
Social Network Analysis
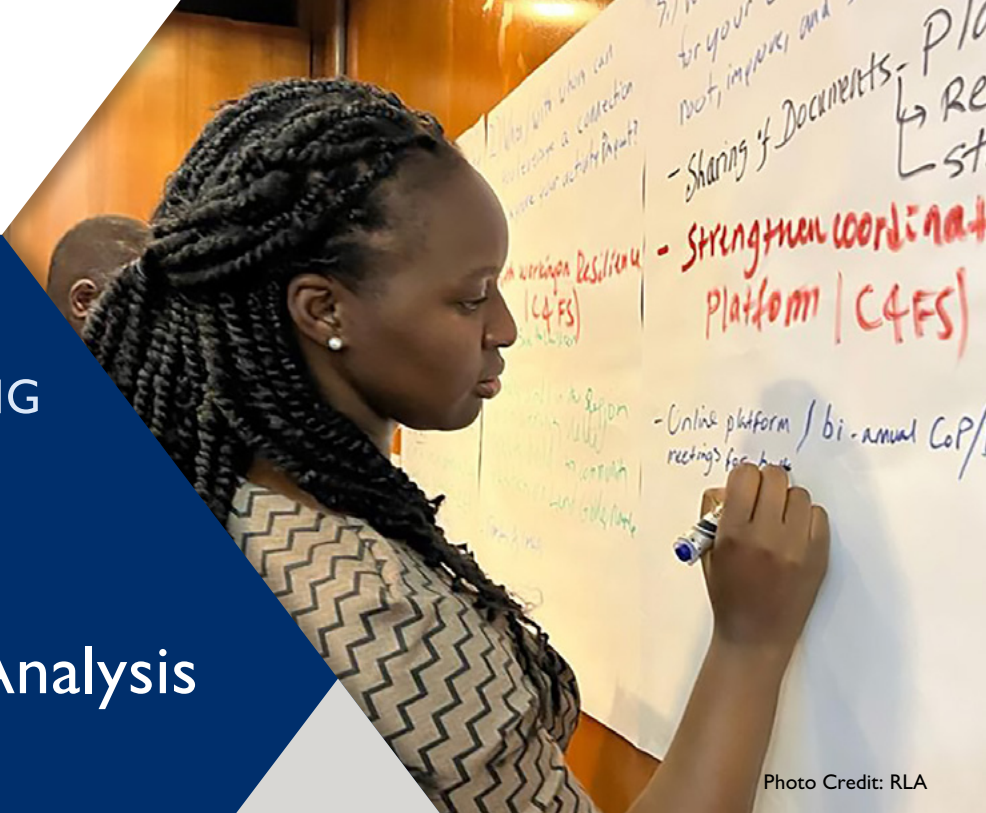
The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Ethiopia Resilience Learning Activity (RLA) conducted a baseline social network analysis from September 18 - 25, 2023 to explore the learning and collaboration connections between the implementing partners of USAID/Ethiopia resilience activities. A social network analysis is a powerful tool to understand local systems better and assess stakeholder relationships' types and qualities. Using software such as Kumu, an open-source visualization platform for mapping systems and understanding relationships, users can generate informative, user-friendly network maps and track quantifiable indicators that measure the effectiveness of relationships and collaboration within a system. When the attributes of a network's actors and their relationships are defined, a social network analysis can shed light on a rich array of sub-networks sharing commonalities or characteristics. By understanding the network's relationships

and dynamics, RLA supports USAID resilience partners in improving cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning.

Overall Network And Relationships

Figure 1 is a network map of the 21 USAID resilience activities (projects and implementing mechanisms in the RLA network), plus all the existing (solid lines) and desired (dashed lines) connections. Red dots represent activities working at the national level, while those supporting resilience in Ethiopia's regions are shown in blue. The map shows that the resilience activities are connected by 73 existing and 70 desired relationships. These findings indicate the network actors have considerable interest in and potential to strengthen learning and collaboration. The map and network metrics depict a reasonably healthy network, albeit with room for improvement as new and desired relationships develop. The number of actual

relationships, 73, is nearly identical to the desired relationships, which is 70. This means if all presently desired relationships were realized, the network density would nearly double, providing a snapshot of what the network would look like if all desired relationships were established. Activities that other network members desired to connect with the most were Iffa (Afaan-Oromo, meaning "to bring forth light"), Ethiopia Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), Transform Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (Transform WASH), and Livlihood for Resilience (L4R, which ended October 2023).

The social network analysis recorded and studied three types of relationships between resilience activities: collaboration, sharing learning, and receiving learning, with collaboration and sharing of learning being the most prominent.
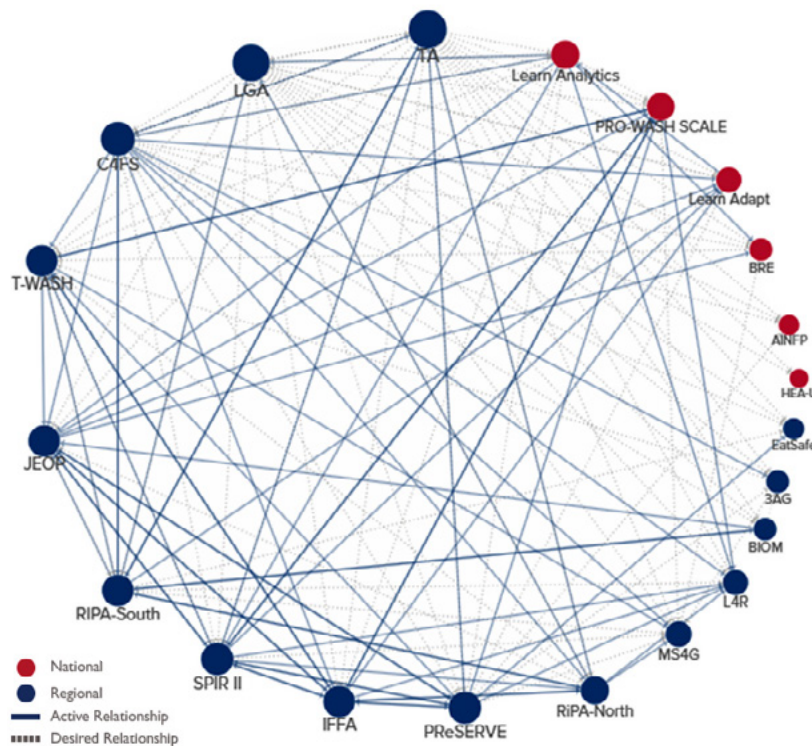
Sharing and receiving learning

Of those activities that reported sharing learning, 40 percent share more than once a month, 24 percent share monthly, 32 percent quarterly, and 4 percent semi-annually. Additionally, 73 percent of activities reported applying the learning they receive to their adaptive management approaches.

RLA will work closely with resilience partners to strengthen learning sharing and improve the frequency, quality, and value of shared learning.

Types of Collaboration

The social network analysis questioned respondents on six types of collaboration with other resilience activities. All types of collaboration (except joint advocacy) are regularly practiced, with 141 reports of
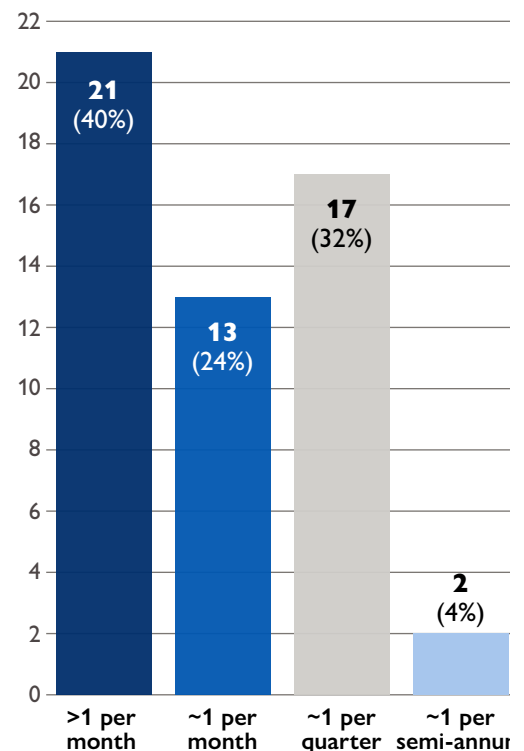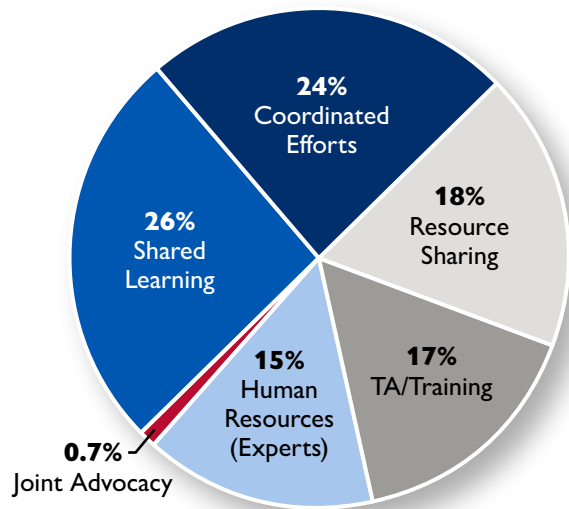

Fig 1: Relationship types—actual and desired

Fig 2: Frequency of sharing learning

Fig 3: Types of collaboration engaged in

Fig 4: Existing and desired relationships in the Somali Region

collaboration (see Figure 3). Partners have healthy collaboration across several areas. However, only .7 percent reported engaging in joint advocacy, making this an area where RLA can facilitate more effective collaboration along different objectives and priorities. Respondents identified the most instances of collaboration with iffa, JEOP, and Transform WASH activities.

Highlights from Regional and Resilience Sector Findings

The Oromia region is home to the greatest number of USAID activities, with 12 USAID activities, 35 existing connections, and 34 desired connections.

The highest percentage of desired connections exists in the Somali region, showing a willingness among partners to increase their sharing and collaboration with other USAID activities in the region.

The sector with the most resilience-building activities is market systems, with 11 activities, 35 existing connections, and 20 desired connections among them (both being among the highest).
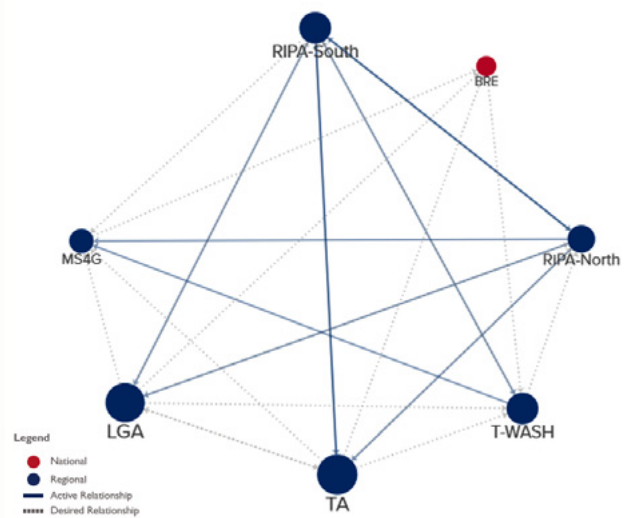
RLA has established and is facilitating a community of practice in the Somali region entitled Integrated Multi-Implementing Partner Solutions to Market System Constraints in the Lowlands Market Cluster. This community of practice is working to pilot a more integrated market systems approach in the lowlands market cluster by leveraging multiple USAID activities. The approach will address one or more specific market systems constraints using best practice approaches. This community of practice provides a unique opportunity to increase collaboration for those who desire to connect with the other activities.

RLA's complete baseline report on the social network analysis can be found here. For readers interested in furthering their understanding of the tool and findings, the report analyzes sub-networks based on geography, resilience sector, and types of relationships to provide detailed analysis and findings around key priorities and sub-networks of partners working toward similar and synergistic efforts. The report also provides valuable recommendations for RLA to help further facilitate learning and collaboration between USAID's resilience partners and their network.

Photo Credit: RLA

USAID Ethiopia Resilience Learning Activity (RLA)
(2022–2027) is a $20 million activity designed as a "learning sidecar" for USAID Ethiopia's resilience investments. RLA works across USAID staff, offices, and implementing agencies (projects) to strengthen a culture of learning, sharing, evidence generation, substantiation, and triangulation. Ultimately, we aim to build a common understanding and direct investments in resilience-building strategies and interventions that demonstratively result in more resilient households, communities, and systems. RLA is implemented by LINC (prime), Environmental Incentives, and JaRco Consulting

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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