



Private Sector Engagement Spotlight on Co-creation: Cacao Connects Global Development Alliance

Co-creation can take many forms, ranging from a series of phone calls with a prospective partner to a structured, facilitated series of workshops with many partners.

A Global Development Alliance (GDA) is one way USAID works with the private sector to co-create and implement market-based solutions to key development challenges.

The GDA Annual Program Statement (APS) is an invitation to the private sector and other potential partners to co-create such solutions with USAID. After exploring whether and how their interests align, USAID and the private sector jointly develop market-based approaches aimed at achieving their business and development interests.

To learn more about the co-creation process under the GDA APS, visit www.usaid.gov/gda/co-creation-process or contact gda@usaid.gov.

To Explore additional Private Sector Engagement (PSE) resources visit www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement or contact the USAID PSE Hub at globalpartnerships@usaid.gov.

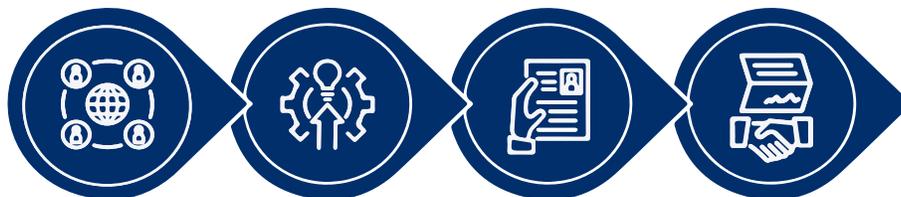
Improving Trust and Alignment Among New and Existing Partners

How did USAID/Colombia and its implementing partner, **Fundación Ideas para la Paz - FIP** (a Colombian think tank), modify an existing GDA and replace two private sector partners during the COVID 19 pandemic?

Opportunities, Challenges, and Aligned Interests

In 2019, USAID/Colombia and FIP entered into a GDA, [From Fear to Trust](#), with two companies to support licit economic opportunities and citizen security. From Fear to Trust promotes investment in traditional agricultural activities and provides technical assistance to strengthen agricultural production value-chains. Other activities include working with local government institutions to develop and implement citizen security capacities.

But when one of the GDA’s private sector companies was sold in 2020, USAID/Colombia and FIP suddenly found themselves searching for new partners to preserve the alliance. USAID/Colombia identified *Compania Nacional de Chocolates*, a cacao company with an established past working with USAID, and a member of the Mission’s Private Sector Advisory Board, as a promising partner. At the same time, Microsoft reached out to USAID/Colombia to explore potential partnership opportunities. Yet the task of choosing new partners, getting to know each other, building trust, and aligning interests all had to take place in a virtual space. USAID/Colombia and FIP met this challenge by applying the best virtual facilitation practices. The result? An even better aligned GDA among all partners. The new GDA, [Cacao Connects](#), will improve digital connectivity and the use of technological tools and enhance women and youth’s ability to act as local change agents and community leaders, improving local governance and fostering economic growth.



INITIATE

Do we have something to talk about?

EXPLORE

Identify aligned interests

DIG DEEPER

Develop market-based approaches

MAKE A PLAN

Determine roles and responsibilities

COMMIT

Formalize partnership with appropriate agreements

COLLABORATE

Continue co-creative spirit throughout implementation

Phases of co-creation

USAID



Good Co-creation Practices

Dedicate personnel (internal or external) to facilitate the co-creation. To allow all partners to participate in the co-creation and feel confident sharing their ideas, USAID/Colombia and FIP enlisted an external consultant (in this instance CollaborateUp) to facilitate the virtual co-creation. A five session co-creation workshop spaced over two weeks in half-day segments created the right tempo between engagement and reflection allowing participants to identify interests, build trust, create a shared vision, and collectively co-create a theory of change and a results framework.

Rely on existing relationships. USAID/Colombia took advantage of their existing relationships with *Compania Nacional de Chocolates* and Microsoft. From the start it was clear to USAID that these two partners could work in the same locations, and both companies had development interests related to their core business. Much of the success of the co-creation workshop and new GDA was due to good relation with prior partners.

Use a neutral facilitator to build – or rebuild – trust. A good facilitator will spend time learning about the participants strengths and weaknesses *before* designing a virtual co-creation workshop. By doing their homework, a neutral facilitator can design and offer the most appropriate methodologies to achieve the best outcome. In this case, to rebuild trust among the incoming GDA private sector partners (*Compania Nacional de Chocolates* and Microsoft) and the existing partners (FIP and USAID), the facilitator created exercises that emphasized how to listen to each other and conversation policies that fostered an open and safe communication environment.



Lessons Learned

Show, don't tell. In a virtual environment, visuals and other symbols to illustrate an emerging relationship strengthens bonds. This co-creation workshop included a graphic designer to visually represent the ongoing conversations. At the end of each workshop, all participants received a mural summarizing the day's conversations with a map indicating where partners had a presence in Colombia. The mural served as a daily reminder of the progress being made and allowed participants to quickly see their new partnership materialize.



The Co-creation Value Proposition

A facilitated co-creation workshop helped USAID and other partners establish the trust and relationships necessary to define and align shared goals. Previously, GDA partners were assigned activities based on sector rather than working together towards a common goal. The result was a misalignment of goals among the business partners. By co-creating this GDA an alliance where the private partners work together to achieve common [goals](#) emerged.

Learn more about [Cacao Connects](#).



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