



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE GLOBAL READING NETWORK (GRN)

PRESENTATION

Prepared by NORC at the University of Chicago for
USAID Office of Education

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ACTIVITIES EVALUATED

Global Reading Network (GRN)

- Implemented by URC
- \$9,984,594
- Jan 2014 – Oct 2019
- 4,444 members

Objectives:

- Develop Community of Practice (Primary Grade Reading CoP)
- Build and disseminate evidence for the field
- Test, disseminate and use guidance, tools, metrics, theories of change
- Develop and promote innovations
- Develop and conduct training
- Communications in support of high impact, scaled reading programs

EVALUATION BACKGROUND

- Mixed methods evaluation
 - Document review
 - 11 key informant interviews and four focus group discussions
 - Web-based evaluation survey (n=395)
- Three main purposes:
 - Document key outcomes achieved
 - Capture critical lessons learned and good practices
 - Provide details of identified effective management and budget oversight methods
- Both GRN and ECCN were evaluated, but treated as separate evaluations
- Limitations

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Network Results and Outcomes

EQ1: What activities were most successful, and why? What activities were ultimately unfeasible, and why?

EQ2: What were the unexpected or unanticipated outcomes of ECCN/GRN? What added value or benefit did they provide to USAID and its implementing partners?

Stakeholder Use of Network Products and Services

EQ3: How did stakeholders use information they received through the ECCN/GRN?

EQ4: What specific knowledge products did stakeholders find most valuable? Why?

EQ5: What modes of delivery made activities successful/unsuccessful?

EVALUATION QUESTIONS (2)

Member Engagement

EQ6: How were USAID missions and implementing partners engaged? What aspects of the communities of practice did they find most valuable?

EQ7: What would they suggest for the future?

Network Management

EQ8: What worked well in terms of management of ECCN/GRN? What did not? What might have made management of the activities easier and more effective?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW / DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS

Respondents	M	F	Total
Mission Members (FGD + KII)	1	6	7
General Members (FGD + KIIs)	1	7	8
GRN Support Team and USAID (KIIs)	2	2	4
DC-based ECCN/GRN + USAID Members (FGD)	1	3	4
Total	5	18	23

WEB SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Affiliation of Respondent	Field	Home-based
USAID	31	8
USAID implementer	55	40
Other international donor	33	8
Government	20	1
University/Academia	33	13
Independent (Consultant/ Researcher)	36	24
Local NGO/International NGO	28	16
Other	25	4
Total	261	114

“Field” respondents are those who identified themselves as living in a developing country.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS



NETWORK RESULTS & OUTCOMES

- **Most successful activities:**
 - Produced high quality technical products/tools by leveraging the strength of experts and organizations within CoPs
 - Convening ability
 - Knowledge-sharing events and capacity building opportunities

“The sheer amount of technical products that have been produced, I think with pretty high quality and relatively low cost, I think is notable in both cases... I think in terms of technical depth and ... the amount that was done, I think that’s definitely notable.”
(USAID staff)

NETWORK RESULTS & OUTCOMES (2)

- **Challenge areas:**
 - Funding of in-country primary research
 - Notable success: RedLEI
 - Trialing innovations in the field
 - Notable success: Enabling Writers
 - Annually developing metrics and protocols
 - Independent regional events in the field
 - Engagement of host country governments in the CoP
 - Some technology related requests

NETWORK RESULTS & OUTCOMES (3)

- **Unexpected outcomes:**
 - Interest in and awareness of GRN abroad
 - Difficult for GRN to gain traction on activities related to indicators and measurement practices
 - Conflicting direction and feedback from USAID

“I only know anecdotally from being at CIES that some of the folks from abroad came up and said that people have heard about the GRN’s activities and webinars, and that’s been unexpected and incredibly positive...”
(GRN ST)

NETWORK RESULTS & OUTCOMES (4)

Added value to USAID:

- Amplified USAID's work in the field

Added value to implementing partners:

- Provided networking opportunities
- Provided opportunities to connect with USAID directly

USE OF NETWORK PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Q. In what areas have these activities been useful in your work?



Source: Evaluation Survey

USE OF NETWORK PRODUCTS & SERVICES (2)

Most Valuable Products

The EGRA 2.0 Toolkit

- Used by both Missions and general members

UDL Toolkit

- Used by both Missions and general members

Coaching in EGR Programs

- Used by both Missions and general members
- Helped an IP integrate a literacy coach role into his programming

USE OF NETWORK PRODUCTS & SERVICES (3)

GRN Resource	Accessed (Count)	Applied (Count)	Utilization Rate
EGRA 2.0 Toolkit	142	102	72%
UDL Toolkit	79	50	63%
Coaching in EGR Programs	87	49	56%
Enabling Writers Workshop Program Guides and Toolkits	108	53	49%
LAC Reading Network Policy Papers	22	11	50%

Source: Evaluation Survey

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Q. How frequently do you engage with the network in each of the following ways ("often" or "sometimes")

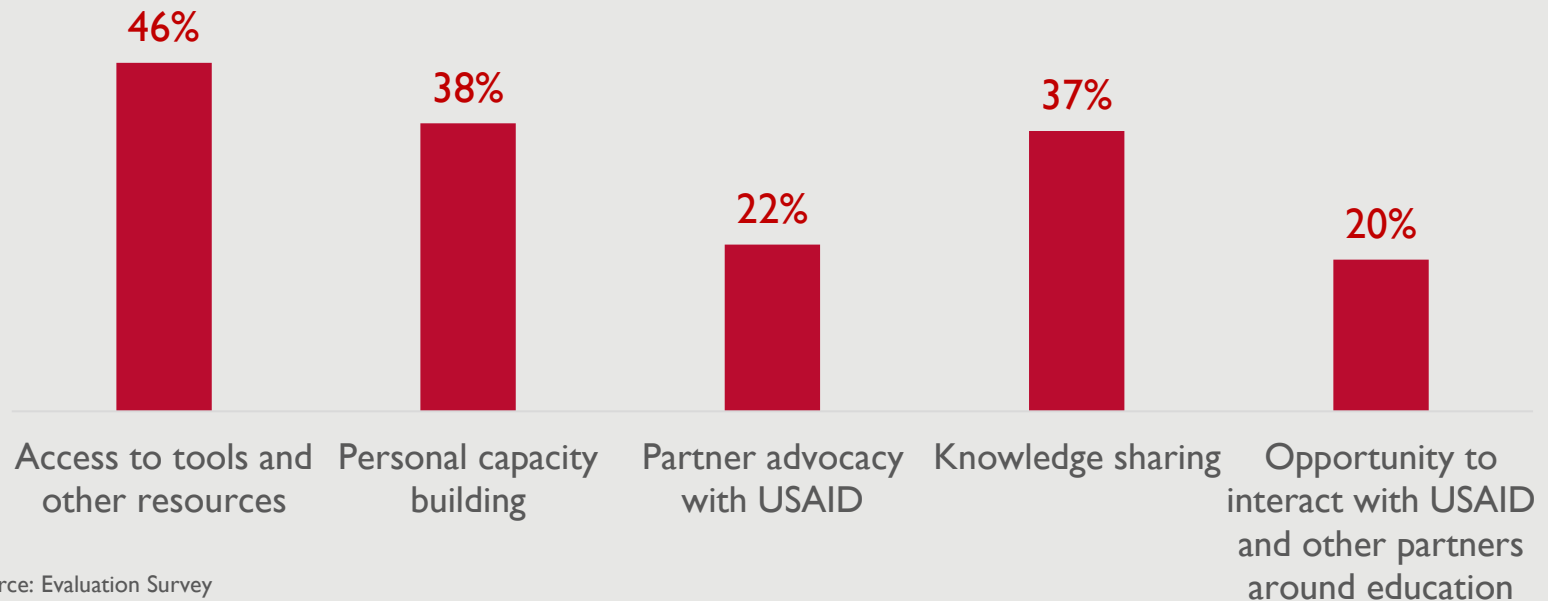


Source: Evaluation Survey

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (2)

- Members ranked access to tools and resources as the most valuable part of being in the CoP

Q. To what extent were your expectations met in each of the following areas? (those who answered "fully met")



Source: Evaluation Survey

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (3)

- 90% of members wanted to remain part of networks after project end
- Engagement with Missions was weaker than IPs
 - Most content did not seem produced for Missions
 - Mission staff were very busy with limited time
 - Content was not always relevant in the field (language, Anglo-centric)
- Timing of webcasts was also a challenge

“From where I sat, I didn’t feel like [Mission engagement] was very successful. The most common kind of feedback I’ve heard from Mission staff is, ‘Yeah I receive the ECCN newsletter sometimes and the GRN news. I see that come across my desk every once in a while, but I’m confused about where to go to get something. It’s all over the place and I can’t find things.’ Or, ‘I’m too busy, too overwhelmed. It’s just too much.’”
(USAID staff)

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (4)

- **To increase engagement, members recommend:**
 - Reducing the emphasis on USAID policy/deliverables
 - Focusing on member needs
 - Involving remote members in product development
 - Recruiting host country governments & local NGOS
 - Improving the remote experience for events

NETWORK MANAGEMENT

- The current COR and COP have a constructive and productive relationship
- Selection of URC as contractor required a trade-off - select an “education powerhouse” vs. neutral space
- Rigidity of contract significantly affected performance
- Staffing was a critical issue

NETWORK VS. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



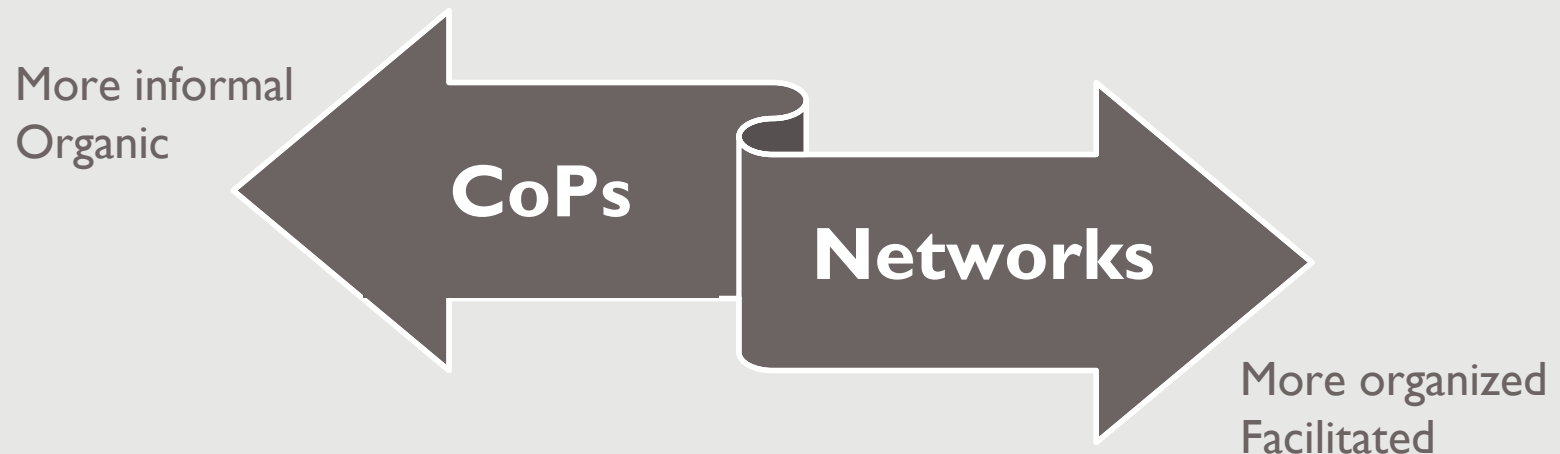
NETWORK VS. COP: DEFINITIONS

- **Community of Practice (CoP)** – a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly
 - Learning that takes place through the CoP is not necessarily *intentional*
- **Learning network** – a *facilitated*, peer-to-peer learning approach that can be highly effective at documenting and sharing knowledge between donors and implementing partners to help strengthen a particular technical area

Source: KM4Dev Journal article by Sarah Cummings and Arin van Zee

NETWORK VS. COP: ON A SPECTRUM

- CoPs and networks are not different types of entities, but rather on different ends of a spectrum (or continuum) of social learning mechanisms



Source: KM4Dev Journal article by Sarah Cummings and Arin van Zee

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Distinguish between competing objectives: USAID-focus or a broader CoP
- 2) Decide on the scope of the network (i.e. audience)
- 3) Design materials with appropriate audience in mind
- 4) Facilitate and broaden access to network materials
- 5) Strengthen outreach and relevance to broader groups in the field
- 6) Consider targeting the needs of USAID Missions and seeking their input in development of resources
- 7) Consider measures to enhance sustainability at the outset

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8) Design resources to enhance utilization
- 9) Ensure contracting mechanisms and contracts do not create rigidities for activities that must be nimble and able to pivot quickly
- 10) Improve ease of use of network resources
- 11) Ensure network leadership can focus on partnership, engagement, and planning, rather than just managing a large number of activities
- 12) When creating “knowledge sharing groups” or sub-groups within a larger CoP or learning network, clarify objectives at the outset to ensure better engagement with group members

FACILITATED Q&A

