Research Methods Overview

This module will guide you through the process of choosing goals and objectives for your project.

Search for Common Ground
30 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE · SFCG

UKaid from the Department for International Development

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents
(Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)

➢ **What is it?**

➢ **What is it for?**

➢ **When should it be used?**

➢ **Who should be involved?**

➢ **How to use it?**

➢ **Practice Exercise**

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What is it?

Research is the process of gathering information to better understand a situation, event, group, etc. People do research all the time in informal ways. For example, when we try to figure out how something works or why something doesn't work, this is a form or research. By taking that every day, informal process and making it deliberate and systematic, we can increase our understanding (of the conflict, people, country, situation, community, etc.) and make better decisions about the projects or programs we develop. There are two types of research, which will be detailed, later in this module: **Qualitative** and **Quantitative** research.

Objectivity is one of the key aspects critical to gathering information in a way that can be impartial. Objectivity does not mean that the researcher has no opinions or biases; everyone enters a situation with at least some beliefs or opinions that will affect what is seen or heard. Rather, objectivity means that the researcher identifies his/ her biases and examines all aspects of the research before reaching a conclusion.

Important Questions to ask before deciding on what type of research to use
1) What is the information that is required?
2) How will you use this information?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?
4) What are the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?

When should it be used?

Research is used before (design) and during (monitoring) a project, as well as during the evaluation phase. During the design phase of a project, gathering information (collecting data) can be used to understand what needs to be done in a situation or community, and can also be used to develop baseline information before the project begins. Using research tools during a project (monitoring) can help the project make changes when needed and strengthen aspects that are working well. Evaluation uses research to help the project determine whether the goals were reached, and to gather broader lessons that can help develop additional projects.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the purpose of the research, its methodology, and so forth.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of the goal and chosen objectives.

How to conduct research?

In order for the information to be as accurate and helpful as possible, it is important that the process of collecting information be deliberate and systematic. The steps outlined below can help you to design a process that can be used in a variety of situations.

It is critical throughout all of these steps **to document what you are doing**, **what decisions you have made, where and why you made changes.** Take notes every chance you have. This will help you to keep moving forward instead of having to rethink decisions, and will also help you to determine why something worked or didn't work as you look back over the process.

1) Be clear about why you want the information and what you hope to do with it. What questions are you trying to answer?

2) Gather background or contextual knowledge about the situation, group, setting, etc. The more you already know about a situation before you start doing the research, the better focused – and therefore more useful – your research will be.

3) Decide what data collection tool(s) would be most appropriate for the kind of information you want to gather.
   Once you are clear about what kind of information you want, you can then think about the best ways of gathering that information. There are many different kinds of data collection tools and each of them will produce different kinds of information. Any of the following can be used:

Surveys	Interviews
Focus Groups	Observation
Case Study	

4) Develop the specific tool(s) you need
   Each of these tools can be used in different ways, varying in degrees between structured and unstructured. See the Data Collection Tools Module to learn how to create a specific tool for your situation.

5) Test the tools you've created

Before beginning the research, test each of the tools you've created to make sure that they will actually gather the information you are looking for.   Many times, other people will understand questions that make sense to you differently. If you are using a survey, test it on a small number of people and ask them for feedback on how well they understand the questions. Look at their answers on the survey to see if they are the kinds of answers that fit what you are hoping to learn. The same applies for interviews and focus groups.

> This testing process can be difficult because an open mind must be maintained when looking at the information. Even if you don't agree with or like what you are hearing, you must continue to think about the quality, not content, of the information, and whether it will be useful in designing, monitoring or evaluating the project. A question should not be changed just because the answer is not one that you wanted to hear.

6) Do the research

Quantitative research

Quantitative research is a study involving the use and analyses of numerical data and using statistical techniques. They pose questions of **who, what, when, where, how much, how many**, and **how**.

> **Quantitative** techniques depict various elements of research in terms of numbers.

Quantitative research methods are designed to produce statistically reliable data that tells us how many people do or think something.

Quantitative data typically is in numerical form such as averages, ratios or ranges.

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What can quantitative research be used for?
Quantitative research is especially useful when carrying out a large scale needs assessment or baseline survey. It is independent of the researcher and one should get similar results no matter who carries out the research. It can also be used to measure trends*.

> **Quantitative Research and the Researcher.**
> Quantitative research is usually independent of the researcher and would generally reveal the same results irrespective of the researcher provided that the methodologies are similar.

When should Quantitative Research be used?

Quantitative research should be used under the following circumstances:

- ❑ When trying to measure a trend such as 'do youth talk to their parents about issues important to them?'
- ❑ When data can be obtained in numerical forms such as 'number of children under 15 who participate in peacebuilding activities'.
- ❑ When simple objective responses can be received such as yes and no questions.
- ❑ There is no uncertainty about the concepts being measured, and there is only one way to measure each concept.
- ❑ You are trying to collect data in ratios, percentages and averages.

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
❑ Can be used when large quantities of data need to be collected.	❑ Results need to be calculated using Excel, Access, or data analysis software (such as SPSS), which may not always be accessible to a country program.
❑ The result is usually numerical (quantifiable) and hence considered more "objective".	
❑ The data is considered quantifiable and usually generalizable to a larger population.	❑ Time consuming, as the researcher or SFCG team member needs to enter, clean and then analyse the data.
❑ It can allow SFCG to see changes overtime and help develop quantitative indicators.	❑ The larger the sample, the more time it takes to analyse the data and analyse results.
❑ It can provide a clear, quantitative measure to be used for grants and proposals.	❑ The larger the sample the more time it takes to collect data.
	❑ The quantitative data ignores a very important human element.

> **Example**
>
> In Liberia, the Talking Drum Studio (TDS) Evaluation conducted in 1999 discovered that a larger percentage of the uneducated or less educated Liberian population listened to the TDS than the educated elite. Approximately 82.5 % of people with no or low levels of education and 89.4% with some education listened to TDS compared to 76.8% of the people with high levels of education. In order to measure the efficacy and reputation of the Talking Drum Studio (TDS) surveys were carried out which asked questions such as "Does the TDS tell the truth" with fixed responses to choose from such as "very often" "sometimes" and "never". Since none of the participants selected "never" it could be stated that all participants believed that TDS spoke the truth "very often" or "sometimes."

How do we use Quantitative Research?

Quantitative research can be conducted by using a variety of methods of numerical data collection. They are:

- ❑ **Surveys** are a quantitative method involving the use of questionnaires and aim to generalize from a representative sample population to a larger population of interest.

- ❑ **Mini surveys** or informal surveys are a quantitative method for collecting program information quickly. They involve relatively small population samples using brief questionnaires that focus on a limited numbers of variables. Mini-surveys are very useful for organizations that have projects of relatively short duration and are carrying out interventions with well-defined expectations**.**

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Consent forms
- All interviewees must give their agreement to participate.
- Interviewers should make sure that interviewees know they can refuse to respond to questions (that is why we always include "no response" in the list of possible response) or stop the interview at any time.
- Investigators must provide interviewees with information about the activity in a manner appropriate to their culture and education.
- Consent forms and informational tools should be developed with community members and field-tested.

For more information on consent forms refer to the Data Collection Tools Module.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research does not analyse or use statistical data. It is interpretive research that accommodates the idea that human behaviour is subjective and influenced by environment and circumstances. Qualitative research focuses more on the **how** and **why** of human actions and situations rather than what and when. This type of research is designed to obtain people's perspectives and views. They help us understand why people do certain actions and how they have reached that stage.

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What is Qualitative research used for?
Qualitative research is used for studying and understanding human opinions and actions. It is used to understand the reasons as to why a conflict developed and how a possible consensus can be achieved. It is useful in accommodating the human element and recognizing that social data concerning man is subjective.

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Qualitative Research and the Researcher. In qualitative research the information revealed is very much dependent on the type and quality of the researcher. Asking the right kind of follow up probing questions with a certain kind of listening style can reveal very different data from someone asking only a set group of questions.

When should qualitative research be used?
Qualitative research should be used under the following circumstances:

- ❑ When there is no existing data on the topic
- ❑ The most appropriate unit of measurement is unclear (individuals? Households? Organizations?)
- ❑ When studying why people do what they do, or why they believe in what they believe
- ❑ When trying to understand how a situation came about
- ❑ When a more in depth understanding of an issue is needed

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Advantages	Disadvantages
❑ Versatility	❑ Researcher may only know roughly in advance what he/she is looking for
❑ Gives the interviewer the opportunity to probe further and to ask more questions	❑ The design emerges as the study unfolds
❑ It gives depth to an interview and makes the data "rich" i.e. Qualitative research generates rich and detailed data	❑ The data analysis and data collection is labour intensive and time consuming
	❑ Qualitative data is vulnerable to the researchers bias/subjectivity

Qualitative research can be conducted by using a variety and combination of different methods of data collection

❑ **Case Studies** are intended to provide a focused assessment of causal relationships, contributory or otherwise, between the intervention and specific outcomes or impacts. (See the Data Collection Tools Module for descriptive instructions.)

> **Selecting participants**
> Carefully consider the following when selecting participants
>
> Gender: Will both men and women feel comfortable discussing the topic in a mixed gender group?
>
> Identity: Will people of different religious/ ethnic/ other identity backgrounds talk freely together?
>
> Age: How intimidating would it be for a young person to be included in a group of older adults or vice versa?
>
> Power: Would a soldier be likely to make candid remarks in a group where his/ her supervisor is also a participant

❑ **Focus Group Discussions** consist of expertly moderated small-group discussion (7-11 people) that centres on the perceptions and experiences of knowledgeable beneficiaries concerning issues of interest to the project/programme undertaking the study. Their perceptions and experiences are elicited via carefully structured but open-ended questions. (See the Data Collection Tools Module for descriptive instructions.)

> **Example:** *Focus Groups during the Baseline in Nepal*
> - One aim of a focus group discussion would be to identify perceptions and the range of opinion about participating in national elections.
> - The indicator could be: "Perceptions about voting responsibilities" and the focus group discussion could aim to understand what people think about this responsibility, whether they think it exists, what the parameters are and why they think what they do.
> - One question for the group could be 'How is voting in a national election relevant to people in this village?'
> - The facilitator would aim to keep the discussion focused on this question and to encourage and document what people responses are, on what do they all agree, where are there differences, why are national elections considered to be important/unimportant? Etc.

❑ **Key Informant Interviews** are qualitative, in-depth interviews of people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic. The interviews are loosely structured, relying on a list of issues to be discussed, or a simple interview guide, and resemble a conversation, allowing a free flow of ideas and information. (See the Data Collection Tools Module for descriptive instructions.)

> **Sample Questions for Interview and Focus Group discussions**
>
> ❑ How has the children's program Nashe Maalo impacted your child's choice of friends?
>
> ❑ What are some of the challenges facing the Liberian society after the elections? Why do you think this is so?
>
> ❑ What in your opinion are the three biggest issues facing your society today? Why is this? What do you think can be done to help resolve these issues?
>
> ❑ What are the 3 key recommendations that you feel are most needed to help resolve this issue? Why is this?

❑ **Open-ended mini surveys** are surveys that contain a few very specific questions that require the participant to provide a detailed response based on what they believe or have experienced rather than a response that is quantifiable. (See the Data Collection Tools Module for descriptive instructions.)

> **Why?** Just adding an open ended why as a follow up to an objective and/or subjective question can reveal extremely rich and useful data. For example *"on a scale of 1 for poor to 5 for excellent, how would you rate the general organization of the conference? Why?*

- ❑ **Observation** is a process in which an evaluator collects information about events as they occur in their natural setting. It can be used to set the basis for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. (See the Data Collection Tools Module for descriptive instructions.)

- ❑ **Story Telling** is the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings in the form of a story or account The storytelling method allows SFCG to receive first hand information on an event that has happened from the perspective of a person that took part in it. It provides the perspective and interpretations of the interviewee, and therefore it is most useful when SFCG needs that kind of personal insight.

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Mixed method research

A research model does not need to be just one single model. In most cases the most appropriate methodology in the field of conflict transformation is a mixed method approach where quantitative methods like surveys are combined with in-depth interviews and story telling. This accommodates the need for both "objective data" (breadth of an issue) and the "human element" (depth of an issue).

So, when you design your methodology, look for the type of research that works best. It may mean that will be using surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Create the best combination in order to acquire the appropriate information.

Example

In Morocco a mixed method approach was used when interviewing participants from the ADR outreach conference in Rabat.

Some of the questions asked were "What do you think are the general issues affecting the development of ADR in Morocco?" "What types of support to the ADR process in Morocco do you think are required?" "On a scale of 1 for no understanding to 5 for complete understanding, how would you rate your comprehension of mediation theory? (circle number)

1 – no understanding
2 – poor understanding
3 – average understanding
4 – good understanding
5 – excellent understanding"

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Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for research methods.

Catholic Relief Services. *RRA Manual*.
http://www.crs.org/publications/pdf/Gen1199_e.pdf

In Search of Strategy: An Agenda for Applied Research on Transitions from Conflict.
http://www.fafo.no/pub/rapp/480/480.pdf

Audience Dialogue. *Qualitative or Quantitative Research*?
http://www.audiencedialogue.org/qualiquant.html

Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers. Designing for results. SFCG. Chapter 12.
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

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Qualitative Research Module

This module will help the user understand what qualitative research is, how it can best be done, and provide practice activities on conducting qualitative research.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➤ **What is Qualitative Research?** ➤ **What is the use of Qualitative Research?** ➤ **Why do we conduct Qualitative Research?** ➤ **When should Qualitative Research be conducted?** ➤ **Who should be involved?** ➤ **How do we conduct Qualitative Research?**	➤ **Exercise 1: Deciding on Best Approach** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct Qualitative Research, please complete the Interactive Pages and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

**TOOL 1: Questions to ask before deciding what type
of research to use**

**TOOL 2: Sample questions for interview and focus
group discussions**

What is Qualitative Research?

Qualitative research does not analyse or use statistical data. It is interpretive research that accommodates the idea that human behaviour is subjective and influenced by environment and circumstances. Qualitative research focuses more on the how and why of human actions and situations rather than what and when.

What is the use of Qualitative Research?

Qualitative research methods are designed to obtain people's perspectives and views. They help us understand why people do certain actions and how they have reached that stage.

Qualitative research is used for studying and understanding human opinions and actions. It is used to understand the reasons as to why a conflict developed and how a possible consensus can be achieved. It is useful in accommodating the human element and recognizing that social data concerning man is subjective.

Tip: Ask "Why?"
Just adding an open ended why as a follow up to an objective and/or subjective question can reveal extremely rich and useful data. For example "on a scale of 1 for poor to 5 for excellent, how would you rate the general organization of the conference? Why?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Versatility	Researcher may only know roughly in advance what he/she is looking for
Gives the interviewer the opportunity to probe further and to ask more questions	The design emerges as the study unfolds
It gives depth to an interview and makes the data "rich" i.e. Qualitative research generates rich and detailed data	The data analysis and data collection is labour intensive and time consuming
Intangible	Qualitative data is vulnerable to the researchers bias/subjectivity

Why do we conduct Qualitative Research?

Qualitative data allows us to dig deeply into the meaning of changes that may occur during implementation of a program. While quantitative data tells us what changed and how many times it changed (people or things), qualitative data tells us why and how things or people changed. "Qualitative methods have greater flexibility and pose questions in a more open-ended manner. They give an in-depth understanding of why people hold particular views. They also explore how people make judgments, in a way that structured quantitative research cannot. Qualitative methods are not intended to be statistically reliable, but findings can — if participants (those who provide data to the study) are broadly representative — be strongly indicative of the population as a whole. Standard qualitative methods include interviews and focus groups. Qualitative data is typically words or text, though it can include photographs, video, or sound recordings." (Church & Rogers, 2006, p. 203)

When should Qualitative Research be conducted?

Qualitative research should be used under the following circumstances:

- When there is no existing data on the topic
- The most appropriate unit of measurement is unclear (individuals? Households? Organizations?)
- When studying why people do what they do, or why they believe in what they believe
- When trying to understand how a situation came about
- When a more in-depth understanding of an issue is needed

Who should be involved?

(Extracted from "Research" module)
Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

The **project manager and staff** usually conduct most of the research, while relevant **stakeholders** can offer insightful information as well.

The **DME Specialist** can be used as a resource or facilitator for all phases of a project's life and how to best make use of research in each phase.

> **Tip: Qualitative Research and the Researcher**
> In qualitative research the information revealed is very much dependent on the type and quality of the researcher.
> Asking the right kind of follow up probing questions with a certain kind of listening style can reveal very different data from someone asking only a set group of questions.

How do we conduct

Qualitative Research?

Qualitative research can be conducted by using a variety and combination of different methods of data collection.

Methods of Qualitative research

- **Case Studies** are intended to provide a focused assessment of causal relationships, contributory or otherwise, between the intervention and specific outcomes or impacts. In order to conduct a case study it is necessary to have 1) specific needs or issues of certain individuals or groups; 2) allocation of several activities to address these issues; 3) response to the need or issue.

- **Focus Group Discussions** consist of expertly moderated small-group discussion (7-11 people) that centre on the perceptions and experiences of knowledgeable beneficiaries concerning issues of interest to the project/programme undertaking the study. Their perceptions and experiences are elicited via carefully structured but open-ended questions.

> **Tip: Selecting participants**
>
> Carefully consider the following when selecting participants
> - Gender: Will both men and women feel comfortable discussing the topic in a mixed gender group?
> - Identity: Will people of different religious/ ethnic/ other identity backgrounds talk freely together?
> - Age: How intimidating would it be for a young person to be included in a group of older adults or vice versa?
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- **Key Informant Interviews** are qualitative, in-depth interviews of people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic. The interviews are loosely structured, relying on a list of issues to be discussed, or a simple interview guide, and resemble a conversation, allowing a free flow of ideas and information.

- **Observation** is a process in which an evaluator collects information about events as they occur in their natural setting. It can be used to set the basis for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

- **Open-ended mini surveys** are surveys that contain a few very specific questions that require the participant to provide a detailed response based on what they believe or have experienced rather than a response that is quantifiable.

- **Story Telling** is the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings in the form of a story or account The storytelling method allows SFCG to receive

first hand information on an event that has happened from the perspective of a person that took part in it. It provides the perspective and interpretations of the interviewee, and therefore it is most useful when SFCG needs that kind of personal insight.

Tip: Mixed Method Approach
A research model does not need to use a single methodology. In most cases the most relevant methodology in the field of conflict transformation is a mixed methods approach where quantitative methods like surveys are combined with interviews and storytelling. This accommodates the need for both "objective data" (breadth of an issue) and the "human element" (depth of an issue). **(See also Mixed Methods Module)**

Example: Mixed Methods within a Single Instrument

In Morocco, a mixed method approach was used when interviewing participants from the ADR outreach conference in Rabat.
Some of the questions asked were quantitative and included: "What do you think are the general issues affecting the development of ADR in Morocco?" "What types of support to the ADR process in Morocco do you think are required?" "On a scale of 1 for no understanding to 5 for complete understanding, how would you rate your comprehension of mediation theory? (circle number)
1 – no understanding
2 – poor understanding
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4 – good understanding
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TOOL 1: Questions to ask before deciding on what type of research to use

1) What is the information that is required?
2) How will you use this information in decision-making?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?

4) What are the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?
5) What are the specific questions?

Exercise 1: Deciding on Best Approach
Using a project you are familiar with, answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe the purpose of the project.	
2. What is the goal of the project?	
3. State the first objective to be evaluated.	
4. Can this objective be broken down further? Break it down to the smallest unit. It must be clear what specifically you hope to see documented or changed.	
5. Is this objective measurable (can indicators and standards be developed for it)? If not, restate it.	
6. Formulate one or more questions that will yield information about the extent to which the objective was met.	
7. Why is a qualitative approach better for answering this question, then a quantitative approach?	
8. Do this for each objective.	

Adapted and modified from the *User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*, National Science Foundation, 1997.

TOOL 2: Sample questions for interview and focus group discussions

- How has the children's program Nashe Maalo impacted your child's choice of friends?
- What are some of the challenges facing the Liberian society after the elections? Why do you think this is so?
- What in your opinion are the three biggest issues facing your society today? Why is this? What do you think can be done to help resolve these issues?

- What are the 3 key recommendations that you feel are most needed to help resolve this issue? Why do you believe that?

Example: Focus Groups during the Baseline in Nepal:

- One aim of a focus group discussion would be to identify perceptions and the range of opinion about participating in national elections.
- The indicator could be: "Perceptions about voting responsibilities" and the focus group discussion could aim to understand what people think about this responsibility, whether they think it exists, what the parameters are and why they think what they do.
- One question for the group could be 'How is voting in a national election relevant to people in this village?'
- The facilitator would aim to keep the discussion focused on this question and to encourage and document what people responses are, on what do they all agree, where are there differences, why are national elections considered to be important/unimportant? Etc.

Additional Resources

Audience Dialogue. *Qualitative or Quantitative Research*?
http://www.audiencedialogue.org/qualiquant.html

Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers. Designing for results. SFCG. Chapter 12.
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

USAID Office of Transition Initiatives. Conflict Evaluation Toolkit. Part III

Quantitative Research Module

This module will help project/program staffers better understand quantitative research.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is Quantitative Research?** ➢ **What is the use of Quantitative Research?** ➢ **What can we use Quantitative Research for?** ➢ **What are advantages and disadvantages of using Quantitative Research?** ➢ **When should we use Quantitative Research?** ➢ **How should we use Quantitative Research?** ➢ **Tools, Templates, and Examples**	

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Types & Examples of Survey Questions

What is it?

Quantitative research is a study involving the use and analyses of numerical data using statistical techniques. They pose questions of **who, what, when, where, how much, how many**, and **how**.

What is it for?

Quantitative research methods are designed to produce statistically reliable data that tells us how many people do or think something. Quantitative data typically is in numerical form such as averages, ratios or ranges.

What can we use it for?

Quantitative research is especially useful when carrying out a large scale needs assessment or baseline survey. It is independent of the researcher and one should get similar results no matter who carries out the research. It can also be used to measure trends. For example, the Talking Drum Studio Evaluation conducted in 1999 discovered that a larger percentage of the uneducated or less educated Liberian population listened to the TDS than the educated elite. Approximately 82.5 % of people with no or low levels of education and 89.4% with some education listened to TDS compared to 76.8% of the people with high levels of education.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Advantages
- Can be used when large quantities of data need to be collected.
- The result is usually numerical (quantifiable) and hence considered more "objective".
- The data is considered quantifiable and usually generalizable to a larger population.
- It can allow SFCG to see changes overtime and help develop quantitative indicators.
- It can provide a clear, quantitative measure to be used for grants and proposals.

Disadvantages

- Results need to be calculated using Excel, Access, or data analysis software (such as SPSS), which may not always be accessible to a country program.
- Time consuming, as the researcher or SFCG team member needs to enter, clean and then analyse the data.
- The larger the sample, the more time it takes to analyse the data and analyse results.
- The larger the sample the more time it takes to collect data.
- The quantitative data ignores a very important human element.

When should it be used?

Quantitative research should be used under the following circumstances:

- When trying to measure a trend such as 'do youth talk to their parents about issues important to them?'
- When data can be obtained in numerical forms such as 'number of children under 15 who participate in peacebuilding activities'.
- When simple objective responses can be received such as yes and no questions.
- There is no uncertainty about the concepts being measured, and there is only one way to measure each concept.
- You are trying to collect data in ratios, percentages and averages.

Mixed Method Approach
A research model does not need to be just one single model. In most cases the most appropriate methodology in the field of conflict transformation is a mixed method approach where quantitative methods like surveys are combined with in-depth interviews and storytelling. This accommodates the need for both "objective data" (breadth of an issue) and the "human element" (depth of an issue).
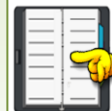
How do we use it?

Quantitative research can be conducted by using a variety of methods of numerical data collection. They are:

Surveys are a quantitative method involving the use of questionnaires and aim to generalize from a representative sample population to a larger population of interest. (Refer to module on Surveys for more information and relevant tools)

Mini surveys or informal surveys are a quantitative method for collecting program information quickly. They involve relatively small population samples using brief questionnaires that focus on a limited numbers of variables. Mini-surveys are very useful for organizations that have projects of relatively short duration and are carrying out interventions with well-defined expectations**.**

> **Mixed Method Approach**
> Quantitative research is usually independent of the researcher and would generally reveal the same results, irrespective of the researcher, provided that the methodologies are the same.
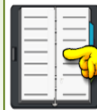
Tools, Templates and Examples

Important Questions to ask before deciding on what type of research to use
1) What is the information that is required?
2) How will you use this information?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?
4) What is the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?
5) What are the specific questions?

TOOL 1: Types & Examples of Survey Questions

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Tip: Consent Forms
- All interviewees must give their agreement to participate.
- Interviewers should make sure that interviewees know they can refuse to respond to questions (that is why we always include "no response" in the list of possible responses) or stop the interview at any time.
- Investigators must provide interviewees with information about the activity in a manner appropriate to their culture and education.
- Consent forms and informational tools should be developed with community members and field-tested.

For more information on consent forms, refer to the Ethics module and the Children and Youth module.

Type	Description	Example
Yes/No answers	These may be used to measure attitudes or responses that have a clear yes and no answer	Should information about ADR be made available to the general Moroccan population? Yes\No
Likert style format	List attitude statements and ask participants to respond on a five-point scale (e.g. Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)	The Moroccan population should be provided with information on ADR Strongly 1 Strongly disagree 2 3 Neutral 4 5 Strongly agree
Lists	These ask the participant to tick all statements that apply	What aspects of SFCGM's ADR work do you think would be useful for the future? • Training sessions for judges • Training sessions for lawyers • Training sessions for CSOs • Other training sessions • Follow-up activities • General media work • Other ---------

Ranking	These ask the respondents to Rank order their responses. This shows the importance assigned by the respondent to a special attitude/object	How have you learnt about ADR? a. through SCGM activities b. through colleagues c. through newspapers d. through books e. through work f. Other --------------
Numerical	When numerical data is needed, list numbers as responses	What is your current age (select one) • Less then 18 • 19-29 • 30-29 • 40-49 • 50 and above

Additional Resources

Audience Dialogue. Qualitative or quantitative Research?
http://www.audiencedialogue.org/qualiquant.html

Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers. Designing for results. SFCG. Chapter 12.
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

OTI. Conflict Evaluation Toolkit. Part III

http://www.unr.edu/bench/chap04.pdf

Mixed Methods Research Module

This module will help project/program staffers better understand mixed methods research.

Search for Common Ground

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
Pre-Test Your Knowledge **What is Mixed Methods Research?** **What can we use Mixed Methods Research for?** **Why do we use Mixed Methods Research?** **When should we use Mixed Methods Research?** **How should we use Mixed Methods Research?**	**Worksheets: Describe Project Goals and Objectives** **Worksheet: Identify Key stakeholders and Audiences** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to select measurable goals and objectives, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Questions to Ask

Pre-Test-Your Knowledge!

Please answer the following questions. Read each statement below. If you agree with a statement, write A = YES. If you disagree with a statement, write B = NO. Also, explain why you believe that statement is wrong.

_____   1. Using mixed methods is better than quantitative methods only or qualitative methods only

_____   2. The primary drawback of mixed methods is that it is difficult for the researcher to keep data organized

_____   3. To mix methods, the researcher needs to complete a quantitative study and a qualitative study, and then submit them together so that readers can compare them

_____   4. Mixed methods research is highly flexible and bound by few "hard-and-fast" rules.

_____   5. A mixed methods researcher approaches their subject to attempt to gain enough information to understand the single, objective reality of the situation.

Answers: 1 N; 2 N; 3 N; 4 Y; 5 N

If you answered 3 or more incorrect, you must complete this module!

What is Mixed Methods Research?

Mixed Methods Research is a study combining the quantitative methods paradigm (the use and analyses of numerical data using statistical techniques.) as well as the qualitative methods paradigm (that uses narrative data collected from interviews, focus group, archival materials and opinion surveys). "Mixed methods" is distinct from "Multi-Methods" research, which uses multiple data collection methods from a *single* paradigm (either quantitative *or* qualitative). In the world of research, there is a lively debate about the utility of the respective paradigms, with some researchers supporting one at the expense of the other. However, what were once considered incompatible approaches are increasingly used in concert with powerful results.

What can we use Mixed Method Research For?

Mixed methods research can be used to produce evaluations that illustrate how generalized quantitative trends play out in particular instances/contexts or how instances/contexts fit into larger trends. For example, a quantitative study can show that adult females in a particular urban population will have five more years of formal education than those in a rural population. Because of the nature of quantitative methods, this information is based on information from many people or sources. A qualitative study can not only show that there are exceptions to this trend, but can also reveal the reasons behind both the education disparity (cultural differences, societal pressure, economic pressure, etc) and the exceptions. These evaluations in combination can produce a more holistic view of a phenomenon, but must reconcile some assumptions:

Quantitative Assumptions	Qualitative Assumptions
There is one objective reality.	There are as many realities as there are actors/participants.
Context is less important in examining a phenomenon.	Context is of paramount importance in examining a phenomenon.
The researcher's biases are controlled via careful statistical methods.	The researcher's biases are a necessary component of results interpretation.
Research results are more valuable when analyzing large populations across which we can generalize results.	Research results give us more depth and meaning when analyzing smaller samples.

Another instance in which mixed-methods would be preferable is when a study should fulfil divergent needs. Often times, field organizations value qualitative data with highly relative, personal input on the effects of projects. Meanwhile, organizations that fund such projects often focus on "hard" data that comes in the form of quantitative statistics (see Waysman and Savaya, 1997). The use of both types of methods in a single study would, therefore, satisfy these competing needs.

It would be useful at this time to review the **Research Methods Overview module** for a comparative evaluation of the two methods.

Why do we use Mixed Methods Research?

While quantitative and qualitative studies certainly have a place on their own, mixed methods research can, in certain situations, provide a better view of reality than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. According to Greene, et al. (1989), there are five primary purposes for mixing methods in research:

| Purposes of Mixed Methods Research	
Triangulation	The use of multiple methods concurrently and with equal weight to test the validity of a finding
Complementarity	The use of multiple methods concurrently and preferably with equal weight to clarify the results of a finding
Expansion	The use of multiple methods sequentially or concurrently and with equal or unequal priority/weight to enhance the richness of a finding
Development	The use of additional methods sequentially preferably with equal weight to shape future research processes
Initiation	The use of multiple methods concurrently and preferably with equal weight to stimulate new questions

Using additional methods can inform the data you have. As an additional consideration, mixing methods can also help your research to transcend the current debate in the research field about the utility of the allegedly competing paradigms.

The first three purposes of mixed methods research listed above are most relevant to this module. They are described below.

Triangulation

Emergency services often use the term "triangulation" to refer to the process of precisely locating a person's cellular phone signal using information about the strength of the signal from multiple cellular towers. Similarly, in the context of research methods, we can use information from multiple perspectives to create an analysis that more accurately portrays information than an analysis from any single perspective.

Triangulation is a core purpose of mixed methods. It is premised on the idea that any single method will yield biased results and that if you can combine and build on the unbiased portions of various methods, you can arrive at information that gets closer to reality. You compare the results of two essentially separate studies, each using a different method whose biases are offset by the other. It is considered "unobtrusive" because it keeps the methods separate, rather than combining them.
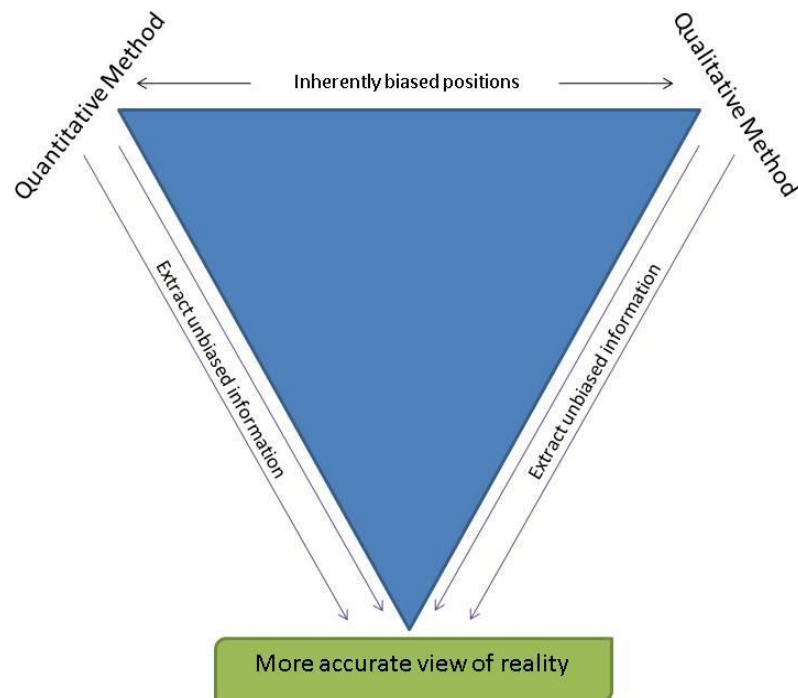
Figure 1 Triangulation

Triangulation is most effective when it is planned in advance with an understanding of the various biases and when the studies are conducted at the same time and independently (Greene, et al., 1989). It can be classified into four types:

- Data triangulation – using a variety of *data sources* in a study, which can help offset possible unrepresentative data

- Methodological Triangulation – using a variety of *data collection methods* (surveys, interviews, case studies), which can give the researcher richer data

- Investigator Triangulation – involving *multiple researchers* in a study, which can help to offset researcher biases in research design

- Theory Triangulation – applying *multiple theoretical perspectives* to data, which can yield analyses and approaches that reveal alternative explanations

Complementarity

When you complete a study using one method, the results and implications can sometimes be unclear. Applying an alternate method that *compliments* the work you have already completed is known as "complementarity." According to Greene, et al. (1989), complementarity is used to "measure overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon." For Waysman and Savaya (1997), "data from one method help to clarify and interpret data from another method." They used focus groups to gain information with which they evaluated the quantitative data they compiled later.

To illustrate, the following is an excerpt from a Search for Common Ground community radio study in Sierra Leone:

> Interns will determine who the audience is and sample different groups in the community where the station is located. Interns will then conduct a parallel study outside that community, at a vector of at least five kilometres away from the station, to see if the impact of community radio varies with distance from the station.
>
> In order to find the above information, Interns will conduct a listening survey with the audience to see what programmes they are listening to and why. Then, Interns will link the studies from the different geographical locations and see if they are connected.

The above excerpt indicates that mixed methods were utilized to monitor community radio. First, the researchers ("Interns") conduct a qualitative study with radio listeners, followed by two parallel quantitative studies. The qualitative study provides researchers with key information that complements their later quantitative study by helping determine the audience (and thus sample).

Expansion

In their evaluation for an umbrella Israeli nonprofit, Waysman and Savaya (1997) were tasked with evaluating the effects of a number of suborganisations on their communities. In much the same way as SFCG works with partners, these suborganisations carried out a variety of different tasks and missions. The authors describe their use of mixed methods for expansion: "Different methods are employed to learn about different phenomena within the same study, thereby expanding its reach. The different methods are chosen based on their respective fit for studying the phenomena in question." Expansion, therefore, was the purpose in order to broaden the scope of the study, since the subjects represented a wide range of actors and were affected by a wide range of phenomena.

Figure 2 Expansion Prism
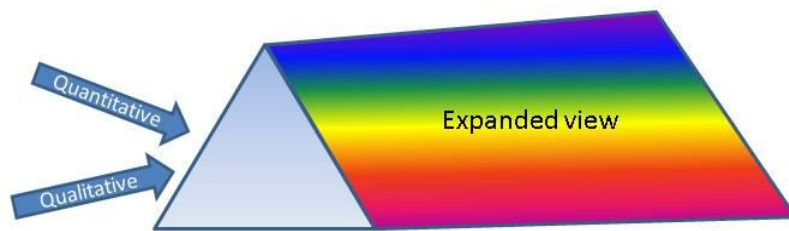
When should we use Mixed Method Research?

Ideally, we would use mixed methods research whenever possible, since it often better captures the richness of the real world than either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. There are of course questions of feasibility. Because both methods are being used, there can be greater cost and time requirements. The research may require multiple administrators to complete. Success can also be dependent upon the extent of existing research on the subject.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Utilizes the strength of both approaches	Requires knowledge in both methods
Provides a more comprehensive view	Requires more extensive data collection and resources
Does not limit the data being collected	Might lead to collection of an overwhelming amount of data

How should we use Mixed Methods Research?

Once one grasps the respective quantitative and qualitative methods by themselves, the use of mixed methods is relatively straightforward. The research design portion, however, is of great importance. One cannot simply do two different studies and submit them together. The researcher should carefully consider how the methods will be integrated. **The added difficulty comes with anticipating how the methods will interact, intersect, and yield insights.** Design research that integrates the two findings should mutually reinforce or reveal the need for further study beyond the scope of the current project. For example, a large-N[1] quantitative study of survey responses coupled with case studies of individual respondents would provide a view of the overall trends

Tip: Plot out your reasoning for choosing a particular method. Include this rationale in the final report.

What questions arise when comparing these two? It would be wise to review the existing literature, if any exists, on the subject of your study: Are these quantitative treatments? Qualitative? Both? What recommendations for further research has the existing literature made? For example, does the author feel that a particular aspect of his/her research warrants further examination?

Two further, appropriate questions are: Should this project utilize quantitative and qualitative methods equally, or should one be dominant? Should the quantitative and qualitative portions be conducted simultaneously or sequentially – that is, at the same time or one after the other? It is most likely that

Tip:
Philosophy of Pragmatism: regardless of the researcher's assumptions, what model design will yield applicable results?

you will be conducting the portions simultaneously. Otherwise, the collection of one set of data can affect the responses for the other set of data. But circumstances (like resource scarcity, the need for an orientation to a culture, e.g., like a qualitative ethnography, or the need to use a time-bound opportunity for gathering quantitative data quickly) can dictate sequential ordering.

---

[1] The letter "n" refers to the size of the sample that a study examines. So a large-N study will involve a significant sample size (and generally, the larger the sample, the more accurate the data).

There is an art to the design of a project: mixed methods research affords the researchers significant flexibility in designing a model that fits their question. Because of this, there is no codifiable method of design; there is not a single set of instructions for the design of a mixed methods study. Rather, there is a guiding principle: the Philosophy of Pragmatism.
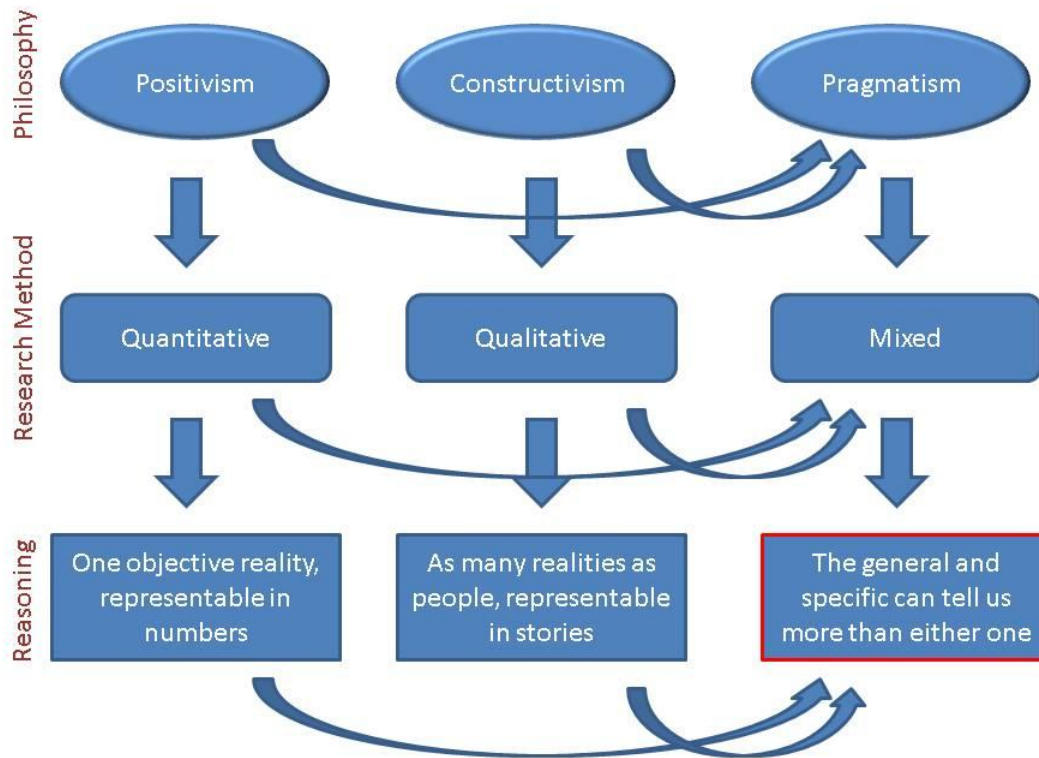
Figure 3 From Philosophy to Action

A philosophy underlies each methodological approach. For quantitative methods, the philosophy is positivism; for qualitative methods. the philosophy is constructivism; for mixed methods, the philosophy is pragmatism. We need not go deeply into philosophy here, but pragmatism is more or less a careful examination of the data and tools at your disposal and the level-headed decision of what questions to ask. According to Victor Lofgreen, "pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method or the world view that is supposed to underlie the method."[2] Such a way of thinking enables the researcher great flexibility. With that flexibility, however, comes the responsibility to ensure that your research is rigorous. Pool and organize the data and literature at your disposal. Draw from this information the most appropriate

[2] Lofgreen, Victor. "Mixed Methodology: Choosing an Appropriate Research Design." November 2006.http://www.writersinkincorporated.com/Lofgreen_Mixed_Methodology_Atlanta06.ppt (accessed 03/14/2010).

question to research. Note that the Philosophy of Pragmatism does not *have to* support mixed methods design. The pragmatist would be free to complete a quantitative-only or qualitative-only study if the research question called for it.

	Steps to Approach a Mixed Methods Project	
I	Determine the feasibility of a mixed method design	*Am I able to do this with the resources at my disposal?*
II	Determine the rationale for a mixed method design	*Why is it best to do it this way?*
III	Determine the data collection strategies and designs	*How and where will I get the information?*
IV	Determine the specific research questions	*What precisely am I looking for?*
V	Collect data	*N/A*
VI	Analyze data	*What does this information tell me?*
VII	Write the report	*N/A*

Tip: Plot out your reasoning for choosing a particular method. Include this rationale in the final report.

TOOL 1

Questions to ask yourself

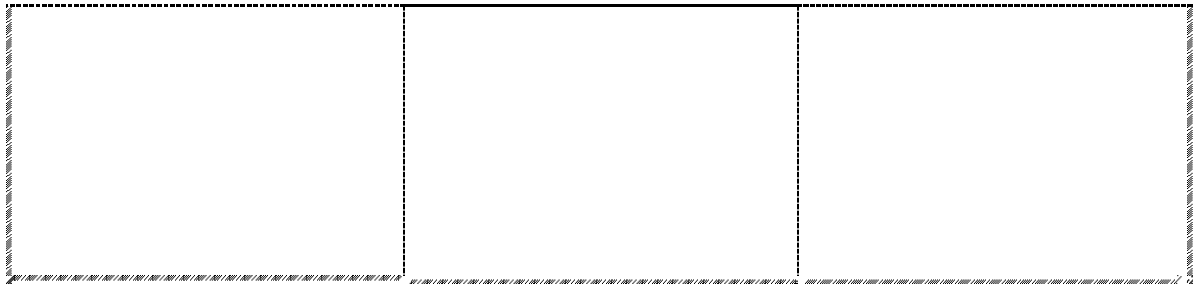Important questions to ask before deciding on what type of research to use

1) What is the information that is required?
2) How will you use this information?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?
4) What are the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?
5) What are the specific questions?

Top of the document

1. Briefly describe the purpose of the project.	
2. State the above in terms of a general goal.	
3. State the first objective to be evaluated as clearly as you can.	
4. Can this objective be broken down further? Break it down to the smallest unit. It must be clear what specifically you hope to see documented or changed.	
5. Is this objective measurable (can indicators and standards be developed for it)? If not, restate it.	
6. Formulate one or more questions that will yield information about the extent to which the objective was met.	
7. Once you have completed the above steps, go back to #3 and write the next objective. Continue with steps 4, and 5, and 6.	

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Adapted from the *User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*, National Science Foundation, 1997.

Worksheet: Identify Key Stakeholders and Audiences		
Audience	Spokesperson	Values, Interests, Expectations, etc. that Evaluation Should Address

Adapted from the *User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*, National Science Foundation, 1997.

Additional Resources

Further information on Qualitative v. Quantitative methods:
http://www.audiencedialogue.net/qualiquant.html

A simple introduction to mixing methods:
http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/publications/mix-methods.pdf

A good introduction with links and references for further information:
http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/tutorial/Sydenstricker/bolsa.html

Commonwealth of Learning Mixed-Methods Module:
http://www.col.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/A5.pdf

NSF Handbook for Mixed-Methods:
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm

Teddlie, Charles and Abbas Tashakkori. *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.* Sage: London. 2009.

Text version of a lecture on some of the concepts of Mixed Methods:
http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/lectures/lec14.htm

Data Collection Tools

This module will provide detailed information about various data collection tools that can be used when doing design, monitoring and evaluation.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Interactive Pages
➢ **Consent Form** ➢ **Sample Structured Observation form** ➢ **Sample Survey**
TOOLS IN THIS MODULE (You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location of the tool in this module.) **TOOL 1: Case Study** **TOOL 2: Focus Groups** **TOOL 3: Key Informant Interview**s **TOOL 4: Observation tools** **TOOL 5: Surveys**

TOOL 1-Case Study

What is a Case Study?

A case study involves an in-depth examination of a single instance or event and helps you create a full, complex picture of what occurred. The case study itself is not necessarily a data collection tool, but rather an approach to gathering information that can utilize a number of different data collection methods.

What can we use the Case Study for?

The case study is a good method for the measurement of the effect of specific interventions on a particular conflict situation. A key attribute of the case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.

Advantages	Disadvantages
❑ Allows for in-depth analysis.	❑ Often focuses on only one causal relationship, leaving out potential others.
❑ Provides the possibility of establishing causal relationships between interventions and their outcomes or impacts.	❑ Difficult to generalize to other situations.
❑ Tends to provide strong evidence to support causal relations between specific interventions and specific outcomes and/or impacts.	❑ Cannot establish with certainty pure causality between specific interventions and positive changes on a large scale, but may establish the contribution of specific interventions to positive changes in a specific conflict situation.

Cost Required	Skills Required	Time required
Case Study may involve travel to places where the impact of certain interventions may be measured. It also involves the cost of using a computer and printing materials used for conducting interviews, focus groups, and other research methods.	Familiarity with various qualitative research methods (such as interviews, focus groups and observations)	The time required to conduct Case Study varies based on the situations. However, in most cases, conducting a Case Study will require scheduling various times for interviews, observations, focus groups, etc. A minimum of at least 2-3 days are usually required to gather Case Study data, and 1-2 days for analysis and report writing.

Step by Step Directions on how to use a Case Study

Step 1: Identify the Situation
Step 2: Design the Case Study
Step 3: Design the methods to be used
Step 4: Conduct the study
Step 5: Analyse results

Step 1: Identify the Situation

A situation has to be identified in which you have the following elements:
1) Specific needs or issues of certain individuals or groups
2) Allocation of several activities (intervention) to address these issues
3) Response to the need or issue (result, outcome or impact)

Step 2: Design the Case Study

Each Case Study should be tailored in order to investigate each of the three elements mentioned above (the needs/issues; activities; and response). The methods or techniques used to investigate each of the three elements and their relationship vary according to the nature of each situation. They will also vary according to the effectiveness of each technique in collecting the most reliable and valid information. It should also be chosen for its safety of use to individuals and its ability to provide focused information. More than one technique could be used for each element. Some of the techniques that can be used are observation, interviews, surveys, focus groups, reviewing pictures or official records, content research, storytelling, amongst others.

Step 3: Design each method to be used

Once the best techniques to be used have been established for each element, the researcher develops the corresponding instruments. It is important to remember that each technique has its own instruments and should attempt to establish the following:
 1) How the situation was when it started?
 2) What actions were taken place and with what purpose?
 3) What and how was the situation after actions had been taken?
 4) To what extent did the actions cause the outcome?

The instrument for the third element will be determined once the information for the first two is gathered. Also, the researcher must determine who will be the best person(s) to apply the instrument to.

Step 4: Conduct the study

To obtain as complete a picture of the participant as possible, case study researchers can employ a variety of approaches and methods. These approaches, methods, and related issues are discussed in depth in this section.

Step 5: Analyse results

As the information is collected, researchers strive to make sense of their data. Generally, researchers interpret their data in one of two ways: holistically or through coding. Holistic analysis does not attempt to break the evidence into parts, but rather to draw conclusions based on the text as a whole. However, composition researchers commonly interpret their data by coding that is by systematically searching data to identify and/or categorize specific observable actions or characteristics. These observable actions then become the key variables in the study. As stated above, while most researchers begin their case studies expecting to look for particular observable characteristics, it is not unusual for key variables to emerge during data collection.

TOOL 2-Focus Groups

Tip: A Focus Group is NOT
- A Debate
- Group Therapy
- Conflict Resolution Session
- Problem Solving Session
- An Opportunity to Collaborate
- A Promotional Opportunity

What is a Focus Group?

A Focus Group is a data collection tool that can be selected for use during design, monitoring, or evaluation. They are in-depth, group interviews with a small number (6 to 10) of carefully selected people, who usually have similar characteristics (such as gender, age, ethnicity etc).

What is the purpose of a Focus Group?

The facilitated discussions are based on open-ended questions that aim to bring out the perceptions and experiences of groups of people (usually participants/ stakeholders in a project). The main idea is to stimulate and capture a rich discussion, structured around 10 or so questions.

The questions used relate to the specific issues to be addressed by the research; usually they are linked to an examination of intended results, implementation processes, indicators, and/or the context of the project/programme.

What can we use a Focus Group for?

Focus group discussions generate more in-depth information that one-on-one interviews or surveys, because they are based around discussion and use our innate desire to communicate about issues, perspectives and opinions. They can be used to solicit views, insights, and recommendations of program staff, customers, stakeholders, technical experts, or other groups.

Focus groups are especially appropriate when:

- Stakeholders' opinions, attitudes, preferences or perspectives are needed for program planning (Be sure to get appropriate consent when needed – **Consent Form**
- Specific activities or projects are in a conflict/post-conflict environment
- Recommendations and suggestions are needed from participants, partners, experts, or other stakeholders

For example, focus groups may be used to better understand the participants' conception of civil society or their impressions about the needs in their community or what they thought of some radio/TV programming.

Focus Groups are very good at providing in-depth information about opinions, attitudes, to explain 'why'. But it is not possible to use this information to make comparisons or to aggregate the findings for a wider population. Therefore, in many evaluations and M&E systems, other data collection tools, such as interviews or surveys, complement focus groups.

> **Tip:** A qualitative method, **focus groups** entail a group of people from the target population gathering to discuss a

When should a Focus Group be used?

Focus groups can be useful during all phases of activities (from the assessment stage to end evaluation). They are tools in a wider process of design, monitoring or evaluation and are used to gather certain kinds of information.

Advantages

- Focus groups produce in-depth qualitative information.
- Focus groups can be low cost and provide speedy results.
- The flexible format of allows the facilitator to explore unanticipated issues that may arise during the discussion.
- The format encourages interaction among participants, allowing them to hear each other's ideas. In a group setting, participants provide checks and balances, thus minimizing false or extreme views.

Disadvantages

- The facilitator of Focus Group discussions needs to be trained and experienced in designing and managing group discussions.
- The flexible format makes it susceptible to facilitator bias, which can undermine the validity and reliability of findings. Therefore, the questions to be covered during the discussion should be established beforehand.
- Discussions can be sidetracked or dominated by a few vocal individuals. The facilitator needs to be skilful in managing dominant individuals and in encouraging other to participate.
- Focus group interviews generate relevant qualitative information, but it is usually specific to that group/setting and not helpful for making generalizations for a whole population.
- As with most qualitative data, the

information can be difficult and time-consuming to analyse.

Cost Required	Skills required	Time required
Cost is generally low for focus group interviews. A safe and suitable location to conduct the interview is required as well as flip charts, a skilled facilitator and perhaps a translator.	Minimum 1-2 days training for facilitators.	The focus group interview should last approximately 1-2 hours. An additional 2-4 hours are needed to compile the results of the interview.

Step by Step Guide on how to using Focus Group Discussions

Step 1: Develop Questions
Step 2: Select the team
Step 3: Select the participants
Step 4: Decide on timing and location
Step 5: Prepare the discussion guide
Step 6: Conduct the interview
Step 7: Debrief the team
Step 8: Analyse results

Tip: *Selecting Participants*
Carefully consider the following when selecting participants:
Gender – Will both men and women feel comfortable discussing the topic in a mixed gender group?
Identity – Will people of different ethnic/religion/other identity backgrounds talk freely together?
Age – How intimidating would it be for a young person to be included in a group of older adults? Or vice versa?
Power – Would a soldier be likely to make candid remarks in a group where his/her supervisor is also a participant?
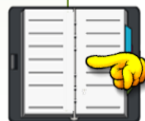
Step 1: Develop Questions

Ask yourself the following questions:
1) Deciding what information is required?
2) How will you use this information in decision-making?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?
4) What are the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?
5) What are the specific questions?

Focus Group Discussions should be based around about 10 questions. These questions should aim to stimulate opinions and perceptions. The order of the questions is important. At the beginning you may want to ask questions to engage the participants, then you explore the issues in more depth, at the end, you should include 'wrap-up' questions that ask for issues, which haven't been covered previously.

Certain types of questions impede group discussions:

- Yes-or-no questions elicit little information and do not stimulate discussion.
- "Why" questions put people on the defensive and cause them to take politically correct" sides on controversial issues.
- Open-ended questions are more useful because they allow participants to tell their story in their own words and add details that can result in unanticipated findings.

> **Tip: The assistant moderator must be able to do the following:**
> - Run a tape recorder during the session
> - Take notes in case the recorder fails or the tape is inaudible
> - Note/record body language or other subtle but relevant clues
>
> Allow the moderator to do all the talking during the group

Questions should be:

- Short and to the point
- Focused on one dimension each
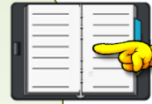- Unambiguously worded

Non-threatening or embarrassing

Example: *Focus Groups during the Baseline in Nepal*

- One aim of a focus group discussion would be to identify perceptions and the range of opinion about participating in national elections.
- The indicator could be: "Perceptions about voting responsibilities" and the focus group discussion could aim to understand what people think about this responsibility, whether they think it exists, what the parameters are and why they think what they do.
- One question for the group could be 'How is voting in a national election relevant to people in this village?'
- The facilitator would aim to keep the discussion focused on this question and to encourage and document what people responses are, on what do they all agree, where are these differences, why are national elections considered to be important/unimportant? Etc.

Conducting a focus group interview requires a small team, with at least a facilitator to guide the discussion and a note-taker to record it. The facilitator should be able to put people at ease and elicit responses to the questions. S/he will need to be flexible in responding to the different directions the discussion might go and also be able to bring the discussion back to relevant topics.

Even if the session is being recorded, a note-taker can be helpful in recording interactions, non-verbal reactions, and nuances that a tape/video recorder does not capture. The team should have substantive knowledge of the topic under discussion.

Step 3: Select the participants

The information needs of the study will, to a large extent, identify who should be represented in the focus groups. Often separate focus groups are held for different populations (gender, age, class, ethnicity, race, employment, community, etc). Once the population has been chosen, identify the most suitable participants for the focus group. One of the best approaches is to consult key informants who know about local conditions. Consult several informants to minimize the biases of individual preferences.

Each focus group should be 6 to 10 people to allow for the smooth flow of conversation. Participants should be homogenous, sharing common traits related to the discussion topic. People may be more inclined to discuss their views and perspectives if they are assured there will be no recrimination. Ideally, people should not know each other, though there may be situations in which this is not possible. Anonymity lowers inhibition and prevents formation of cliques.

Step 4: Decide on timing and location

The ideal amount of time to set aside for a focus group is anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Beyond that most groups are not productive and it becomes an imposition on participant time. Hold it at a convenient location with some degree of privacy.

Step 5: Prepare the discussion guide

The discussion guide is an outline of the upcoming interview that covers the topics and issues to be discussed and aids the team in conducting the session. The guide should contain only a few items, allowing some time and flexibility to pursue unanticipated but relevant issues.

The guide provides the framework for the facilitator to explore, probe, and ask questions. Initiating each topic with a carefully crafted question will help keep the discussion focused.

Step 6: Conduct the interview

Resources Required:
- ❑ Safe and suitable location
- ❑ Flip charts
- ❑ Skilled facilitator
- ❑ Taping equipment (preferable)
- ❑ Note-taker

Process
1) At the beginning of the session, outline the purpose and format of the discussion. Often participants do not know what to expect from focus group discussions and having clear information will help set the group at ease.

2) Define the general guidelines that will be followed throughout the session:
   There are no right or wrong answers; all views are welcome.
   a) Everyone should speak.
   b) Opinions/views expressed will not be attributed to a specific individual.
   c) The session is confidential. It will not be published or broadcast.

3) Ask if everyone is comfortable with the guidelines

Tip: *Techniques to use in getting more/deeper information*
- ❑ Repeat the question. Repetition gives more time for participants to think.
- ❑ Adopt a "sophisticated naïveté" posture to convey a limited understanding of the issue and ask for specific details.
- ❑ Pause for additional information; silence can be a useful tool. A thoughtful nod or expectant look can convey that you want a fuller answer.
- ❑ Repeat the reply. Hearing it again sometimes stimulates

TOOL 3-Key Informant Interview

What is a Key Informant Interviews?

Interviews are a data collection tool that can be selected for use during design, monitoring, or evaluation. They are one-to-one discussions with people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of interest.

Conducted in person, the **interviews** are a face-to-face discussion, with the interviewer using a discussion guide with a logical sequence of questions to guide the conversation.

Advantages

- ❑ Provides information directly from knowledgeable people.
- ❑ Provides flexibility to explore new ideas and issues not anticipated during planning.
- ❑ Inexpensive and simple to conduct.

Disadvantages

- ❑ Not appropriate if quantitative data are needed.
- ❑ May be biased if informants are not carefully selected.
- ❑ Susceptible to interviewer biases.
- ❑ May be difficult to generalize findings

Qualitative Interviews: They provide the interviewer with some focus, but at the same time provide him/her with the opportunity to explore new ideas as and when they arise during the interview process.

When should it be used?

Specifically, interviews are useful in the following situations:

- ❏ When qualitative, descriptive information is sufficient for decision-making.

- ❏ When there is a need to understand motivation, behaviour, and perspectives. Interviews of program planners and managers, service providers, host government officials, and beneficiaries concerning their attitudes and behaviours about a project/programme can help explain its successes and shortcomings.

- ❏ When a main purpose is to generate recommendations. Key informants can help formulate recommendations that can improve a program's performance.

- ❏ When quantitative data collected through other methods need to be interpreted. Key informant interviews can provide the how and why of what happened. If, for example, a sample survey showed farmers were failing to make loan repayments, key informant interviews could uncover the reasons.

- ❏ When preliminary information is needed to design a comprehensive quantitative study. Key informant interviews can help frame the issues before the survey is undertaken.

- ❏ **Use active listening skills**: You should be listening, not be doing most of the talking. At the end of each major segment, recap what you heard from the respondent and get their agreement. *For example say, "This is what I think I heard you said…..Is that right?"*

- ❏ **Maintain eye contact**; use body language that says you are interested and non-judgemental (nodding head, smile, learning forward, etc.)

- ❏ Keep a **neutral demeanour**; try not to let your own opinions show. Interviewees will not want to disagree with you if they feel you have an opinion or perspective.

- ❏ **Reinforce and encourage** further comments by saying, *"That's very interesting, say more…." "I'm interested in your opinion/perspective…."*

How do you conduct a Key Informant Interview?

1. <u>Formulate Interview Questions</u>
2. <u>Prepare a Short Interview Guide</u>
3. <u>Select Key Informants</u>
4. <u>Conduct Interviews</u>
5. <u>Take Adequate Notes</u>
6. <u>Analyse Interview Data</u>
7. <u>Check for Reliability and Validity</u>

Step 1: Formulate interview questions

- Form a list of possible questions related to the subject area of focus that you may need answered.

- The Questions could be a combination of open ended and closed questions depending on the situation and type of information needed.

- Questions should require an explanation rather then requiring a simple yes and no answer.

- If a question requires a simple answer, follow it up with a question requiring an explanation or reasoning for the previous answer.

> **Filtering** enables the interviewer or the respondent to know which question to go to next
> For example:
> If yes to Q1 Go to Q3
> If no to Q1 go to Q2

- Questions should be neutral rather than leading. Example, "What do you think of the SFCG radio program in Sierra Leone? Rather than "Do you think the SFCG radio program is good?"

- Start the interview questions with a few simple basic questions before discussing the more complex in depth ones

- Ask questions about the present first before those about the past.

Step 2: Prepare a short interview guide

- Come up with the common themes after analysing the questions
- Sort the questions together according to the theme.
- Formulate pre-codes for closed questions
- Compile filters for questions based on answers.
- Identify media for recording the interview: Note taking, Tape recorders, Digital Voice recorders.

Step 3: Select key informants

❑ Identify whom you will interview. Be sure all groups are represented.

❑ It is important that the interviewer receives (written) consent of the respondent (interviewee) as well as consent from their officials (if needed).

❑ The interviewee should know in advance how long the interview would take.

Tip: INTERVIEWING PITFALLS

❑ **Asking multiple questions**: For example, "How do you feel about the teachers and classes you're taking?"

❑ **Asking leading questions**: For example, "How does the staff foster a sense of community here?" vs. "Does the staff foster a sense of community here? If so, how?"

❑ **Cutting off the respondent**: Often it takes the interviewee a while to respond, allow for silence. Unless interviewees are rambling and digressing, give them time to complete their thoughts and sentences.

❑ **Asking closed ended questions.** If you ask a yes/no question, follow up with "Why?", "Say more about this…", or, "please elaborate."

Step 4: Conduct interviews

❑ Establish rapport. Begin with an explanation of the purpose of the interview, the intended uses of the information and assurances of confidentiality. Often informants will want assurances that relevant officials have approved the interview. Except when interviewing technical experts, questioners should avoid jargon.

❑ Sequence questions. Start with factual questions. Questions requiring opinions and judgments should follow. In general, begin with the present and move to questions about the past or future.

❑ Phrase questions carefully to elicit detailed information. Avoid questions that can be answered by a simple yes or no. For example, questions such as "Please tell me about the alternative media?" are better than "Do you know about alternative media?"

❑ Use probing techniques. Encourage informants to detail the basis for their conclusions and recommendations. There is a potential that implementers will bias the evaluation by identifying persons who will give only a positive picture of impact. While most people will give honest answers, a keen sense of discernment is necessary to listen to exaggerations.

❑ Minimize translation difficulties. Sometimes it is necessary to use a translator, which can change the dynamics and add difficulties. For example, differences in status between the translator and informant may inhibit the conversation. Often information is lost during translation. Using translators who are not known to the informants can minimize difficulties; briefing translators on the purposes of the study to reduce misunderstandings and having translators repeat the informant's comments verbatim.

Step 5: Take adequate notes

❑ Interviewers should take notes and develop them in detail immediately after each interview to ensure accuracy.

❑ Use a set of common subheadings for interview texts, selected with an eye to the major issues being explored. Common subheadings ease data analysis.

Step 6: Analyse interview data

❑ At the end of each interview, prepare a 1-2 page interview summary sheet reducing information into manageable themes, issues, and recommendations. Each summary should provide information about the key informant's position, reason for inclusion in the list of informants, main points made, implications of these observations, and any insights or ideas the interviewer had during the interview.

❑ Use descriptive codes. Coding involves a systematic recording of data. While numeric codes are not appropriate, descriptive codes can help organize responses. These codes may cover key themes, concepts, questions, or ideas, such as sustainability, impact on income, and participation of women. A usual practice is to note the codes or categories on the left-hand margins of the interview text. Then a summary lists the page numbers where each item (code) appears. For example, reintegration of ex-combatants might be given the code "rein-x-com," and the summary sheet might indicate it is discussed on pages 7, 13, 21, 46, and 67 of the interview text. Categories and subcategories for coding (based on key study questions, hypotheses, or conceptual frameworks) can be developed before interviews begin, or after the interviews are completed. Pre-coding saves time, but the categories may not be appropriate. Post-coding helps ensure empirically relevant categories, but is time consuming. A compromise is to begin developing coding categories after 8 to 10 interviews, as it becomes apparent which categories are relevant.

❑ Storage and retrieval. The next step is to develop a simple storage and retrieval system. Access to a computer program that sorts text is very helpful. Relevant parts of interview text can then be organized according to the codes. The same effect can be accomplished without computers by preparing folders for each category, cutting relevant comments from the interview and pasting them onto index cards according to the coding scheme, then filing them in the appropriate

folder. Each index card should have an identification mark so the comment can be attributed to its source.

❑ Presentation of data. Visual displays such as tables, boxes, and figures can condense information, present it in a clear format, and highlight underlying relationships and trends. This helps communicate findings to decision-makers more clearly, quickly, and easily.

Step 7: Check for reliability and validity

❑ Key informant interviews are susceptible to error, bias, and misinterpretation, which can lead to flawed findings and recommendations.

❑ Check representativeness of key informants. Take a second look at the key informant list to ensure no significant groups were overlooked.

❑ Assess reliability of key informants. Assess informants' knowledgeability, credibility, impartiality, willingness to respond, and presence of outsiders who may have inhibited their responses. Greater weight can be given to information provided by more reliable informants.

❑ Check interviewer or investigator bias. One's own biases as an investigator should be examined, including tendencies to concentrate on information that confirms preconceived notions and hypotheses, seek consistency too early and overlook evidence inconsistent with earlier findings, and be partial to the opinions of elite key informants.

❑ Check for negative evidence. Make a conscious effort to look for evidence that questions preliminary findings. This brings out issues that may have been overlooked.

❑ Get feedback from informants. Ask the key informants for feedback on major findings. A summary report of the findings might be shared with them, along with a request for written comments. Often a more practical approach is to invite them to a meeting where key findings are presented and ask for their feedback.

TOOL 4-Observation

What is Observation as a tool?

Observation involves watching and recording what people do in a natural setting such as a meeting, workplace, school, store, restaurant, etc. Useful information and new insights can often be gained from such observation that would otherwise not be obtained. It allows the observer to see how people actually behave and therefore can be a good complement to interviews or surveys that capture how people describe their behaviour.

What is the purpose of the Observation Tool?

Observation is an appropriate method to use when we want to get information about what happens in a situation **beyond** what the participants say or think about it. Observation can capture **nonverbal interactions or reactions**, can find patterns of behaviour that are not apparent to participants, and can provide **information about the setting**. Observation is particularly useful in conflict settings, where people may not want to speak openly in face-to-face data collection techniques such as interviews or focus group discussions. Additionally, observation is a tool that allows for comparison over time and between different settings.

Advantages

- ❑ Provides data that is most reflective of the natural state
- ❑ Avoids the subjective opinions of interviewees or focus group participants
- ❑ Provides focused descriptive information about a certain event
- ❑ Demonstrates needs, issues, or program results
- ❑ Involves low to medium cost

Disadvantages

- ❑ Must deal with subjectivity or biases of observer(s)
- ❑ Some topics may not lend themselves to observations because of sensitivity or invasion on privacy
- ❑ Does not answer "why" or "how"
- ❑ Is usually not interactive
- ❑ Verifying observation can be more difficult than regulating other data collection tools

When should the Observation Tool be used?

Observation can be useful during all phases of DM&E, from the assessment stage to end evaluation, as well as in collecting data to inform programming. It is used to gather certain kinds of information and so often works best when combined with other data collection methods.

Cost Required	Skills Required	Time required
The cost of conducting an Observation varies from low to medium. It is low if local observers and shorter time frames are used for Observation. Costs for Observation increase if it requires assigning professional evaluators/researchers to observe certain events or occurrences over a long period of times.	• Basic knowledge of the program/evaluation subject • Accurate knowledge of classification criteria • Adept at interpreting observed function within criteria • Accurate recording of data	Time required for conducting Observation varies based on the nature of the evaluation activity. But in general, Observation, by its definition, requires an extended period of time to gather valid and reliable data. Qualitative Observation is likely to be more time consuming than quantitative Observation.

> **Ethical rules for Observation**
> - Ensure that Observation is not violating individuals' privacy
> - Ensure that observer is as unobtrusive as possible
> - Ensure that Observation is not a safety hazard to observer or others

How do we use the Observation Tool?

1. Develop guidelines for the observation.
2. Choose observer(s) and ensure needed skills are present.
3. Conduct observation. (Use the Structured Observation Form as a guide.) **Blank Structured Observation Form** and the **Sample Structured Observation Form**
4. Analyse and use data.

See detailed steps in the **Steps to doing Observation**

1. Develop guidelines for the observation.
2. Choose observer(s) and ensure needed skills are present.
3. Conduct observation.
4. Analyse and use data.

Step 1: Develop guidelines for the observation.

This first step includes deciding what kind of information is wanted from the observation and establishing clear guidelines for the process. Begin by asking if observation can provide you with the information you need. What other data tools could also provide this information? Is observation the best/one of the best tools for your specific needs?

> If you haven't done an unstructured observation before, practicing at one or two events before you start the real observation is quite helpful. Taking notes on what is happening without summarizing or interpreting can be difficult at first and doing some practices can help you get an idea of how to be a recorder. Ask someone else to read your practice observation records to help identify summarizing or interpreting that you may not be aware of.

The observation can be either **structured** – looking for and counting the presence ofspecific events/interactions/behaviours – or **unstructured** – documenting all that occurs during a particular event or time period. The choice of

structured or unstructured depends upon what kind of information would be most helpful. If one of the project's objectives were to increase the number of times women speak out at a community meeting, then a structured approach would be best. If the project team were trying to gather some general information about what happens at a community meeting, then an unstructured approach would be most appropriate.

If choosing an unstructured approach, the observer must be prepared to take notes on what is happening **without** summarizing or interpreting the actions of the people.

The notes should be a description of all (to the extent possible) that occurs during that particular time period/event so that someone could read through the notes and have a good idea of what happened, in what order, and who said or did what.

Some areas of focus may require agreement on definition or on the criteria that will be used to identify the event, action, or behaviour. These definitions or criteria must be decided upon prior to the start of the observations so the observer can be consistent in how s/he marks or counts each occurrence and so that each observer is looking for the same thing. The definitions or criteria should also be tested or revisited after the first observation to ensure adequacy.

If choosing a structured observation, you will need to develop a list of events, actions, and/or behaviours that are most relevant to the work of the project. These will be the areas of focus for the observation. For example, the observation might be focused on who (male or female) speaks at community meetings, whether the comments are on the topic or about an individual/group, etc. A useful tool for a structured observation can be a form that has the areas of focus already listed so the observer only needs to make quick notes or marks for each occurrence. See sample Observation Form

Step 2: Choose observer(s) and ensure needed skills are present.

The observer(s) can either be community members/project staff and/or people from outside of the community.   The advantage of choosing people who live and work full-time in the project area is that they may be more easily accepted into the community and may have good ideas about what to look for during the observation.   However, community members may need extra training in observational and documentation skills.

People from outside the community who already have the necessary skills can be brought in to do the observation. They may need much more time to know what is significant, but they sometimes can also notice significant issues that local people no longer see or take for granted.

> Doing some practice observations/note-taking is even more important if there will be more than one observer. That way you can compare what kinds of notes you are all taking and can work on being more similar in how you do things.

If the observation process will use more than one observer, they must all take a similar approach. The team must agree ahead of time on what they will focus on, the level of detail their notes will include, definitions or criteria of actions (particularly if doing a structured observation), etc.

As with all data collection, it is critical to capture the information in a way that it can be understood, compared, and analysed by others. For observation, it is important to include a detailed record of the context. For this you should include a description of the setting and record the following types of information:

- Who is present (different groups - age, gender, profession, ethnicity, etc)
- What is the setting (bus, school, meeting, street corner, office, etc)
- What is the main action taking place (lecture, discussion, shopping, movement, etc.)?
- Are there people who are outside of the main groups?
- Where are you (the observer)?
- What reactions are people having to you?
- As you are taking notes during the event or activity, try to capture as much detail as you can about what is done and said. While some of the detail may not seem to be that important at the time, the themes and patterns that can emerge when analysing the notes are often drawn from all that detail.

Step 3: Conduct the observation.

- Arrive in the location of observation early. This will give you a chance to document the setting and to familiarize yourself with what is in the area.

- Try to be inconspicuous. Dress so that your clothes will not draw specific attention to you. Do not wear logos on your person that will identify you with your organization. The only thing that should set you apart from those you are observing is your notepad. And if you are approached and questioned, always be honest.

- Select a position that allows for the best observation of what you are interested in, without drawing attention to yourself – this is often to the side or rear of the event/group/setting.

- Record observations accurately and attentively. Your notes should be a narration of the event, almost as if you were writing a story and wanting to give your reader the sense of actually being present. The detail is often what is most

important in an observation. Remember, this is not a summary,

- Have a rehearsed response to people who might ask you what you are doing. This needs to be fairly short so you do not interrupt or miss what is happening. For example: "I work with Search for Common Ground and we are interested in helping youth become more involved in the community. So I am here to learn about what role youth play in community meetings. If you would like, I would be happy to talk with you further after the meeting."

- Maintain a quiet presence before, during, and after the event. Remember you are not an active participant at this time and should influence the situation as little as possible.

- As soon as possible after the event go through your notes, clarifying or correcting anything that you didn't have time to finish writing. Make sure that the notes are thorough, clear and complete for the analysis.

Step 4: Analyse and use data.

To analyse observation data, you will look for patterns, themes, or frequencies the steps for doing this are slightly different for structured and unstructured observations. Data from a structured observation is more organised and categorised than data from unstructured observation because some of the themes and specific areas of focus were determined before the observation started. If there were multiple events or observers, Begin by gathering all the data together from all events and observer/s, then summarize the findings for each of the specific areas of focus.

Data from an unstructured observation will need to go through the organising and categorising process (see module on coding/analysing qualitative data). Once this has occurred and the themes and patterns have been identified, a summary of those findings should be written.

Once the data has been analysed, the next important step is to decide how you will use the information you have found.
- Make the reports available to project staff and stakeholders as appropriate.
- Determine whether/how the information will affect project objectives/activities.
- Keep the data for comparison at other points in the project – monitoring, evaluation, etc.

Sample Structured Observation Form

(This is for observing at a school)

Observer: ___John Smith_____ Location: _____Primary School_____

Date: ___March 7, 2007____ Observation Start Time: _10:30 am___ End time: _11:30 am_

Event: ____The children were out on break in between classes. There was one teacher supervising them during this time. ___

Number of Participants (approximate):

	Ethnic Group 1	Ethnic Group 2
Male	5	12
Female	7	14

Description of the Situation _During the break, about half of the children started a football game. The teacher was not involved, but kept an eye on what was happening.

Types of Actions *(items in the chart are examples of what an observer would write)*:

Action: 1=hostile, violent 2=hostile, not violent 3=Friendly interaction 4=Other	Trigger	Number of students involved	Length of time	Other factors
2 (one student used ethnic slurs as a student from the other group attempted to join a football game)	Arrival of a student from the other group	2	3 minutes	The arriving student left angry ("angry" blurs the line between reporting and interpreting. Suggest including a section above about how emotions fit into reporting vs. interpreting)
1 (hand-fist fight between students from two ethnic groups)	Radio news that ethnic violence broke out in a neighbouring town	6	10 minutes	Teachers intervened to break up the fight
3 (Students from two ethnic groups engaged in a football game)		20	40 minutes	No overt or implicit hostility was observed
4 (the student who was refused to join a game complained to a teacher, who had a talk with the student who used ethnic slurs)	Student complaint to a teacher	2	10 minutes	The teacher made the student apologize (Maybe better to report that the student apologized and that the observer suspected the kid was made to by the teacher—could be an interpretation)

Comments: __Children from the two different groups seemed to mostly get along during the game. The teams were not chosen along ethnic lines. In dealing with the fight, the teacher did not address any broader issues (e.g. ethnicity, differences, etc), but just broke up the fight. The student who wanted to join the game was a girl. _____

TOOL 5-Surveys

What are Surveys?

In general, there are two types of questions, open format or closed format – the survey should use a mixture of these.

CLOSED FORMAT (Forced Choice): If Closed Format questions are used, put a lot of thought into developing alternative responses; the range must be exhaustive. To avoid forcing people to offer opinions on issues on which they have no opinion, it is useful to have a no opinion category. With Closed Format a number of alternative answers are provided from which respondents are to select one or more. These include the following response types:

- Multiple-choice
- Two-way questions (e.g. agree/disagree, yes/no, etc.)
- Check lists
- Ranking scales (e.g. Likert)

The following are examples of closed-questions:

➢ Multiple Choice:
Example: How have you learnt about _____?
- b. through SFCG activities
- c. through colleagues
- d. through newspapers
- e. through books
- f. through work
- g. Other --------------

➢ Yes/No answers:
Example: Should information about _____ be made available to the general Moroccan
population? Yes\No

> ➢ Likert style format: List attitude statements and ask participants to respond on a five-point scale (e.g. Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)

Example: The Moroccan population should be provided with information on ____.

Strongly   Strongly
Disagree_____ 1   2   3 Neutral   4   5_____Agree

> ➢ Lists: These ask the participant to tick all statements that apply

Example: What aspects of SFCG's work do you think would be useful for the future?

- Training sessions for police offices
- Training sessions for youth
- Training sessions for CSOs
- Other training sessions
- Follow-up activities
- General media work
- Other ---------

Problems with closed format

⇒ On some issues, they can create false opinions either by giving insufficient range of alternatives from which to choose or by prompting people with acceptable answers

⇒ May not allow individuals to qualify their answer when they feel a need to do so.

Advantages of well-developed closed format

⇒ Useful if the instrument or questionnaire is long or the motivation to answer is not high - they provide for quick answers.

⇒ Easier to code and analyze

⇒ Do not discriminate against the less talkative and inarticulate respondents

OPEN FORMAT: These questions are those that ask for unprompted opinions. In other words, there is no predetermined set of responses, and the participant is free to answer however he/she chooses. It is common for a questionnaire to end with and open format question asking the respondent for her/his ideas for changes or improvements.

Problems with open format questions

⇒ They can be difficult/impossible to quantify

⇒ They can take a long time for people to answer, sometimes resulting in incomplete or no information

Advantages of *well-developed* open format questions

⇒ They can address questions that cannot be put in forced choice format

⇒ They can bring up important points that were not considered in the design of the questionnaire

⇒ Respondents can qualify their answers

⇒ They do not "put words in the mouths of participants."

Considerations in selecting question type

- Use closed form:
  - ⇒ To see if the respondent has thought about or is aware of the issue
  - ⇒ To get at specific aspects of an issue
  - ⇒ To see how strongly an opinion is held.
- Use open-ended to get at general feelings.
- Use either, to find out responders reasons for their opinions.
- Consider how you will analyze the results. Different question forms give different data types that define and/or limit the type of analysis.

Other Considerations
- Consider how the data will be used (improvement of the program, marketing the program,..)
- Consider what type of data is needed.
- Consider who will use the information.
- Consider the time for completing the survey.

For more detailed information in using surveys, see **Steps to Creating the Best Survey** as well as a **Sample Survey**.

Step 1: How do you know which type of Survey format to use?

Topic	Information required	Question	Response Format

Attributes / Demographics	Age
	Gender
	Location (rural/urban and north/south)
	Degree of contact with topic i.e. number of sessions attended
		- How old are you
		- Male/Female
		- Do you work in a rural or urban location
		- North / South
			- OPEN
			- CLOSED:
			  - under 30 / 30-45 / over 45
			  - Male / Female
			  - Rural / Urban
			  - North/South

Feedback	- How well do they think the training was organized? How did this affect their perceptions of the topic? - How has it affected their attitude towards the overall issue?	- What aspect of SFCGs work have you found the most useful? / Why? - To what degree has you perception of topic changed since attending SFCG training? / Why?	- CLOSED: List of possible responses / OPEN to capture why - CLOSED: likert scale / OPEN to capture why
Knowledge	- How do they think external	- How do you think	- OPEN

	changes will affect the topic in your location?	external changes will affect _____ in Morocco?	
Behaviour	- % of the interviewed participants who feel more motivated about acting on the topic. - If they are more motivated, why? If not, why not?	-When the structures are there will you behave as a in a certain way about the topic? -Why have you made this decision? -Do you think _____ would have a beneficial impact on Morocco? - How? -What aspects motivate you to act in this role? -What aspects are likely to impede you acting in this role?	- CLOSED yes/no - OPEN - OPEN - OPEN - CLOSED ranking of aspects - CLOSED ranking of aspects
Belief / Attitude	- % of the interviewed participants who feel more confident with the main concepts. - If they feel more confident, how/why?	- On a scale of 5 from very confident to 0 completely unprepared, how would you rate your comprehension of this concept? -What aspects of these concepts would you like more information on? -Has your understanding increased? Why?	- CLOSED likert scale - OPEN - OPEN

Wording of questions:

The goal is clear, unambiguous and useful questions. Thus, careful wording is essential. Some of the more obvious concerns are listed below.

1. Use **simple language –** Avoid jargon and technical terms.
   Look for simple words without making questions sound condescending

2. Keep the items as **short** as possible – Shorter questions are less confusing and less ambiguous. Long questions can lose respondents.

3. Do not use **double barrelled** questions i.e. questions that address more than one item. – A question such as "How often do you speak with your boss?" can be double barrelled if an individual has more than one boss.

4. Do not use **leading** questions. – Leading questions make individuals feel that they could be giving a wrong answer or an answer that would be disapproved. You want an honest response.

5. Do not use **negative** questions. – For example: "The workshops should not be discontinued" [Agree/Disagree]. This item should be worded, "The workshops should be continued."

6. In composing an item, choose **words that have the same meaning for all** respondents.

7. Be sure the question is **clear** i.e. not ambiguous. – Ambiguity can arise from poor sentence structure, words with several different meanings, uses of negatives and double negatives, and double-barrelled questions. Use short, crisp, simple questions. For example, the word *frequently* can be misleading (instead specify the number of times)

8. Consider if the question should be **direct or indirect**. – When questioning in a particularly sensitive area, it may be better to avoid blunt direct questions.

   - Ensure that the frame of reference is clear; give a time frame; provide alternative responses

   - Give the response option of 'no opinion' or 'don't know'.

   - Questions regarding variables such as age or income can create problems. To diffuse the problem, provide for categorical responses.

9. Ensure that the respondent has the **necessary knowledge to answer** the question. "Do you agree with the company's policy on investments?" is a useless question if the respondents do not know about the policy. Filter questions can be used.

10. Avoid **prestige bias** in writing the question. – People distort answers to impress the interviewer (or perhaps fool themselves). For example, responses may be exaggerated on items related to income, education, etc., and they may be minimized on items related to age, level of prejudice, etc. There is no ideal solution to this problem; categorization of response may help. Try to avoid leading questions and be aware of possible bias in the analysis and interpretation.

Step 2: How to design the Survey Questionnaire Layout?

1. Leave sufficient space for answers.

2. Use space to your advantage
   - Avoid clutter
   - Provide room for coding
   - Leave sufficient space for open-ended question responses.
   - List responses so it is clear to the respondent what the choices are (e.g. how the words correspond to the numbers)

3. Write instructions clearly. Consider:
    *   General instructions: Include a statement of purpose; assure confidentiality; tell how and when to send responses.
    *   Section Instructions
    *   Question instructions

4. Use care in ordering questions.
    *   Begin with question that
        $\Rightarrow$ The respondents will enjoy answering
        $\Rightarrow$ Are easily answered
        $\Rightarrow$ Factual
        $\Rightarrow$ Are not demographics
    *   Increase from easy to difficult
    *   Go from concrete to abstract.
    *   Make use of filters
    *   As possible, use some variety in question type.

5. Use filter or contingency question since you do not want respondents to waste time reading items that are not relevant.

Step 3: Piloting and revising the questionnaire

Run the questionnaire with a few individuals. Consider how you would use the information gathered. Capture any areas for improvement – i.e. wording of questions (are they clear?), format for responses (do they allow you to make comparisons between different people? Etc.

You can also use the questions below to 'test' the questionnaire:
*   Consider the content of the instrument. Does it address all the areas of interest in the study? This addresses the issue of validity (accuracy) of the items.

*   Evaluate the wording of the questions. Consider some of the factors that are addressed in the previous section of this document.

*   Is the nature of the responses appropriate for the questions?

*   Are the instructions clear?

*   Do you think that if you repeat the administration of the items, under similar circumstances, you would get the same results? This addresses the reliability (consistency) of the instrument.

*   Does the instrument allow for comments or reactions that are not specified in the forced answer questions?

*   Check for redundancy. There is no point in including two items that measure the same thing. (You can check by looking at the Correlations between items.)

- Check for a response set (individual always agrees). Vary the questions.

- Depending on what you are measuring, you may need to check for the ability of the item to discriminate. In some instance a question to which most people provide the same answer is of little use. If everyone provides the same answer, there are no variations in answers to explain. (In reaction instruments, you probably want consistency in the answers.)

Sample Survey

INTRODUCTION:

M y name is ---------------------------------. We are conducting this survey on behalf of Search for Common Ground / Talking Drum Studio.

I would like to know your opinions on the parliamentary and presidential elections that were held this year in August and September.

The information you will give me, will help SFCG review its programs and activities so that they can effectively respond to your information needs with regard to electoral process in Sierra Leone.

I will ask you a few questions, our discussion will take roughly 15 minutes. The discussion will be completely confidential (which means that your name will not be mentioned).

You are free to answer this survey. Do you agree? ☐Yes   ☐ No   *(If no, thank for time and say goodbye)*

Shall we start?

Location: ☐Porto Loko   ☐Kabala   ☐Pujehun   ☐Moyamba   ☐Tombo   ☐Susan Bay

Gender: ☐Male   ☐Female   **Age:** ☐15-20 yrs   ☐ 20-30 yrs   ☐30-40yrs   ☐40+yrs

Highest level of education completed: …………………….

How many meals a day? ……………

---

1. Did you see people from this community who were observing the situation at the poling station? (*Show the t-shirt they were wearing)* ☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

2. I trusted the person from the community who was observing the poling station and wearing the black T-shirt
   - ☐ Strongly agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly disagree

3. Did you listen to radio programs who mentioned "IRN"?   ☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

4. An issue I had in mind was mentioned over radio discussions

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

5. How often did you listen to radio programs before the elections?
    - ☐ Once every day,
    - ☐ Many times a day
    - ☐ Once a week

    - ☐ Some days of the week
    - ☐ Never

6. How often did you listen to radio programs during the elections?
    - ☐ Once every day
    - ☐ Many times a day
    - ☐ Once a week
    - ☐ Some days of the week
    - ☐ Never

7. Can you name three radio programs you liked listening to:
    - a. ……………………………………………………………………
    - b. ……………………………………………………………………
    - c. ……………………………………………………………………

8. The radio programs helped me understand the electoral process
    - ☐ Strongly agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
    - ☐ Disagree

    - ☐ Strongly disagree

9. I had a chance to hear the voice of my candidate on radio or public forum
    - ☐ Strongly agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly disagree

10. It was useful for me to hear my candidate
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

11. The debates helped me understand the electoral process
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ I did not listen to debates

12. I think the information on the election was true
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Strongly disagree

13. I heard the voices of people like me (women/ youth) on the radio
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

14. I thought the elections were free and fair
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

15. I had enough information to make an informed choice of candidate
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

16. I voted for my personal choice of candidate
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

17. I felt free to cast my ballot inside the voting station
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

18. Did you watch TV programs/videos during the elections?
- ☐ Yes   ☐ No *(skip next questions & end interview)*

19. Where did you watch these programs/films:
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

20. How many times did you watch the video?
- ☐ Once
- ☐ Twice
- ☐ Three times
- ☐ more than 3 times

21. Name the TV/video programs that talked about elections that you watched:
- a. …………………………………………………………………………………
- b. …………………………………………………………………………………

If they mention In Sai Di Saloon –

22. What did you think about the soap opera?
    (when they mention one of these note order in which mentioned: 3 max)
    a. Enjoyable   ……..
    b. Interesting   …….
    c. Different   …….
    d. Boring   …….
    e. Good   ……
    f. Bad   ……
    g. Useful   …..
    h. Other ……….…………………..   …….

CONCLUSION: Thank you for your time, we have now finished our discussion. Would you like to add anything else?   ☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

……

………………………………………………………………….

Consent Form

Sample of Consent Form

Consent Form for Focus Group Discussions

INTRODUCTION:
Hello! My name is …. I'm here for a study on behalf of XXXX, who are providing services here in [*insert name of community*] like [*insert name of local services*].

PURPOSE:
We're **conducting a group discussion** here to get information about their lives and how XXXX can provide them with support, especially in difficult times. The information we obtain will be used to assess how the services are going, and how XXXX can improve them.

IDENTITY AND INVOLVEMENT:
We would like to try to understand what you think. So, I would like to know if you are [*insert name*]? Have you been interviewed or participated in a group discussion in the past two weeks for this study?
Proceed only if identity is correct and no previous involvement.

FUNDING SOURCE:
Consider if it's appropriate to mention: These services are being provided by XXXX, whose local partners are [*insert name of local partners*].

PROCEDURES INVOLVED:
We would like to ask you some questions, in a focus Group discussion, which will take about 45-60 minutes. I would like to discuss this with you in a group of 6 to 10 people.

RISKS:
Some of these questions might talk about things that some people find quite personal, or may be difficult to answer. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to answer them, you do not have to.

ABILITY TO SAY NO:
Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you don't want to. This will not affect your ability to receive services now or in future. However, I would really appreciate it if you would answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can find out what young people here in [*insert name of community*] really think. Your answers will be very important to us. We would really appreciate any help you can give us in finding out about children here. Do you have any questions about any of the things I have just said?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE INFORMATION:

Additional Resources

CASE STUDY:
Sage Publications on Qualitative Methodology
http://www.sagepub.co.uk/

The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education
http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/tf/09518398.html

A List of References on Case Study Research
http://www.auckland.ac.nz/msis/isworld/case.htm target

The Sin of Omission-Punishable by Death to Internal Validity
http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/gallery/bowen/hss691.htm

Qualitative Research Resources on the Internet
http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/qualres.html

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW:
USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation - Performance
Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS: Using Key Informant Interviews
http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/usaid_eval/pdf_docs/pnabs541.pdf

USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring
and Evaluation TIPS: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods
http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/usaid_eval/ascii/pnaby209.txt

"Methodologies for Conducting Livelihoods Baseline Studies"
http://www.livelihoods.org/lessons/project_summaries/docs/LFP%20Report_Methodology_%20baseline.
pdf

FOCUS GROUP:
Eliot and Associates. Guidelines for Conducting A Focus Group
http://www.eliotassoc.com/support-files/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf

Mary Marczak & Meg Sewell. Using Focus Groups for Evaluation, University of Arizona
http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/focus.htm

S. Dawson, L. Manderson and V.L. Tallo. A Manual for the Use of Focus Groups (1993)
http://www.unu.edu/unupress/food2/UIN03E/UIN03E00.HTM

USAID Center for Development Information and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS, Conducting Focus Group Interviews
http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/usaid_eval/pdf_docs/pnaby233.pdf

OBSERVATION TOOL:
"Collecting Evaluation Data: Direct Observation"
http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/G3658_5.PDF

"Using Direct Observation Techniques" USAID TIPS
http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNABY208.pdf

"Observation" from User Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluation, Ch 3 National Science Foundation
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm

Case Study Module

This module will help project staff in designing and conducting a case study.

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from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is it?** ➢ **What is it for?** ➢ **Who should be involved?** ➢ **Advantages & Disadvantages** ➢ **When should it be used?** ➢ **Costs, skills & time required** ➢ **How to use it?** ➢ **Additional Resources**	

What is it?

A case study is "**an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context**, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident… It allows the investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries."[1] **A case study, in other words, is a story about something unique.**

> **Tip:** Case studies are multi-perspectival analyses. This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them; they give a voice to the voiceless.

Case studies are interested in contextual conditions in which something unique has occurred, often from the perspective(s) of the people who experienced the unique phenomenon. It is primarily a qualitative inquiry, though quantitative methods may be used for data triangulation and verification.

What is it for?

The case study methodology may be used for a variety of purposes: it may provide the baseline measurements of a particular issue or event in a specific context, provide a glimpse into the process of change within an individual or community as part of monitoring efforts, and it can also be a method of project evaluation. *A key attribute of the case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what results*.

An **exploratory case study** is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study or at determining the feasibility of the desired research. Fieldwork and data collection are frequently undertaken prior to defining the final questions and hypotheses. These studies are often considered a prelude to other social research projects, including case study methodology—hence "exploratory."

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[1] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition, Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume 5 (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 3.

A **descriptive case study** presents a complete description of the phenomenon within its context.

An **explanatory case study** presents data bearing cause-effect relationships—explaining how events happened and are connected.

Within the case study approach to evaluation there are at least five different applications. Keep in mind, however, that case study evaluations must conform to Search's Evaluation Guidelines (see **Evaluation Guidelines**).

1. **Explain** the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies;
2. **Describe** an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred;
3. **Illustrate** certain topics within an evaluation in a descriptive mode;
4. **Explore** those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes;
5. **"Meta-evaluation"**—a study of an evaluation study.[2]

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:
Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the subject to be investigated, the methodology by which data will be acquired, coded and analyzed, conclusions of the report and the report's distribution strategy.

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[2] Yin, "Case Study Research," p. 10

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review the case study research plan.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows for thorough in-depth analysis.	Focuses on only one causal relationship, leaving out potential others.
May contribute to establishing causal relationships between interventions and their immediate results.	Difficult to generalise to other situations.
Incorporates various research techniques within one focused case study, which strengthens the credibility of results.	Cannot establish with pure certainly pure causality between specific interventions and positive changes on a large scale (impact).
Tends to provide strong evidence to support causal relationships between specific interventions and specific outcomes and/or impacts.	

When should it be used?

Case studies are often used when there is a unique or interesting story to be told. They may also provide context to other data, such as quantitative data, thus offering a more complete picture of what happened and why.

Listed below are some possible utilizations of case study methodology for field staff:

Reporting to Donors, Stakeholders, HQ and the Media
Is there a particularly interesting story or anecdote from project implementation that you

Tip: Case study methodology is particularly useful for:
- "How" and "why" questions
- Discovering important contextual conditions
- When the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear

think other people should know about? Given the frequent emphasis on voices and perspectives, case study methodology can be a good tool for reporting that story, and why it is special and/or unique, including its implications, to wider audiences.

> ### *Example: Reporting to Donors, Media and HQ*
> Is there a particularly moving example of transformation or project success? This might be, for example, an individual who has made tremendous strides towards transforming conflict within their community. You might, then, prepare a set of interview questions for the individual and some of the people s/he interacts with to better understand how and why the individual was able to transform a specific situation.

Deep Monitoring

If you have quantitative data that suggests successes or problem areas in program implementation, and you want to dig underneath this broad, generalized data to look at "how" and "why" change did or did not occur, the use of case study methodology can provide supporting documentation to answer these questions.

> ### *Example: Deep Monitoring*
> While implementing a community empowerment and political participation project in several communities, you notice that one community in particular is not performing on par with the others. Attendance to trainings, workshops and other project activities is low, the participant return rate and knowledge retention is low. A case study of that particular community might help you better understand why the project is not as successful as it could be.

Assessment and Evaluation

Case study methodology employed for assessment allows you to dig deeper into the situation in which you are working, or seek to work, to better understand existing capacities and dynamics.

Case study methodology employed for evaluation has similar utilizations: why did project implementation exceed expectations in community X in comparison to the other targeted communities? What are the main differences between community X and the other targeted communities that allowed community X to exceed project goals, if any? Was the project implemented differently in community X, and if so how did this affect the outcome in community X?

Costs, skills & time required

Cost

A case study may involve travel to places where the impact of certain interventions can be measured. It also involves the cost of using a computer and printing materials used for conducting interviews, focus groups, and other research methods.

Skills required

The researcher needs familiarity with various qualitative research methods (such as interviews, focus groups, document review, and observations[3]). The lead researcher should have at least some formal training or experience in such research and data collection methods as interviews, focus groups and observations often require certain levels of skill and experience.

Time required

The time required to conduct a case study varies based on the situations. However, in most cases, conducting a case study will require scheduling various times for interviews, observations, focus groups, etc. A minimum of at least 2-3 days are usually required to gather case study data, and 2-3 days for analysis and report writing.

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[3] For more information on qualitative data collection methods, see: Dawson R. Hancock and Robert Algozzine, *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginner Researchers* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

How to use it?

This section provides step-by-step directions on conducting a case study:
(Direct links clickable below)

Step 1: Identify the situation
Step 2: Design the case study
Step 3: Conduct the study
Step 4: Analyse results
Step 5: Composing the study

> **Tip:** A research design is an action plan for getting from "here" (questions) to "there" (answers).

Step 1: Identify the Situation

To use a case study, a situation needs to be identified in which you have the following elements:
1) specific needs or issues of certain individuals or groups
2) allocation of several activities (intervention) to address these issues
3) change in the need or issue as a result of the intervention (result, outcome or impact)

Step 2: Design the Case Study

There are five components of research design that are particularly important for case studies:
1. the study's questions;
   > What question do you seek to answer with the case study?
2. its propositions, if any;
   > Your hypothesis of why something occurred;
3. its unit(s) of analysis;
   > What is the "case"?
4. the logic linking the data to the proposition;
   > Linking qualitative and quantitative evidence to your hypothesis
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings;
   > How will you know if your hypothesis was correct?

But keep in mind, not all of these points will be included in every case study. For example, an exploratory case study, such as in assessment may not have a proposition.

Questions

The topic of investigation should guide your questions. For example, if you are conducting context and conflict assessments, you want to understand the key driving forces, dynamics and root causes of the conflict and the context, as well as their synergies. "Defining the research questions is probably the most important stage in a research study, so patience and sufficient time should be allowed for this task."[4]

> **Tip:** Explore potential research questions with your fellow researchers. This will help you narrow down your topic, and help ensure the research team is "on the same page."

Your question should, furthermore, point you towards sources of data. Continuing with the above example of conflict and context assessments, you might decide on a mixed-methods design that collects and analyses qualitative and quantitative data: the prevalence of violence, for example (quantitative) and how people experience that violence (qualitative).

You may consult the DME Specialist in Washington, D.C. to ensure you have properly constructed the questions defining and guiding your research.

Propositions

Each proposition, the question posed by your research, should direct attention to something that will be examined in the scope of the study. For example, if you are conducting an evaluative case study, you might ask: How and why did this project work in this context? These questions not only frame the context of the study, but also point to where to look for relevant evidence, for example in project documents.

No question may be posed however if you are conducting an exploratory case study—but the study should still have some purpose.

> ### Example
> You want to use a case study research design in order to investigate *how* a particular war-torn community *decided* to reconcile with the past. The case, then, is the decision making process of that community in deciding to reconcile with the past. You might, therefore, pose the following questions: How did X community *decide to reconcile with the past*? What factors influenced their *decision*? What challenges did they face in their *decision*?

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[4] Yin, "Case Study Research," p. 7

Units of Analysis

The unit(s) of analysis should define what the "case" is. For example, if you are doing a case study of an ethnic tribe then the unit of analysis is that tribe. The study's propositions should guide the researcher to relevant sources related to the units of analysis.[5] Continuing with the above example of a group, if a study is interested in how economic relations have affected relations between Tribe A and Tribe B, then relevant sources to the analysis might include economic data, levels of conflict between the two tribes, perceptions of the "Other," etc.

It is important to ensure your units of analysis are clearly, and correctly, identified. For example, if your unit of analysis is a small group, the members of that group (unit of analysis) need to be distinguished from those who are not (the context).[6] Specific time boundaries are also needed to define the beginning and end of the case. Consult a DME specialist in the DC office for further help identifying the most appropriate units of analysis.

Tip: The unit of analysis is related to the initial research questions. If your questions do not lead to the favouring of one unit of analysis over another, your questions are probably too vague or too numerous—and you may have trouble conducting your case study. (Yin 1994 p. 23)

The same study may involve more than one unit of analysis. For example, a case study might be about a country program, but the analysis might include outcomes from individual projects as subunits for analysis.

Single- or Multiple-Case Designs

Each case study should be tailored to investigate the proposed phenomenon of study. Towards this aim, a case study may examine a single case, or multiple cases. Each design, single- or multiple-case, has its applications. Listed below are guidelines to help you decide which research design is **most appropriate** for your proposed study. You may also consult a DME Specialist in the DC office for guidance on your research design.

The single-case design is often used when you want to test, challenge or build on a well-formulated theory. The single-case design can also be employed when you are investigating a unique, extreme or representative phenomenon, an in-depth study of

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[5] Ibid, pp. 21-25.
[6] Yin, "Case Study Research," p.24.

which may yield new insights and knowledge. Finally, a single-case design may also be used for revelatory purposes: the phenomenon of study was previously inaccessible to investigation.[7]

This design is likely to be used for reporting to HQ, donors and the media: it investigates a unique or interesting story from project implementation. The single-case design might also be used for a country assessment, such as exploring the possibilities of an intervention. If, however, you are conducting an assessment for a project to be implemented in multiple communities, a multiple-case design may be more appropriate: it allows in-depth investigation and comparison between the targeted communities so that the intervention can be tweaked, if need be, in order to be more effective.

The same study may contain more than a single case study; this is called a **multiple-case design**. For example, a project might be the overall unit of study, with each project site (the locations where the project was implemented) serving as case studies. "The decision to undertake multiple-case studies cannot be taken lightly. Every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry." **Each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results or (b) produces contrasting results but for predictable reasons.** Generally, evidence from multiple-case designs are considered more compelling, thus the study is regarded as more robust. Within the multiple-case study design it is important to develop a rich theoretical framework which states the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found as well as the conditions when it is not likely to be found.[8]

Linking Data to Propositions and Interpreting Findings

Unfortunately, these two final components of case study design are the least well developed. There are a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods for analyzing data, and it is important to choose a methodology which best suits your inquiry, as well as your strengths as a researcher. Similarly, there is no precise way to interpret the data: it must be done in a manner which best suits the research inquiry.

Step 3: Conduct the study

To obtain as complete a picture of the participant as possible, case study researchers can employ a variety of approaches and methods. These approaches, methods, and related issues are discussed in depth in this section.

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[7] Yin, "Case Study Research," pp. 38-41.
[8] Ibid, pp. 45-46.

Search for Common Ground

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from the Department for International Development

Method: Single or Multi-modal?

To obtain as complete a picture of the participant and/or the situation as possible, case study researchers can employ a variety of methods for the collection of data. Some common methods include interviews, protocol analyses, field studies, and participant-observations. Keep in mind that your research question should point towards certain methods over others.

Case studies may employ single or multiple methods of data collection. *Using more than one method strengthens the reliability and validity of the study.* The use of multi-methods is called "triangulation." The findings from each method can be held up to those of other methods to compare and look for strengths and weaknesses in the data or the data collection process.[9]

Participant Selection

Case studies can use one participant, or a small group of participants (for example, ten people). However, it is important that the participant pool remain relatively small. The participants can represent a diverse cross section of society, but this isn't necessary.

Often, a brief "case history" is done on the participants of the study in order to provide researchers with a clearer understanding of their participants, as well as some insight as to how their own personal histories might affect the outcome of the study. These personal histories can be useful in later stages of the study when data are being analysed and conclusions drawn. Again, this may or may not be necessary in your case study; consult a DME Specialist in the DC Office for further guidance on this issue.

Data Collection

Case studies are likely to be much more convincing and accurate if they are based on several different sources of information.

It is important to note that in case studies, as in any qualitative descriptive research, while researchers begin their studies with one or several questions driving the inquiry (which influence the key factors the researcher will be looking for during data collection), a researcher may find new key factors emerging during data collection. These might be unexpected patterns or issues which become evident only during the course of the research. While these may not directly affect the researcher's guiding

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[9] Colorado State University, "Writing Guide: Case Studies," Writing@CSU, Colorado State University, accessed 8 November 2010, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/casestudy/index.cfm.

questions, the new variables may become the basis for new questions asked at the end of the report, thus linking to the possibility of further research.

Step 4: Analyse Results

As the data is collected, researchers strive to make sense of it. Generally, researchers interpret their data in one of two ways: holistically or through coding.

> **Tip: Tip:** Since coding is inherently subjective, more than one coder is usually employed. It is important to establish agreement amongst researchers on the coding system.

Holistic analysis does not attempt to break the evidence into parts, but rather to draw conclusions based on the data as a whole. However, case study researchers commonly interpret their data by **coding[10],** that is, by **systematically searching data to identify and/or categorize specific observable actions or characteristics**. These observable actions then become the key variables in the study. Sharan Merriam[11] suggests seven analytic frameworks for the organization and presentation of data:

1. The role of participants
2. The network analysis of formal and informal exchanges among groups
3. Historical
4. Thematical
5. Resources
6. Ritual and Symbolism
7. Critical incidents that challenge or reinforce fundamental beliefs, practices and values

There are two purposes of these frameworks: to look for patterns among the data and to look for patterns that give meaning to the case study.

Data analysis is often an intensive, time consuming process. Riding the global information technology revolution, qualitative and quantitative analyses have become

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[10] Coding is not covered in-depth here; for further information on qualitative coding, see: Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, (New York: Sage Publications, 2005); University of Texas at Austin, "Evaluate Programs: Coding qualitative data," Instructional Assessment Resources, University of Texas at Austin, accessed 02 March 2011, http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/programs/report/focus-QualCode.php; Dr. Sonja K. Foss and Dr. William Waters, "Coding Qualitative Data," *The All-But-Dissertation Survival Guide*, accessed 02 March 2011, http://www.abdsurvivalguide.com/News/020603.htm.
[11] Sharan Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1988).

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easier with the development of computerized analysis tools. A variety of programmes specialising in qualitative analysis are available: NVIVO, ATLAS.ti, Kwalitan, and MAXQDA 2007.[12]

Step 5: Composing the study

In the many forms it can take, "a case study is generically a story; it presents the concrete narrative detail of actual or at least realistic events, it has a plot, exposition, characters, and sometimes even dialogue."[13] Generally, good case study reports have the right combination of extensive description and analysis.

The following elements should, in general, be included in the final composition of the case study:

1. The "case", or the problem
    a. Identify the case
    b. Explain why the case is important
    c. How was the case identified?
2. Steps taken to address the case; for example, the intervention.
3. Results
4. Challenges and how they were met
5. Implications to relevant fields of study
6. Lessons learned from the case study

Authors typically address each step of the research process and attempt to give the reader as much context as possible for the decisions made in the research design and for the conclusions drawn. This contextualization usually includes participants' backgrounds, the process of data collection, and the meaning and limitations of the coding system employed.

Case studies often include the reactions of participants to the study, or to the researchers' conclusions. Here researchers may identify significant variables that emerged during the research and suggest studies related to these. Case studies may also often outline the implications of the study's conclusions for the professional field or context.

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[12] Note that many of these programs require purchasing, though some offer free program trials; SFCG does not own any of these programs.
[13] John Boehrer, "Teaching with Cases: Learning to Question," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Volume 42, 1990, pp. 41-47.

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of case studies.

Colorado State University, "Writing Guide: Case Studies," Writing@CSU, Colorado State University, accessed 8 November 2010, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/casestudy/index.cfm.

Craig Zelizer, "Guide to Conducting and Disseminating Research," Peace and Collaborative Development Network, accessed 8 November 2010, http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/guide-to-conducting-and.

Dawson R. Hancock and Robert Algozzine, *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginner Researchers* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition, Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume 5 (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 1994).

_____. *Applications of Case Study Research*, Second Edition, Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume 34 (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2003).

Focus Groups Module

This module will help project/program staff conduct focus groups as a means of data collection

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Focus Group?** ➢ **What is the use of a Focus Group?** ➢ **What are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting Focus Groups?** ➢ **When should a Focus Group be used?** ➢ **What are the costs, skills and time required for conducting a Focus Group?** ➢ **How do we use a Focus Group?**	➢ **Practice conducting a Focus Group** ➢ **Use a practical sample indicator as an example for the worksheets** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct a Focus Group, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

What is a Focus Group?

Focus groups are a data collection tool that can be selected for use during design, monitoring, or evaluation. They are in-depth, group interviews with a small number – 6 to 10 - of carefully selected people, who usually have similar characteristics (such as gender, age, ethnicity etc).

- Open-ended questions aim to bring out perceptions and experiences of project participants/stakeholders
- To stimulate and capture rich discussion, which is structured around 10 or so questions

What is the use of a Focus Group?

- Open-ended questions aim to bring out perceptions and experiences of project participants/stakeholders
- To stimulate and capture rich discussion, which is structured around 10 or so questions

The questions used relate to the specific issues to be addressed by the research; usually they are linked to an examination of intended results, implementation processes, indicators, and/or the context of the project/programme.

Focus group discussions generate more in-depth information than one-on-one interviews or surveys, because they are based around discussion and use our innate desire to communicate about issues, perspectives and opinions. They can be used to solicit views, insights, and recommendations of program staff, customers, stakeholders, technical experts, or other groups.

Focus groups are especially appropriate when:

- Stakeholders' opinions, attitudes, preferences or perspectives are needed for program planning

Synonyms for Focus Group Discussion include:

- Group Discussion
- Small Group Discussion
- Focus Group Discussions

A focus group is not:

- A debate
- Group therapy
- A conflict resolution session
- A problem solving session
- An opportunity to collaborate
- A promotional opportunity
- An educational

- Specific activities or projects are in a conflict/post-conflict environment
- Recommendations and suggestions are needed from participants, partners, experts, or other stakeholders

For example, focus groups may be used to better understand the participants' conception of civil society or their impressions about the needs in their community or what they thought of some radio/TV programming.

Focus Groups are very good at providing in depth information about opinions, attitudes, and to explain 'why'. But it is not possible to use this information to make comparisons or to aggregate the findings for a wider population. Therefore, in many evaluations and M&E systems, other data collection tools, such as interviews or surveys, complement focus groups.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting Focus Groups?

Advantages
- Focus groups produce in-depth qualitative information.
- Focus groups can be low cost and provide speedy results.
- The flexible format allows the facilitator to explore unanticipated issues that may arise during the discussion.
- The format encourages interaction among participants, allowing them to hear each other's ideas. In a group setting, participants provide checks and balances, thus minimizing false or extreme views.

Disadvantages
- The facilitator of Focus Group discussions needs to be trained and experienced in designing and managing group discussions.
- The flexible format makes it susceptible to facilitator bias, which can undermine the validity and reliability of findings. Therefore, the questions to be covered during the discussion should be established beforehand.
- Discussions can be sidetracked or dominated by a few vocal individuals. The facilitator needs to be skillful in managing dominant individuals and in encouraging others to participate.
- Focus group interviews generate relevant qualitative information, but it is usually specific to that group/setting and not helpful for making generalizations for a whole population.

- As with most qualitative data, the information can be difficult and time-consuming to analyse

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When should a Focus Group be used?

Focus groups can be useful during all phases of activities (from the assessment stage to end evaluation). They are tools in a wider process of design, monitoring or evaluation and are used to gather certain kinds of information.

Example
Focus Groups during Baseline in Nepal
- One aim of a focus group discussion would be to identify perceptions and the range of opinion about participating in national elections
- The indicator could be "perceptions about voting responsibilities" and the focus group discussion might aim to understand what people think about voting responsibility, whether they think it exists, what the parameters are and why they think what they do
- One question for the group could be: 'How is voting in a national election relevant to people in this village?'
- The facilitator could aim to keep the discussion focused on this question and to encourage and document people's responses; On what do people agree? Where are there differences?   Why are national elections considered important/unimportant?

What are the costs, skills and time required of Focus Groups?

Cost
Cost is generally low for focus group interviews. A safe and suitable location to conduct the interview is required as well as flip charts, markers, a skilled facilitator and perhaps a translator.

Skills required
Minimum 1-2 days training for facilitators.

Time required
The focus group interview should last approximately 1-2 hours. An additional 2-4 hours are needed to compile the results of the interview.

How do we use Focus Groups?

This section provides step-by-step directions on using Focus Group Discussions:
(You can click on the underlined step to go directly to the location of the step in this module.)

Step 1: Develop Questions
Step 2: Select the team
Step 3: Select the participants
Step 4: Decide on timing and location
Step 5: Prepare the discussion guide
Step 6: Conduct the interview
Step 7: Debrief the team
Step 8: Analyse results

Step 1: Develop the questions:

As with all other data collection you should follow the same process and arrive at **stage 5:**
1) Deciding what information is required?
2) How will you use this information in decision-making?
3) From which stakeholders will you get this information?
4) What are the most appropriate tools for collecting the information?
5) What are the specific questions?

Focus Group discussions should be based on approximately 10 questions. These questions should aim to stimulate opinions and perceptions.

The order of the questions is important. At the beginning you may want to ask questions to engage the participants and build trust in the group, then you explore the issues in more depth, at the end, you should include one or two 'wrap-up' questions that ask for issues that have not been covered previously.

Certain types of questions impede group discussions:
- "Yes"-or-"no" questions elicit little information and do not stimulate discussion.
- "Why" questions put people on the defensive and cause them to take "politically correct" sides on controversial issues.

- Open-ended questions are more useful because they allow participants to tell their story in their own words and add details that can result in unanticipated findings.
- In place of "why" you can ask probing questions after an open-ended question to help participants dig more deeply, e.g., Tell me more about that, what do you mean by that, or can you give me examples?

Questions should be:
- Short and to the point
- Focused on one dimension each
- Unambiguously worded
- Non-threatening or non-embarrassing

Step 2: Select the team

Conducting a focus group interview requires a small team, with at least a facilitator to guide the discussion and a note-taker to record it. The facilitator should be able to put people at ease and elicit responses to the questions. S/he will need to be flexible in responding to the different directions the discussion might go and also be able to bring the discussion back to relevant topics.

Even if the session is being recorded, a note-taker can be helpful in recording interactions, non-verbal reactions, and nuances that a tape/video recorder does not capture. The note-taker should write things down as close to verbatim as possible, or if abbreviating, s/he should make sure abbreviated text accurately represents what participants are saying. S/he should check with participants for accuracy and ask for clarification if s/he did not capture what was said.

The team should have substantive knowledge of the topic under discussion.

The ideal Focus Group moderator has the following traits:
- Can listen attentively with sensitivity and empathy
- Is able to listen and think at the same time
- Believes that all group participants have something to offer no matter what their education, experience or background
- Has adequate knowledge of the topic
- Can keep personal views and ego out of the facilitation
- Is someone the group can relate to but also give authority to (e.g.: a male moderator is most appropriate for an all-male group discussing sexual harassment in the workplace
- Can appropriately manage challenging group dynamics

The assistant moderator must be able to do the following:
- Run a tape recorder during the session
- Take accurate notes in case the recorder fails or the tape is inaudible
- Note/record body language or other subtle but relevant cues
- Allow the moderator to do all the talking during the group

Step 3: Select the participants

The information needs of the study will, to a large extent, identify who should be represented in the focus groups. Often separate focus groups are held for different populations (gender, age, class, ethnicity, race, employment, community, etc). Once the population has been chosen, identify the most suitable participants for the focus group. One of the best approaches is to consult key informants who know about local conditions. Consult several informants to minimize the biases of individual preferences.

Each focus group should be 6 to 10 people to allow for the smooth flow of conversation. Participants should be homogenous, sharing common traits related to the discussion topic. People may be more inclined to discuss their views and perspectives if they are assured there will be no recrimination. Ideally, people should not know each other, though there may be situations in which this is not possible. Anonymity lowers inhibition and prevents formation of cliques.

Selecting Participants:
- Gender: Will both men and women feel comfortable discussing the topic in a mixed gendered group?
- Identity: Will people of different ethnic/religious/other identity backgrounds talk freely together?
- Age: How intimidating would it be for a young person to be included in a group of older adults? Or vice versa?
- Power: Would a soldier be likely to make candid remarks in a group where his/her supervisor is also a participant?

Step 4: Decide on timing and location

The ideal amount of time to set aside for a focus group is anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Beyond that most groups are not productive and it becomes an imposition on participant time. Hold it at a convenient location with some degree of privacy.

Keeping privacy:

Focus groups can arouse curiosity and can result in uninvited participants, especially if held in an outdoor or public place. People can wander over to watch the interview or sit down and invite themselves to participate as well. Choose a location that contributes to privacy and confidentiality and minimizes uninvited participants from joining the group. A second aspect of privacy is explaining confidentiality rules to participants. Will their names be used or will their comments be anonymous in any reports?

Step 5: Prepare the discussion guide

The discussion guide is an outline of the upcoming interview that covers the topics and issues to be discussed and aids the team in conducting the session. The guide should contain only a few items, allowing some time and flexibility to pursue unanticipated but relevant issues.

The guide provides the framework for the facilitator to explore, probe, and ask questions. Initiating each topic with a carefully crafted question will help keep the discussion focused.

Step 6: Conduct the interview

Resources Required:
- Safe and suitable location
- Flip charts and markers
- Skilled facilitator
- Taping equipment (preferable)
- Note-taker

Process:
1) At the beginning of the session, outline the purpose and format of the discussion. Often participants do not know what to expect from focus group discussions and having clear information will help set the group at ease.
2) Define the general guidelines that will be followed throughout the session:
   a) There are no right or wrong answers; all views are welcome.
   b) Everyone should speak.
   c) Opinions/views expressed will not be attributed to a specific individual.
   d) The session is confidential. It will not be published or broadcast.
   e) The facilitator will keep the discussion focused
3) Ask if everyone is comfortable with the guidelines.

4) Introduce all non-participants in the room and explain their roles.
5) Begin asking the questions.
   a) Keep questions open-ended
   b) If the discussion is too broad, narrow responses by asking specific follow-up questions
   c) When participants give incomplete or irrelevant answers, probe for fuller, clearer responses.

Techniques to use in getting more/deeper information:
- Repeat the question. Repetition gives more time for participants to think.
- Adopt a "sophisticated naiveté" posture to convey a limited understanding of the issue and ask for specific details.
- Pause for additional information; silence can be a useful tool. A thoughtful nod or expectant look can convey that you want a fuller answer.
- Repeat the reply. Hearing it again sometimes stimulates conversation.
- Ask when, what, where, how and which questions that provoke more detailed information.
- Use neutral comments—"anything else?" or "why do you feel this way?"

   d) Control the discussion; in most groups, a few people dominate the discussion.

Tips: Controlling the discussion:
- Ask questions to individuals who are reluctant to talk.
- Ask quiet people to speak more loudly or you can repeat their response for the whole group.
- Give nonverbal cues appropriate to the culture/group (look in another direction or stop taking notes when an individual talks for an extended period).
- Intervene, politely summarize the point, and then refocus the discussion.
- Take advantage of a pause and say, "Thank you for that interesting idea. Perhaps we can discuss it in a separate session. Meanwhile, let's move on to another item."
- If one individual is dominating and you cannot find another way to limit their participation, politely ask them to speak to you away from the group—thank them for sharing their important opinions. Tell them you appreciate the time they have given the group, and explain to them that it is now important to hear the opinions of other group members.

e) Minimize group pressure by probing for alternative views or ideas. When an idea is being adopted without any general discussion or disagreement, more than likely group pressure is occurring.

If possible, the discussion should be tape-recorded. A high quality omni-directional microphone, tape recorder, several tapes and microphone stand are all needed.   Each tape should be labelled at time of completion of the interview.

A note-taker is also needed since not everything can be captured in a recording. Notes should be extensive and reflect the content of the discussion as well as nonverbal behaviour (facial expressions, hand movements). Discussion should be reported in participants' language, retaining their phrases and grammatical use. Summarizing or paraphrasing responses can be misleading. For instance, a verbatim reply "Yes, indeed! I am positive," loses its intensity when recorded as "Yes."

6) Wrap Up. Close the interview by thanking participants for their ideas and suggestions and reiterating how Search plans to use the interview findings to strengthen their work in the community/region.

Step 7: Debrief the team

Shortly after each focus group interview, the team should discuss how the interview went, summarize the information that was heard, and consider implications of the information for the study.

Step 8: Analyse results

Once the interviews have been written up (if taped) or the notes have been typed up, the team should assemble all transcriptions, notes, summaries, and any other relevant data to analyse trends and patterns. The following method can be used:

1) Read summaries all at one time. Note potential trends and patterns, strongly held or frequently aired opinions.
2) Read each transcript. Highlight sections that correspond to the discussion guide questions and mark comments that could be used in the final report.
3) Analyse each question separately.   After reviewing all the responses to a question or topic, write a summary statement that describes the discussion.
4) In analysing the results, the team should consider:
    a) Words. Weigh the meaning of words participants used. Can a variety of words and phrases categorize similar responses? Or can the repeated use of a word or phrase, mean more than one thing?
    b) Framework. Consider the circumstances in which a comment was made (context of previous discussions, tone and intensity of the comment).

c) Internal agreement. Figure out whether shifts in opinions during the discussion were caused by group pressure.
d) Precision of responses. Decide which responses were based on personal experience and give them greater weight than those based on vague impersonal impressions.
e) The big picture. Pinpoint major ideas. Allocate time to step back and reflect on major findings.
f) Purpose of the report. Consider the objectives of the study and the information needed for decision-making. The type and scope of reporting will guide the analytical process. For example, focus group reports typically are (1) brief oral reports that highlight key findings; (2) descriptive reports that summarize the discussion; and (3) analytical reports that provide trends, patterns, or findings and include selected comments.

Points to guide development of FGD:

- Each section of the guide should have questions that directly respond to the research questions - so that analysis is relevant.
- There should be a maximum of 5 major questions (each followed by probing questions).
- The discussion should not last more than 1 hour – 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Questions should be open. I.e., questions that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no". They usually start with: Could you tell me how...., what would you do when...., What do you think of ...
- FDGs are useful when they give deep information. To get "deep" information probing is key. The challenge is that a good discussion facilitator - who masters what the project is about and what we are trying to get to and the analytical framework (at best internal to SFCG, rarely though)- decides on probing questions as the discussion unfolds. S/he pick up on an answer or a series of answers to ask questions that would help better understand the nature of the change that we are bringing

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of Focus Groups.

American Statistical Association. *What Are Focus Groups.*

Austin Community College. *Focus Group Guidelines*

Eliot and Associates*. Guidelines for Conducting A Focus Group*
http://www.eliotassoc.com/support-files/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf

Mary Marczak & Meg Sewell. *Using Focus Groups for Evaluation*, University of Arizona
http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/focus.htm

OTI. *Conflict Evaluation Toolkit*. Part III

Susan Dawson, Lenore Manderson and Veronica L. Tallo. *A Manual for the Use of Focus Groups* (1993),
http://www.unu.edu/unupress/food2/UIN03E/UIN03E00.HTM

Interviews Module

This module will guide you through the process of conducting interviews for your project.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is it?** ➢ **What Is It For?** ➢ **Advantages & Disadvantages** ➢ **When Should It Be Used?** ➢ **How Do We Use It?** ➢ **Tools, Templates and Examples** ➢ **Additional Resources**	

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Question Examples

What is it?

Interviews are a qualitative data collection tool that can be selected for use during design, monitoring, or evaluation. Interviews can be structured or semi-structured and may be look for varying levels of depth of information. They are one-to-one discussions with people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of interest.

> **Tip:** Semi structured interviews provide the interviewer with some focus, but at the same time provide him/her with the opportunity to explore new ideas as and when they arise during the interview process. The more structured an interview is the more it approaches being a survey (offering forced choice for answers).

What is it for?

Interviews are low cost and provide timely information, their flexible format allows the interviewer to explore unanticipated issues and gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Advantages

- Provides information directly from knowledgeable and/or experienced people.
- Provides flexibility to explore new ideas and issues not anticipated during instrument design. They are a good way to surface unintended outcomes of a project.
- Inexpensive and simple to conduct.

Disadvantages

- Not appropriate if quantitative data are needed.
- May be biased if informants are not carefully selected.
- Susceptible to interviewer biases.
- May be difficult to generalize findings.

When should it be used?

Specifically, interviews are useful in the following situations:

- When qualitative, descriptive information is sufficient for decision-making.
- When there is a need to understand motivation, behavior, and perspectives. In-depth interviews of program planners and managers, service providers, host government officials, and beneficiaries concerning their attitudes and behaviors about a project/programme can help explain its successes and shortcomings.
- When a main purpose is to generate recommendations. Key informants can help formulate recommendations that can improve a program's performance.
- When quantitative data collected through other methods need to be interpreted. Key informant interviews can provide the how and why of what happened. If, for example, a sample survey showed farmers were failing to make loan repayments, key informant interviews could uncover the reasons.
- When preliminary information is needed to design a comprehensive quantitative study. Key informant interviews can help frame the issues before the survey is designed and undertaken.

How do we use it?

Step-by-Step Directions

Once the decision has been made to conduct key informant interviews, following the step-by-step advice outlined below will help ensure high-quality information:

Step 1: Formulate interview questions

- Form a list of possible questions related to the subject area that is the focus of your study or project.
- The Questions could be a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions depending on the situation and type of information needed.
- Closed-ended questions require simple forced-choice answers, e.g., "yes" or "no". Open-ended questions allow respondent to elaborate on their answers.
- If a question is closed-ended, follow it up with a question requiring an explanation or reason for the previous answer.
- Questions should be neutral rather than leading. Example What do you think of the SFCG radio Program in Sierra Leone? rather than "Do you think the SFCG radio program is good?"

- Start off the interview questions with a few simple basic questions before discussing the more complex in-depth ones. This allows you to put the respondent at ease and build rapport.
- Questions should be arranged in a sequence that makes sense, e.g., past to present or vice versa.
- Pilot test the interview questions with a small number of people. They need not be actual respondents, but should have some basic knowledge of the topic. Make revisions based on pilot feedback.

Step 2: Prepare a short interview guide

- Identify the common themes in the questions.
- Sort the questions together according to the theme.
- Number questions and sub-questions accurately as this numbering system will later be used for organizing the data.
- Compile filters for questions where an answer to a question may suggest skipping to another question.
- Identify media for recording the interview: Note taking, Tape recorders, Digital Voice recorders.

> **Tip:** Filtering enables the interviewer or the respondent to know which question to go to next. For example:
> If "yes" to Q1, Go to Q3

Step 3: Select key informants

- Identify persons to be interviewed. If program implementers or people with agendas regarding the program are to help identify respondents (interviewee), push for a wide sample of people with varying opinions (positive and negative) about the programme/project in order to reduce selection bias.
- It is important that the interviewer receives (written) consent of the respondent as well as consent from their superiors or appropriate officials (if needed)
- Permission should include information regarding anonymity and/or confidentiality of responses and permission to take notes and/or audio/video tape session.
- Tell interviewee in advance how long the interview will take

Step 4: Conduct interviews

- **Establish rapport.** Begin with an explanation of the purpose of the interview, the intended uses of the information and assurances of confidentiality. Often informants will want assurances that the interview has been approved by relevant officials.
- **Use of jargon.** Except when interviewing technical experts, questioners should avoid jargon.
- **Sequence questions.** Start with factual questions. Questions requiring opinions and judgments should follow. Whether to begin with the present and move to questions about the past or future or vice versa depends on the nature of the information you are collecting.
- **Phrase questions carefully to elicit detailed information.** Avoid questions that can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no." For example, questions such as "Please tell me what you know about the alternative media?" are better than "Do you know about alternative media?"
- **Use probing techniques.** Encourage informants to detail the basis for their conclusions and recommendations. This technique helps to uncover bias and can provide unexpected information. While most people will give honest answers, a keen sense of discernment is necessary to identify exaggerations.
- **Minimize translation difficulties.** Sometimes it is necessary to use a translator, which can change the dynamics and add difficulties. For example, differences in status between the translator and informant may inhibit the conversation. Often information is lost during translation. Difficulties can be minimized by using translators who are not known to the informants, briefing translators on the purposes of the study to reduce misunderstandings, making sure that the translator has an understanding of any technical or program-specific terms in both languages, and having translators repeat the informant's comments verbatim.

Step 5: Take adequate notes

- Interviewers should take notes and develop them in detail immediately after each interview to ensure accuracy.
- Use a set of common subheadings for interview texts, selected with an eye to the major issues being explored. Common subheadings ease data analysis.

Step 6: Analyze interview data

- **Interview summary sheets.** At the end of each interview, prepare a 1 to 2-page interview summary sheet reducing information into manageable themes, issues, and recommendations. Each summary should provide information about the key informant's position, reason for inclusion in the list of informants, main points made, implications of these observations, and any insights or ideas the interviewer had during the interview.

- **Use descriptive codes.** Coding involves a systematic recording of data. While numeric codes are not appropriate, descriptive codes can help organize responses. These codes may cover key themes, concepts, questions, or ideas, such as sustainability, impact on income, and participation of women. A usual practice is to note the codes or categories on the left-hand margins of the interview text. Then a summary lists the page numbers where each item (code) appears. For example, reintegration of ex-combatants might be given the code "rein-x-com," and the summary sheet might indicate it is discussed on pages 7, 13, 21, 46, and 67 of the interview text. Categories and subcategories for coding (based on key study questions, hypotheses, or conceptual frameworks) can be developed before interviews begin, or after the interviews are completed. Precoding saves time, but the categories may not be appropriate. Postcoding helps ensure empirically relevant categories, but is time consuming. A compromise is to begin developing coding categories after 8 to 10 interviews, as it becomes apparent which categories are relevant.

- **Storage and retrieval.** The next step is to develop a simple storage and retrieval system. Access to a computer program that sorts text is very helpful. Relevant parts of interview text can then be organized according to the codes. The same effect can be accomplished without computers by preparing folders for each category, cutting relevant comments from the interview and pasting them onto index cards according to the coding scheme, then filing them in the appropriate folder. Each index card should have an identification mark so the comment can be attributed to its source.

- **Presentation of data.** Visual displays such as tables, boxes, and figures can condense information, present it in a clear format, and highlight underlying relationships and trends. This helps communicate findings to decision-makers more clearly, quickly, and easily.

Step 7: Check for reliability and validity

Key informant interviews are susceptible to error, bias, and misinterpretation, which can lead to flawed findings and recommendations. Pay attention to the following:

- Check representativeness of key informants. Take a second look at the key informant list to ensure no significant groups were overlooked.

- Assess reliability of key informants. Assess informants' knowledgeability, credibility, impartiality, willingness to respond, and presence of outsiders who may have inhibited their responses. Greater weight can be given to information provided by more reliable informants.

- Check interviewer or investigator bias. One's own biases as an investigator should be examined, including tendencies to concentrate on information that confirms preconceived notions and hypotheses, seeks consistency too early and overlooks evidence inconsistent with earlier findings, and being partial to the opinions of favored key informants.

- Check for negative evidence. Make a conscious effort to look for evidence that questions preliminary findings. This brings out issues that may have been overlooked.

- Get feedback from informants. Ask the key informants for feedback on major findings. A summary report of the findings might be shared with them, along with a request for written comments. Often a more practical approach is to invite them to a meeting where key findings are presented and ask for their feedback.

TIPS: INTERVIEW SKILLS

- **Use active listening skills**
  You should be listening, and not talking except to probe for more information. At the end of each major segment, recap what you heard from the respondent and get their agreement. For example say, "This is what I think I heard you said…..Is that right?"
- **Maintain eye contact**
  Use culturally appropriate body language that says you are interested and nonjudgmental (nodding head, smile, learning forward, etc.)
- **Keep a neutral demeanor**
  Try not to let your own opinions show. Interviewees will not want to disagree with you if they feel you have an opinion or perspective.
- **Reinforce and encourage further comments by saying**, "That's very interesting, say more…." "I'm interested in your opinion/perspective…."
- **Repeat the question**
  Repetition gives more time for participants to think. You may convey a limited understanding of the issue and ask for specific details.
- **Pause for the answer**
  A thoughtful nod or expectant look can convey that you want a fuller answer.

TIPS: INTERVIEWING PITFALLS

- **Asking multiple questions:** For example, "How do you feel about the teachers and classes you're taking?" Teacher and classes should each get their own question.
- **Asking leading questions:** For example, "Do the staff foster a sense of community here? If so, how?" Instead, ask, "How does the staff foster a sense of community here?"
- **Cutting off the respondent:** Often it takes the interviewee a while to respond, allow for silence. Give them time to complete their thoughts and sentences. If interviewees are rambling and digressing, politely intervene and pull their attention back to the main question.
- **Asking closed ended questions.** If you ask a yes/no question, follow up with "Why?", "Say more about this…", or, "Please elaborate."
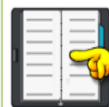
TOOL 1

The following example is taken from the Mid-Term Monitoring and Evaluation of the Mother and Child Free Healthcare Initiative in Sierra Leone in 2010. The questions were attempting to determine the effect of radio programming for a maternal and child healthcare project:

Research Questions:
The questions are aimed at three different audiences.

Questions – On-the-street Interviews with General Public (Direct Beneficiaries)

Involvement with Radio
1. Are you either pregnant, lactating or do you have a child under five?
2. Do you listen to the radio?
3. Do you listen to the healthcare radio programmes? Can you tell me what the FHC policy is?
4. Are you aware of the free healthcare campaign (FHC)? How did you hear of it?
5. Have you personally been influenced by the programmes? Has it changed your attitude about going to the hospital or healthcare?

6. Have you heard your concerns reflected in the programmes? Do you have any suggestions for improving the programmes?
7. Have you ever called a station to give feedback?
8. (For women) Would having women on the air be influential? Are the issues that you experience being adequately addressed by the programming?
9. (For parents) Are the specific concerns of children being addressed, in your opinion?

Accountability
10. Did you know that you could report acts of corruption to the ACC or the radio stations? Where did you learn that?
11. Have you ever reported a breach of the FHC or an act of corruption? When you reported this concern to the ACC, how did the interaction go?
12. What do you think ppl can do about the corruption?
13. What other issues of accountability would you like to be highlighted in the TDS programmes?

Experience at the Hospital
14. Have you been charged for care since the FHC has been launched? Have you been satisfied with the quality of care?
15. How do you define corruption? How do you define "good" healthcare?
16. What are some of the problems you have faced in the hospitals or clinics in relation to the FHC initiative?

Questions – Key Interviews with Station Producers
Feedback and the Community:
1. Have you personally listened to TDS programmes on the FHC?
2. What feedback have you received from your audience regarding the FHC Programmes (whether produced by your station or TDS)?
3. Do you have any questions from your audience about your programmes? Anything you'd like to hear from them?
4. What changes over the last two months have you made in your programming and why?
5. How did you decide what key information to include in your programmes based on your audience? What factors did you take into account?
6. What is the biggest vision you have for this campaign? What degree of public impact do you think it is capable of?

Messaging and Programming:
7. Have you had any challenges regarding your programming or messaging since the campaign began? What about with TDS programming?
8. How do you overcome the difficulty that it can be hard to influence people through the radio?
9. Radio has its natural limitations, what is the biggest vision you have for this campaign? How far-reaching do you think it can be?
10. Do you feel you understand the objectives behind the campaign?

11. Do you broadcast on the air who to call and their phone numbers in cases of corruption? [Call the ACC-corruption, call Amnesty – for mistreatment at the hospital, and call HR Commission – for rights violation.]
12. Do you think that people know what the goal is for healthcare (the ideal or norm of nursing standards, of treatment from doctors, etc.) Do you air what healthcare should look like? Do you think that would work? Why or why not?

Partnership with SFCG:

13. Is there any way that Search can be more helpful to you in promoting our message of conflict transformation?
14. Do they think that SFCG programmes are focused on the right issues of the community?
15. Is SFCG remaining on a policy level, and not digging deeper?
16. If we need to dig deeper, what are some of the issues that should be on the programme?
17. What recommendations do you have in terms of what SFCG is doing with regional programmes?
18. Is there anything you want us to focus on? What about on the community level?
19. What support do you need from us, or want?

Questions – Key Interviews with Other Stakeholders and Allies (MoHS, ACC, Amnesty International, etc.)

1. Have you listened to the FHC radio programmes?
2. Are the programmes supporting your work in a manner you find effective?
3. What feedback have you received from the public about the TDS radio programmes on healthcare?
4. What have the challenges been since the campaign began? Have these been addressed by the radio campaign?
5. What have the successes been? Has the radio addressed these?
6. What is the biggest vision you have for the media campaign? What do you think it can accomplish?
7. Where do you think TDS can improve?
8. Where do you think TDS has done well?
9. Do you have ideas for additional ways to engage the public in combating corruption and taking ownership of their healthcare?
10. Have you seen a reduction in the corruption? (Whether yes or no) Why do you think that is?
11. What barriers to eliminating corruption still remain?
12. What do you think the radio can do to address the issues of corruption?

Additional Resources

Trent Focus Group, Using Interviews in a Research Project, 1998 (updated 2002)

USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS: Using Key Informant Interviews, 1996, number 2, http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/usaid_eval/pdf_docs/pnabs541.pdf.

USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS: Using Rapid Appraisal Methods, 1996, number 5, http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/usaid_eval/ascii/pnaby209.txt.

Survey Module

This module will guide you through the process of conducting surveys for your project.

Search for Common Ground

SFCG · 30 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➤ **What is a Survey?** ➤ **What is the use of a Survey?** ➤ **When to use Surveys?** ➤ **Costs, Skills, and Time Required** ➤ **Clarifying Objectives** ➤ **Sampling** ➤ **Developing the Questionnaire** ➤ **Administering the Survey** ➤ **Analyzing Data** ➤ **Appendix: Survey Budget** ➤ **Resources Consulted** ➤ **Further Resources**	

What is a Survey?

A survey is a method of gathering information for a sample of a target population through a sequence of focused, targeted questions. The sample is scientifically chosen to reflect the larger population. Information is collected by standardized procedures to ensure that each individual is asked the same questions in the same way and sequence.

With regard to the mode of administration, one can distinguish between surveys that are administered orally (face to face, telephone), and those that are written and self-administered (mail, online).

What is the use of a Survey?

The main purpose of a survey is to gather (at least predominantly) quantitative information, generally (but not always) on a large-scale, that can be analyzed statistically and generalized to the population being studied. (See → **Quantitative Methods Module** and → **Qualitative Methods Module**.)

General scope and limits

Surveys can be used to profile principal characteristics of target population (such as needs, radio listenership, etc.), but cannot provide detailed and in-depth qualitative information. They may, for example be part of a conflict assessment (→ **Conflict Assessment Module**)

Surveys can be used to compare

- Changes over time (generate / compare against baseline data (→ **Baseline Module**));
- Actual situation against targets established in program/project design (→ **Logframe Module** and → **Indicator Collection**);
- One population against another (e.g. to assess outcomes of an intervention by comparing the targeted population with a similar one that did not experience the intervention).

Surveys can and should be used in conjunction with other methods, particularly qualitative ones, depending on study purpose. (See → **Mixed Methods Module** and → **Monitoring Modules (Context)** and → **Evaluation Modules (Design / Utilization / Reflection)**). They can, for instance, be used to

- Gather information that informs further qualitative or quantitative research; or
- Follow-up on qualitative and quantitative findings that are interesting or hard to explain, and explore what may have caused them.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Well-designed surveys are most useful when

- You need information from a large sample, for instance to analyze interventions affecting large numbers of people;
- You want to learn about characteristics of the whole population, e.g., neighborhood, region or country;
- Statistical analysis is required or desired;
- You want to be able to make generalizations.

Surveys have the further advantages that

- Anonymity is easy to guarantee;
- They do not necessarily require respondents to be literate. They can be either written or conducted by interview.

If surveys are <u>not done right</u>, however, seemingly objective answers will be biased, and conclusions based on them will be false.

Surveys, by themselves, are <u>not useful</u> to

- Study complex processes;
- Solicit opinions or narratives;
- Explore unknown issues, topics, or phenomena.

For such tasks you should consider other methods that are more appropriate for this kind of analysis. See **→ Focus Groups** and **→ Interviews**.

When to use Surveys?

Likely, you will contemplate using a survey in the context of baseline studies, evaluations, or broader impact assessments. The decision whether a survey is an appropriate data collection method for the task at hand – either by itself or in conjunction with other methods – should be made in light of the research question and research objective. Consider the following key questions:

1. What is the purpose and scope of the study?
   If you need reliable, quantifiable data from which you can generalize findings, identify trends, and make some types of predictions, surveys may be the right option.

2. What kind of information do you need to answer the research question?

- *Perceptions/attitudes/opinions*
  If you are interested in more than a cursory overview, i.e., in-depth information, other methods are more appropriate. For example ➔ **Focus Groups** and ➔ **Interviews**.
- *Behaviors*
  If you need information about behaviors that is more reliable than self-reports, consider using ➔ **Observation**.
- *Knowledge*
  For testing knowledge, surveys are a very useful tool (although, depending on the scope of the study, you may (also) want to rely on ➔ **Interviews**).
- In practice, you will likely use a combination of methods to get different types of, and more reliable, data. Combining different methods will help you verify your data ("triangulation"), see ➔ **Mixed Methods**.

3. What information do you have already?
   You may already have sufficient quantitative data available (other / former studies) to go on to explore causal relationships with other, qualitative methods.

4. How much time, funds, and expertise are at your disposal?

When thinking about whether to use a survey, also consider what *type of survey* to use. While self-administered surveys (online or mail) are good to reach a large number of potential respondents relatively cheaply, they have some disadvantages such as low response rates.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Face to face / phone	- Literacy not required - Personal contact may stimulate higher response rates, with sensitive issues in particular - Better for asking open questions - Possible to probe, ask follow-up questions: more flexibility - More complicated questions and skip patterns possible - Longer questionnaires possible - Easier to guarantee surveys are *completed* - Higher response rates	- More costly and time-consuming (logistics!) - Require well-trained interviewers - Bias induced by interviewer presence: social desirability, visual and verbal cues
Phone	- Literacy not required - Personal contact may stimulate	- Requires respondents to have phones and publicly listed

	higher response rates, with sensitive issues in particular - Better for asking open questions - Possible to probe, ask follow-up questions: more flexibility - More complicated questions and skip patterns possible - Easier to guarantee surveys are *completed* - Moderately high response rates	numbers - Intrusive - Must be relatively short - Questions need to be simple (respondents cannot read questions)
Mail / online	- Less intrusive than face-to face or phone surveys (free to complete on own time, no interruption) - More cost (and time) effective, especially with large sample sizes and large areas to cover - No bias from interviewer through verbal and visual cues - Allows respondents to carefully consider answers - Possibly elicit more candid responses (if confidentiality and anonymity credibly established)	- Possibly low response rates - Inability to capture visual cues, inflections, etc. - No follow-up or probing possible - No control over who completes survey: respondent may let other person (husband, employee, kids) fill out questionnaire - Likely bias from self-selection - Can prompt responses (respondents can read answer options to all questions - may bias response) - Respondents can look ahead, which may influence responses to previous questions - (Requires existing infrastructure like internet access, mail service)

Costs, Skills, and Time Required

Cost and time varies with the size of the task. Generally speaking, think of surveys as having overhead costs (planning, recruiting, sampling, designing, pre-testing, analyzing, report writing), variable cost (administering), and follow-up cost (further research inspired by results, utilizing results for (project) improvements).

Cost / Time	Lower	Higher	Depends on
	Small samples	Large samples	*Desired reliability of data (the research objective)*
	Easy to access samples (e.g. cities)	Hard to access samples (e.g. remote places)	*Context & desired reliability of data (the research objective)*
	Self-administered (mail, online)	Orally administered (face to face, phone)	*Characteristics of target audience; context*
	Short questionnaires	Larger, sophisticated questionnaires	*Research question*
	Low quality (mainly overhead: design, pre-testing, depth of analysis)	High quality	*Desired reliability of data (research objective)*

Skills and knowledge required likewise depend on the task at hand. Generally, you will require:

- Sound analytical and technical skills (M&E, survey experience), and a well-developed common sense;
- Specific knowledge of the issue (e.g. project) and context under study.

- For a recent assessment on the impact of community radio on development and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Liberia, interns were hired to develop a methodology and conduct the study. These interns had little knowledge of the development process in either country. As a consequence, focus group discussion guides and interview questionnaires focused on gaining insights about the development process – information which could easily have been obtained beforehand through internet research, review of legal texts, and some informal interviews. Consequently, the study did not probe as deeply as it could have. This was compounded by the fact that interns were asked to strictly adhere to the methodology in order to maintain comparability across research sites.

In addition, depending on the extent to which you outsource remaining tasks, you will need:

- For designing survey documents:
    - Word processing software skills for survey design or experience with setting up online surveys, depending on how your survey will be administered;
    - Design skills in order to produce a non-cluttered, visually clear survey.
- For surveying:
    - Social skills, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity;
    - Some analytical ability to understand instructions and questions.
- For data analysis:
    - Basic statistics knowledge at a minimum;
    - Experience with using appropriate software (MS Excel, SPSS, MS Access, etc.).
- For report writing:
    - Writing skills, analytical skills;
    - Computer skills – word processing, perhaps design skills if report writing includes producing graphs.

See also Appendix I for more information on budgeting.

Clarifying Objectives

It is crucial that you remain focused on the overall goal of your research (e.g., baseline study, workshop evaluation, impact assessment) when developing a survey as part of a larger research methodology. (See the section When to Use a Survey to help you decide whether a survey is, by itself or in combination with other methods, an appropriate instrument.)

Prepare a clear statement of purpose that includes what you want to find out and why. If you are clear on study objectives, it will be easier to develop a useful and focused survey that provides the data you need.

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Key Elements for a Successful Survey

1. Dedicated <u>focus on the survey as a project management</u>;
2. <u>Adequate and proper resources</u> assigned;
   In addition to the project manager, the team should include those affected by the surveying effort (they have a vital role in instrument design).
3. Sufficient <u>budget</u>;
4. Well-developed <u>plan</u>;
   Covers instrument design, survey administration, data analysis and the implementation of results.
5. Clear <u>statement of purpose</u>.
   Why are you doing this? Summarize in one paragraph. Amend it if necessary, but keep the focus on the essential, not on additional items of unrelated interest.

Source: Adapted from
http://www.greatbrook.com/survey_project_requirements.htm

</div>

To specify your research goal, consider the following:

- If you are conducting an evaluation, for instance, you may want to consult the project's **→ Logical Framework** and further documents and reports, such as a narrative of the project's **→ Theory of Change**;
- You can consult other DME modules as appropriate to assist you in specifying your research goal. In particular, consider the modules on **→ Conflict Assessment**, **→ M&E Plan**, **→ Baseline**, **→ Monitoring**, **→ Context Monitoring**, **→ Designing an Evaluation**, and **→ Ethics**;
- You may further want to consult external information on substantive issues related to your research question, particularly if your study is not tied to a specific project. Consider documents by governments as well as (inter-)national non-governmental organizations, previous internal or external studies, academic literature, etc.

- You can, for instance, find a wealth of information on the use of information technology in relation to relevant issues like agriculture and health in several African countries on Intermedia's AudienceScapes (www.audiencescapes.org). The site offers reports but

also lets you do your own analysis of their data. Other sources for similar information include Internews and the BBC World Service.

In particular, make sure you are clear on
- Why you are conducting the research.
  Do you intend to measure (quantitative) indicators as part of a project evaluation? Do you need reliable quantitative data that you can generalize in order to demonstrate project reach to a donor? Are you conducting a self-evaluation with the purpose of identifying project shortcomings and successes? Do you merely want to capture anecdotes to illustrate the value your work in communications with donors or the broader public?
- What you want to find out.
  Are you trying to assess causal relationships (e.g., project outcomes and impacts), gain information about the characteristics of a population (e.g., radio listenership), or research specific issues more in-depth?
- What type of data you need.
  You can distinguish between the following types of information. Information on (1) knowledge, (2) beliefs/attitudes (thoughts, feelings, judgments, opinions, ideas), (3) behavior, and (4) attributes (personal, demographic characteristics).

Once you have a concise and relatively precise answer – preliminary or definite – to these questions you can begin designing a methodology.

Please refer to Sections 2 through 4 of this document to determine whether and for what part of the research a survey would be appropriate in light of this research goal.

Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a part of a target population that is *representative* of the whole. The aim is to be able to make relatively reliable generalizations without having to ask everybody. The term **target population** refers to that *subset of the general population* you would like to study.

Examples are: Citizens, inhabitants of a certain region (which you would have to define), school children aged 13 to 18, citizens living in rural towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants, or all project participants.

It is helpful to conceptually distinguish between **target population** and **study population**. *Target population* is the population your survey *intends* to study, such as "Liberian school children." *Study population* is the population your survey *actually*

covers, i.e., that population which your sample actually represents, such as "Liberian school children *attending school in urban areas*". Note that you cannot generalize from the survey population to the target population if they are not identical.

- Imagine that you are in Monrovia during the rainy season and decide you can only interview school children in the capital itself because transport to rural sites is impossible. In this case, your study population – "Liberian school children that attend school in Monrovia" – would differ substantially from your target population ("Liberian school children"). Having noted this difference, you would be careful to only make generalizations for school children in the capital itself.

All citizens ← **General "Population"**

School children between 13 and 18 yrs ← **Target Population**
Subset of the general population which you want to study; ideally identical with *study population*

X children from School A, B, … ← **Sample**
Individuals from the population that you choose to survey
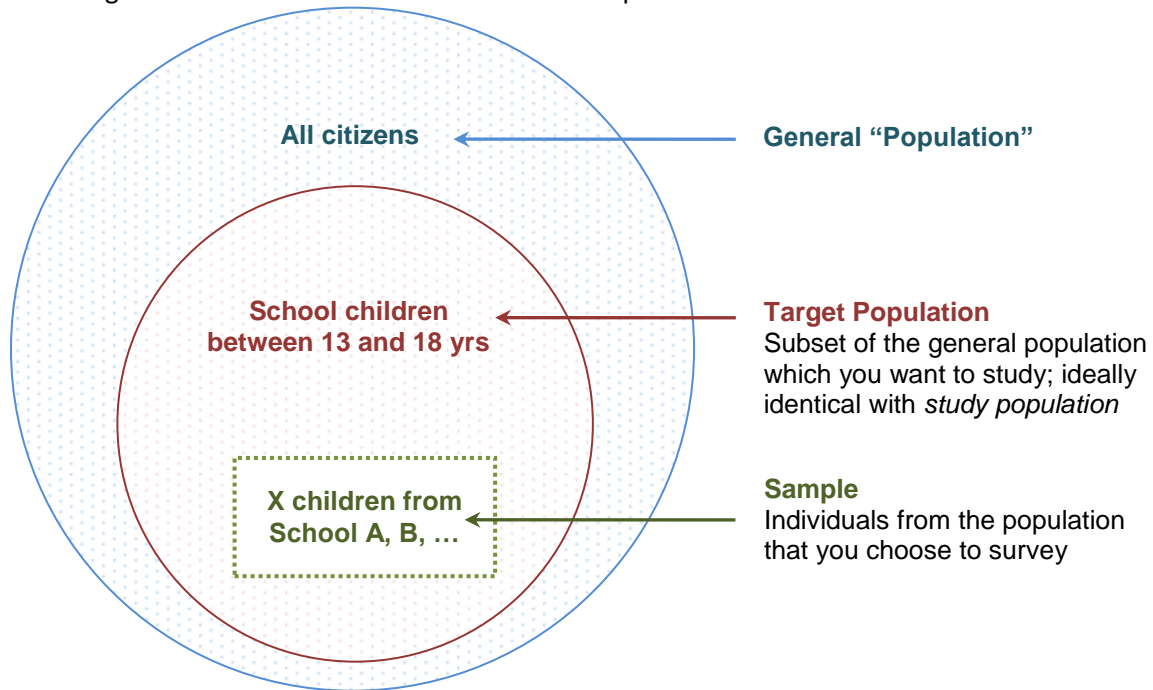
In an ideal situation, you would possess a list of all the elements of a population, i.e., of the largest possible sample. This list is referred to as sample frame1 or frame.

An example would be a list of people who participated in a certain project that you are trying to evaluate.

The choice of both sampling strategy and sample size, which crucially affect the reliability (analysis power) and accuracy of your results, should be made in accordance with the purpose of the study, research question, available resources, and other constraints.

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[1] Note that some researchers use the term "sample frame" to refer to those individuals that constitute the actual sample for the survey. Here, "sample frame" refers to the list of a survey's target population, and "sample" refers to those individuals that are chosen as respondents.

Sampling Strategies

There are two fundamental sampling strategies available – random (probability) and non-random (non-probability) sampling. Random sampling will provide you with more accurate and reliable data, as it helps to avoid sampling bias (see below on <u>sampling bias</u>), thus enabling you to make credible generalizations. It *requires*, however, that you have a sample frame available (often not the case) or that you are able to develop one (which may be costly).

Random sampling

The key principle of random sampling is that the sample composition (i.e., which units are included or excluded) is *random*. It insures the most representative sample.

Specific strategies include:

1. **Simple sampling**
   Each unit in the target population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

2. **Systematic sampling**
   One unit is chosen randomly. Additional units are added at evenly spaced intervals.

> ### *Example*
>
> 1,000 project participants; desired sample size is 250. To calculate intervals, divide population by desired sample size to get step difference between units (1,000/250 =   There are several websites that will calculate sample size for you. One of those is <u>http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm</u>. 4). Select one unit randomly (participant #34). Add units at evenly spaced intervals (add participants #38, #42, #46,…, #998, #2, #6, …, #30 to the sample).

3. **Stratified sampling**
   Use when sample frame is very heterogeneous and you need to accurately represent certain subgroups in order to compare them.

a. Divide the target population into relatively *homogeneous* segments according to the characteristics of interest to you (such as age, gender, education level, place of residence, etc.).
b. Use simple random, systematic, or cluster sampling for each stratum to get to your sample.
c. Strata should be mutually exclusive (any one member of your population falls into only one stratum) and collectively exhaustive (every member of your population is part of a stratum).

With respect to choosing sample sizes for your individual strata, you have two principal options:
a. Proportional stratified sampling: If a particular stratum represents 10% of your population, it should represent 10% of your sample. The advantage is that you can use aggregate data collected to immediately draw conclusions for the whole population (because your data mirrors population strata). You should not use *proportional* stratified sampling, however, if the resulting sample sizes for the individual strata are too small to be reliable (if, say, 10% of the sample is equivalent to only 30 individuals). In such cases you should either increase your total sample size or rely on disproportionate stratified sampling.
b. Disproportionate stratified sampling: Choose the relative proportions of strata samples so that respective sampling sizes are large enough to allow reliable generalizations for each stratum.

- If you want to survey a total of 300 individuals and make comparisons based on income levels, you may find that only 5% of the total population falls into the highest of the three income strata you have chosen to compare. As 15 people is too small a sample size for this task, you can choose to survey 100 (ideally more) individuals per income strata to get more accurate data.

Although this will allow you to make easy and reliable comparisons *between*, and generalizations for, individual strata, you need to keep in mind that in order to draw conclusions with respect to the *general* population, you need to adjust the relative weight of data from individual strata according to their population size.

4. **Cluster sampling**
Cluster sampling is a process you should use if you have no sample frame (i.e. list of population units) available. For large target populations, direct simple random or systematic random sampling are not practicable without a sample frame.

> **Tip:** UNICEF offers a comprehensive guide on cluster sampling in development countries. See www.childinfo.org/mics1.html

Cluster sampling involves dividing the target population into exhaustive and mutually exclusive clusters, selecting some (or all) of those clusters, and applying another sampling technique at the cluster level.

Step 1: Begin by identifying "natural" clusters for your target population – such as primary schools (with a target population of "primary school students"), radio stations ("radio station staff"), or even communities (e.g., for a target population "youth").

Step 2: Obtain, or create, a list of *all* existing clusters for a given target population (e.g., all primary schools, all radio stations, all communities, etc.). Consult external sources such as census data (communities), media regulatory bodies (radio stations), or education departments (schools).

Step 3: Once you have identified the clusters, there are several options.
   a. First, there is the question of whether you select all or only some of the clusters on your list. If you select only some, be sure to use some form of random sampling (simple or systematic).
   b. Second, you need to decide whether you will simply interview every single member of the clusters you selected (called "one-stage cluster sampling"), or whether you will use another sampling technique to identify a subset of each clusters' population to interview (called "two-stage cluster sampling") – an example would be to pick one house in a community at random, interview a person there, and use systematic sampling to select additional houses in given intervals.
   c. Note that there may be sample frames available at the cluster level – such as the names of students of a particular school, a list of radio station staff – which you can use for simple random or systematic sampling.
   d. Your decision should be informed by desired sample size and feasibility.

   • If there are only 10 radio stations in the country you are studying, and if those stations have a staff of around 15 each, it would probably be best to select all members of all clusters as your sample. If, on the other hand, your target population is "housewives in country X" and you have selected "communities" as clusters, it is clear that you will need to use additional techniques to choose a sample. You may, for instance, randomly select an appropriate number of communities (say, 30), and then employ some form of systematic random sampling to select 20 housewives in each community (for a sample size of 600). For one community that has 120 houses, you could divide that number by 20 (=6), randomly select one house, conduct an interview, and then proceed interviewing female heads of households in every 6th house.

The principal advantage of cluster sampling is that it may *reduce cost*, simplifies the interviewing process (as your sample will be concentrated in particular locations, e.g. a company), and saves time.

Nonetheless, there is an increased likelihood of sampling error, as one would expect less variation *within* clusters than among clusters ("design effect") because members of a cluster are likely to influence each other and/or are similar in some respects. To minimize resulting sampling bias, you should use as many different clusters as possible and *increase* the sample size.

Depending on the magnitude of the expected design error, you generally need samples that <u>are two to four times larger</u> than other (simple or systematic) random samples to maintain a given margin of error and level of confidence (more on <u>sample size</u> below). Take this as a very rough guideline - in some instances, lower or higher factors (10, 15) are appropriate. Use your common sense to gauge whether there is consistent and strong intra-cluster homogeneity in relevant characteristics (such as socio-economic status, attitudes, etc.).

Find an example on cluster sampling combined with systematic sampling below in the <u>section on PPS</u>.

POPULATION: Radio station staff
*No sampling frame available, **but** stations known. Stations have staff lists.*

Step 1: Identify all clusters (stations)

Step 2: Select all or randomly select a few

Step 3: Obtain lists of population members (staff)

Station 1 *Has staff list*	**Station 2** *Has staff list*	**Station n** *Has staff list*	**Step 4: Select some (randomly) or interview all**
Manager A	Manager A	Presenter A	
Producer A	Producer A	Editor A	**Your Sample**
Producer B	Editor A	Manager A	
Editor A	Presenter A	Manager B	
Presenter A	Presenter B		

Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is more convenient and less costly than probability sampling, particularly as you do not need a sampling frame. Because it entails sample selection by some form of *judgment*, not probability, the likelihood that any given member of the population under study is included in your sample is unknown and *varies* for each member. Hence, your sample will very likely be *biased* (see also section on Sampling Biases below). You should thus be careful with any generalizations, or at least explicate potential biases when reporting your conclusions. One can distinguish between the following strategies:

1. **Accidental (convenience) sampling**

Accidental sampling involves surveying members of your population that are convenient to reach.

- Aiming to interview market vendors, for instance, you may choose to go to several markets and survey the first ten vendors you encounter. Or you may use "intercept sampling," where you provide surveyors with quotas of target groups (ex-combatants, youth, market women, etc.), send them to specific locations (central market, bus stop Y, main street of town X, etc.), and instruct them to interview people according to the quotas provided.

2. **Purposive sampling**

There are several techniques of purposive sampling. They may include:

- **Judgment sampling**; in which an expert, or a group of experts, makes informed judgments to select the sample. This is justified in particular if the study population is small enough to allow for informed judgments, and the sample size is small enough to expect judgment sampling to yield a better sample than probability sampling.

  ➢ If you intend to survey five of twenty radio station managers that are heterogeneous in relevant dimensions – such as issues relevant to respective listenership, gender, literacy, reach of radio station, or governing mechanisms – a judgment sample providing a cross-section of these dimensions may yield better results than a probability sample.

- **Quota sampling;** which involves dividing the population into mutually exclusive and exhaustive strata, just like in stratified sampling, but applying *non-probabilistic* means to select samples within those strata (convenience sampling, judgment sampling, etc.).
- **Extreme or deviant case sampling**; to analyze unusual manifestations of a phenomenon of interest. You could, for instance, interview project participants whose behavior has

observably changed significantly in response to your intervention, and compare them against those where this has not occurred.

- **Snowball sampling;** in which you select the first member of your sample (likely in a non-random manner), and that member identifies further subjects you can survey (and so on). This technique is particularly useful for populations that are hard to access by other means (e.g., drug users, criminals, prostitutes, etc.).

Mixed sampling strategies

Mixed sampling combines different sampling strategies, both probabilistic and non-probabilistic. In many cases, practical constraints call for such an approach. An example would be to combine cluster sampling with judgment and convenience sampling.

> You may, for example, randomly select ten primary schools (clusters), divide pupils into strata (male/female, Muslim/Christian/other), choose to interview 20 of each of the four resulting categories at each school, and proceed by convenience sampling, such as asking teachers to point out students that match your criteria.

Cluster/systematic sampling strategy: PPS

If you use cluster sampling based on clusters that vary considerably in population size (such as districts or communities), both large and small clusters have an equal probability of being included in your sample, which is not desirable. Probability sampling proportional to size (PPS) can help remedy this. Consider the following example of selecting communities within a district. (UNICEF, 2001)

You need (1) a list of all communities, (2) estimates for population size of each (typically individuals or households, depending on your target population), (3) and the number of clusters you want to select in that district.

Step 1: Create a table with four columns:

Community #	Population	Cumulative Population	Clusters
(Sequentially number the communities in the district)	*(List population for each community)*	*(Calculate cumulative population)*	*(Results from PPS, see below on process)*
1	100	100	
2	1,000	1,100	**X X**

3	200	1,300	
4	100	1,400	X
5	1,100	2,500	
6	300	2,800	X
7	1,300	4,100	X

Step 2: Calculate the sampling interval using the formula below. Using the example table above, and assuming 5 clusters are required, this would yield a sampling interval of 820.

$$Sampling\ Interval = \frac{Cumulated\ total\ population}{Number\ of\ clusters\ required}$$

Step 3: Select a random number that is equal to or lower than the sampling interval (in this case between 1 and 820). You can simply ask a co-worker to pick one. Suppose that the random number is 132.

Step 4: Find the *first cluster* by identifying that community for with the cumulative population first exceeds that random number. In the example above, the cluster would be located in community #2.

Step 5: Then add the sampling interval to that number (820 + 132 = 952) and find that community in which the next cluster will be located by identifying the community for which the cumulative population just exceeds this number. In the example above, this would *also* be community #2.

Steps 6+: Repeat step 5 until you have the desired number of clusters. In the example above, you would select two clusters from community #2, and one each from communities #4, #6, and #7.

Sampling Biases

You will likely be using surveys in order to make accurate quantitative statements about your target population. There are two principal sources of error that could undermine your results: sampling and non-sampling bias.

Non-sampling bias refers to bias that occurs as a result of the way the survey is designed and administered, or from characteristics of those surveyed (e.g., respondents give socially desirable answers). Such bias can be minimized by sensible questionnaire design and administration (more in this module's sections on question design and survey administration).

Sampling bias refers to bias resulting from your choice of sampling size and strategy. You should be aware of:

- **Sampling error**
  In theory, if you administer a specific survey multiple times but to different representative samples of the same population, you will likely encounter some *variability among results*. This variability, sampling error, can generally be reduced by increasing sample size.

  - ➢ If, for instance, you do a survey to estimate radio listenership three times with different but representative samples, you are likely to receive varying responses – such as 69%; 68.2%; 70.5%.

- **Selection bias**

  If your sample is *not representative*, your results will be biased. One can distinguish between different kinds of selection bias:

  1. **Undercoverage.** Bias from undercoverage occurs if some members of the population are more likely to be included in the sample than others. It is thus a problem of sampling strategy. Potentially underrepresented groups include those who are illiterate, residents of inaccessible places, marginalized groups, elites, and seasonal migrants.

     - ➢ If, for instance, you conduct a survey to ascertain radio listenership in a developing country, and do so only in cities in order to minimize time and travel costs, the under-representation of rural dwellers may cause inaccurate results – at least if you intend to generalize your results to the country's entire population.

  2. **Self-selection bias.** If the population you intend to study has any control over whether to be included in your sample or not, and if this willingness to participate correlates with behaviors, attitudes, or knowledge you want to measure, your results will be biased.

     - ➢ This may be the case, for instance, if you want to evaluate a large project by asking all participants to voluntarily participate in a survey. It is likely that those with a strong (positive or negative) opinion will be more motivated to respond, and thus overrepresented in your results.

  3. **Non-response bias.** Even if you have a representative sample, it may be the case that some members of that sample are more likely to respond than others. If this willingness or ability to respond correlates with meaningful characteristics of your sample, your results will be biased.

➢ Suppose, for instance, you try to learn about attitudes on a particular TV show via a mail survey. If illiterate people (who are unlikely to respond) have attitudes that differ significantly from those of literate individuals (who are more likely to respond) you will have inaccurate results.

Ideal Sample Size

While being constrained by the resources at your disposal, the theoretically ideal size of your probability sample depends on the following factors:

1. Margin of error (or confidence interval) **and level of confidence**
The margin of error reflects how much you can tolerate survey responses to deviate from the "true" answer (i.e. the results you would get if you surveyed *every single member* of the population). Typical level: 5%. Note that margin of error is equivalent to the *sampling error* discussed above.

The level of confidence reflects how certain you can be that survey results do indeed only deviate from the "true answer" by your margin of error. Should you choose a sample based on a confidence level of 90%, for instance, you can (all else equal) be sure that *nine in ten* (i.e. 90%) responses will not deviate from the "true answer" (had you surveyed your entire population) *by more than the margin of error*. In other words, the level of confidence reflects how often the true percentage of a population who would pick a certain answer *lies within the confidence interval* (margin of error).

Typical levels are: 90%, 95%, 99%.

➢ Suppose that you ask whether people listen to the radio at least once a week, and choose your (simple, random) sample size based on a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 90%.
If you get 40 percent "yes" and 60 percent "no" responses, then you can claim that 40 +/- 5 percent (margin of error) do listen to the radio more than once a week and 60 +/- 5 percent do not. You can make this claim with 90% certainty – or, put differently, you know that this is (statistically speaking) not true for one in ten members of the total population (=90%).

The lower the desired margin of error, and the higher the desired level of confidence, the larger your sample should be.

Margin of Error, Level of Confidence
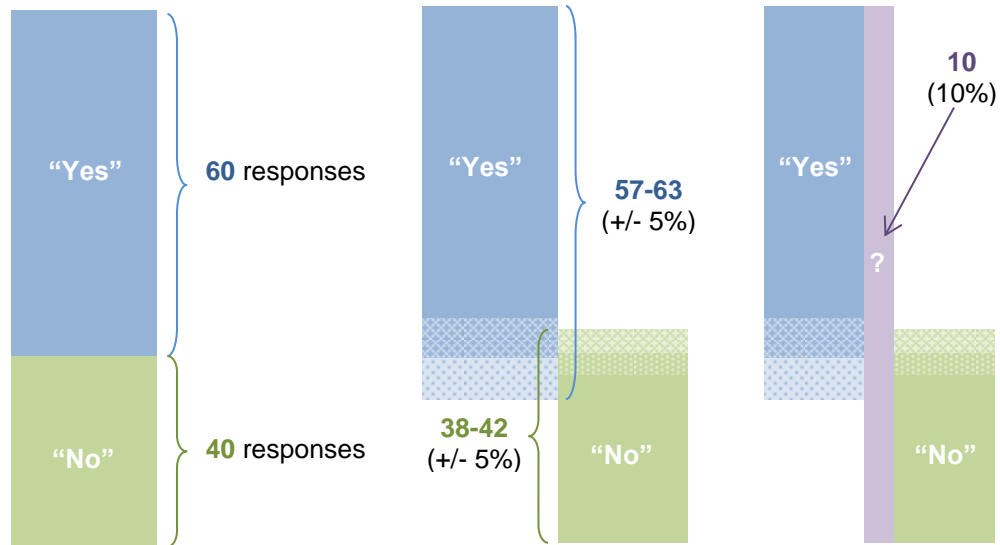
Actual Responses To a hypothetical survey question (Yes/No).	**Error** With a margin of error of 5%, the "true answer" lies within +/- 5% of these figures.	**Confidence** Given a level of confidence of 90%, you can say this for *nine out of ten* answers. (Meaning for 10% of results, the true answer lies outside of the +/- 5% margin of error)

2. Response distribution

How do you expect respondents to answer? In principle, if you can reasonably expect a large majority to give one *particular* answer to *one particular* question (e.g. 90 % say "yes" to a "yes/no" question), you may choose a smaller sample (for that question). Except if you know what you are doing, however, you should assume the worst-case scenario of a response distribution of 50% (half say yes, half say no). The sample size required (with given margin of error and level of confidence) is largest for an expected response distribution of 50%.

3. Population size

All else equal, larger populations require a larger sample size. For populations in excess of 20,000 members, the effect of population size on sample size is very small.

4. Nature of analysis

If gathering qualitative data is your main objective, then sample size is less important (although you may want to choose a different method to gather such data).

5. Desired degree of disaggregation

If making reliable generalizations for, and comparisons across, sub-groups (e.g., gender, age, profession/occupation, residence, ethnicity, etc.) in your dataset is an important objective, consider the likely margins of error and confidence levels *for those individual sub-groups*.

➢ Assuming a population size of 20,000, a response distribution of 50%, and a confidence level of 95%, suppose you interview 400 women and men categorized into youth and adults. Your approximate margin of error is 4.9% (see table). If you want to draw generalizations for, say, the 100 young women in the sample, and/or compare data to adult women, your margin of error will be much higher at 9.8%.(See stratified probability sampling.) For any generalizations for, or comparisons between, the 10 adult market women and the 10 female teachers included in your hypothetical dataset, you would have to tolerate a 31% margin of error.

6. Whether you use cluster sampling

If you use cluster sampling, you need to adjust sample size upwards to maintain accuracy. See above in <u>section on cluster sampling</u>.

Developing the Questionnaire

Developing good questions is crucial to gathering useful data. If this part of survey development is not done well, respondents may refuse to respond or, if they do, give biased answers – intentionally or not.

General Considerations

In general, consider the following principles of question design:

1. Try to <u>minimize respondent burden</u>, i.e. the time and effort required of respondents. High respondent burden will likely result in lower response rates and biased (i.e. possibly useless) answers. At the most basic level, questions should
- Be clear, and interpreted similarly by all respondents;
- Indicate what type of answer is desired (yes/no, rating, categories…);
- Be answerable with the respondents' knowledge; and
- Should not threaten (privacy, sensitive issues) or overburden respondents.

   ➢ If questions are unclear, if they ask about sensitive information, if respondents are forced to answer although they think they can't, or if they do not find appropriate answer categories, they may choose (or be forced) to answer untruthfully or inaccurately.

- As a first test, you should evaluate each question from the perspective of respondents. Is the question reasonable? Would you be able and willing to answer it? Does it infringe on your privacy?

2. Keep your survey <u>as short as possible</u>. If you cannot justify why a particular question should be included in the survey, leave it out. This includes "nice-to-know" questions. Doing this reduces respondent burden and the time/resources needed to collect and process data.

3. Always consider <u>which kind of data</u> you want to get and how you want to disaggregate and interpret it. (See the figure below for analysis potential of different question/data types.)

➢ If you evaluate a project that targets youth and adults differently, include an appropriate demographic question. If three age categories are sufficient for any generalizations you want to draw and comparisons you want to make, do not ask for six.

4. Note that the *type of survey* you use has an impact on the kind of questions you can ask – in self-administered surveys, for instance, respondents will always be able to read all possible answer options. If you want to test knowledge, the mere fact that (some) "right" answers are listed may bias your results because that listing helps respondents recall information they had forgotten.

Typical question type	Data type	Example	Analysis Potential					
			Multiply / Divide	*Average*	*Add / Subtract*	*Cumulative frequency distrib.*	*Frequency distributions*	*Tally sheets*
Open-ended, numerical [with natural zero]	Ratio	*How old?* ___ *Years*	X	X	X	X	X	X
Scales	Interval	*How satisfied? (1) very; (2) not; …*		X	X	X	X	X
Forced rank ordering	Ordinal	*Rank these three development goals in order of importance.*				X	X	X
Select all that apply	Nominal / Categorical	*Do you like (a) egg; (b) tea; …*					X	X
Open-ended comments	Text	*What do you think about X?*					X*	X

* If you categorize and code open-ended questions, you can analyze frequency distributions as well.

Source: based on http://www.greatbook.com/survey_question.htm

Question Types

There are two fundamental types of survey questions – open and closed ones.

Closed questions

Closed questions provide *exhaustive* lists of answers of which respondents pick one or more.

If you are not sure whether a set of answers you come up with is indeed exhaustive, you can use *partially closed* questions that offer an "other" or "don't know" option, often with the possibility for respondents to specify "other" answers in writing.

Answers to closed questions are designed to be either *alternative* ("check only one") or *cumulative* ("check all that apply"). Alternative answer options must of course be *mutually exclusive* for answers to be meaningful.

Possible and common formats for alternative answer sets include two-option (e.g., male/female; yes/no), one best answer, rating scale, paired comparisons, and ranking items in a series.

The primary advantage of closed questions is that they are easy to code and analyze and are appropriate even for inarticulate respondents. Their utility does, however, crucially depend on how well answer choices are designed. Closed questions can only solicit unknown information to a limited extent, and only if they are partially closed.

If questions and answers are not carefully designed, closed questions can create false opinions because they provide respondents with a set of (acceptable) answers and leave little room for qualification (except for partially closed questions).

It may be sensible to allow respondents to qualify *each* answer they give to a closed

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Examples: Closed Questions

Alternative Choice
Does anybody in your household own a working radio set? *(Check only one)*
☐ Yes
☐ No

Cumulative Choice, partially closed
Which are the three favorite types of programs you like to listen to on the radio? *(Do not read answers out loud. Check <u>three</u> answers <u>or less</u>. If unclear about what to mark, check "other" and specify.)*
☐ Storytelling
☐ Music
☐ Sports
☐ Dramas / Series
☐ Local news
☐ National news
☐ International news
☐ Other (1) > Specify: _____
☐ Other (2) > Specify: _____
☐ Other (3) > Specify: _____

Rating Scale
I had a chance to hear the voice of my candidate on radio or public forum. Do you agree or disagree? *(Check only one)*
☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

Paired Comparison
Local government helps with development in this community. What do you think is more important? *(Read as "Is it more important that local government [first option] or [second option]?" and check the response)*
☐ builds wells   distributes medicine ☐
☐ educates about illness   distributes medicine ☐
☐ hires more doctors   distributes medicine ☐
☐ build treatment facilities distributes medicine ☐

question if they feel the need to do so. In practice, you would provide space for comment next to each closed question, and instruct surveyors accordingly.

Open questions
Open questions do not offer a predetermined set of responses.

In contrast to closed questions, open questions can capture unknown information, be that creative suggestions, constructive feedback, or answers that you were unable to anticipate when originally designing the question.
Open questions allow respondents to qualify their answers, and do not *prompt* for opinions in the sense that they offer answer choices that are apparently acceptable to the researcher.
On the downside, open questions take longer to answer and are hard (sometimes impossible) to code in a meaningful way, which makes generalization difficult.
In addition, very general open questions on attitudes and behaviors may result in underreporting.

> ➢ If, for instance, you ask "what have you done today?" to see whether respondents report having listened to the local radio station on a given day without being prompted by answer categories, note that they may simply consider this behavior to be self-evident and not worth reporting.

Your choice of question type depends on what kind of information you need. Open questions may be better to solicit opinions, closed questions to assess the strength of an opinion, etc.

Writing Questions

Designing good questions that generate useful and reliable data is difficult. You can conceptualize the conditions under which a question does so in the following manner:

Question asks for information you need	No→	Useless information	*Example:* "Should national government reduce spending on X *and* increase on Y?" only gives you information on <u>relative</u> preferences.

Yes ↓

| Respondents understand question and interpret it consistently | No→ | No answers / unreliable data based on inconsistent interpretations | *Example*: "Do older people think the television show should not be discontinued?" is unspecific, not well worded, and confusing. |

Yes ↓

| Respondents <u>able</u> to answer (truthfully) | No→ | Meaningless or no answers | *Example:* "Rank these 10 development priorities in order of importance" is simply too demanding. |

Yes ↓

| Respondents <u>willing and able</u> to give <u>unbiased</u> answers | No→ | Biased answers | *Example:* "People who do not vote are a threat to democracy and freedom. Did you vote in last year's election?" will likely yield biased results. |

Yes ↓

Goal: Useful, reliable data

Below are more specific guidelines to call your attention to the main problems surrounding survey question design:

Asking the right questions

- Consider the <u>value of the information</u> you are likely to get from a particular question.

➢ Answers to a question asking "were you satisfied with this workshop," for instance, will only tell you self-reported satisfaction levels. If you seek information you can act on, however, such self-reports do not tell you much. Unsatisfied respondents will have very different reasons for their answers. Either ask a different question altogether, or follow this one up with more specific ones. For example, ask for satisfaction with the trainers' competence and behavior, location, workshop content, process, etc.

- Ask one question at a time (avoid "double-barreled" questions).
  The information you get from answers to double-barreled questions is not very useful. If you want to ask for relative preferences (e.g. development goals – building wells vs. providing medicine, providing seeds vs. fertilizer), use ranking questions or paired comparisons because they state your intent more clearly.

  ➢ Avoid questions like "Is this show entertaining and informative?," "Should government reduce spending on X and increase on Y?" Instead, break such questions into two questions.

- Provide meaningful scales, i.e. offer not too many and not too few answer choices. Label each. Four to five is usually good. Larger scales are appropriate if you want to capture extreme opinions.
  - Consider whether you want to offer a neutral position, i.e. whether you provide an even or odd number of answer choices.
  - Use wording that minimizes the relative frequency of answers at the extreme ends of a scale, and generally try to achieve a good dispersion of answers. This is particularly important if you want to measure improvement over time, because this way you leave room for respondents to give better ratings in the future.
  - Do this through the adjectives with which you label your scale's endpoints. Usually, "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" is a good scale for opinion questions.
  - If you use large rating scales, e.g. from "(1) Very satisfied" through "(10) very dissatisfied," label points (2) through (9) as well. It is likely that respondents will otherwise interpret options to mean very different things.

- If you want to be particularly careful, you can offer respondents the option of *explaining* their choice of answer to a closed question by providing some space next to such questions, or by asking a follow-up, open-ended "please explain why you feel that way" question.

- For closed questions, those with alternative answer choices in particular, include all relevant alternatives as answer options. Even though it is very difficult to find out what exactly "relevant" alternatives are, well-crafted answer choices are essential to make sure you actually get the information you want. [See box]

- Note also that respondents use frequency scales and reference periods to *interpret* a question. Consider providing examples of the kind of attitudes or behaviors you are trying to learn about in order to avoid the need for respondents to interpret questions by looking at answer choices (though this may in turn suggest "appropriate" answers and result in biased responses).

➢ If you ask "How often do you discuss what you see on TV with others?" and use a frequency scale suggesting that "discussion" is a rare event (never, once a year, once a month), it is likely that respondents interpret "discussion" to mean especially meaningful conversations, or substantial and heated arguments. If you provide a different frequency scale (once a day, several times a week, once a week, less than once a week), "discussion" will be construed differently. Similar differences in interpretation will occur if you ask "How often did you discuss what you heard on TV with others last year" as opposed to "last week."

Impact of answer choices on answers

"Make sure you include all the relevant alternatives as answer choices. Leaving out a choice can give misleading results. For example, a number of recent polls that ask Americans if they support the death penalty "Yes" or "No" have found 70-75% of the respondents choosing "Yes." Polls that offer the choice between the death penalty and life in prison without the possibility of parole show support for the death penalty at about 50-60%. Polls that offer the alternatives of the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole, with the inmates working in prison to pay restitution to their victims' families have found support for the death penalty closer to 30%. So what is the true level of support for the death penalty? The lowest figure is probably truest, since it represents the percentage that favors that option regardless of the alternative offered. The need to include all relevant alternatives is not limited to political polls. You can get misleading data anytime you leave out alternatives."

Source: http://www.surveysystem.com/sdesign.htm

Understandable and clear questions

Make sure respondents understand your questions, and minimize the degree to which different respondents understand the same question differently to get reliable data.

- <u>Language should be clear, simple, and brief</u>. Write for your audience. Consider respondents' level of education and command of the language you use – especially if you intend to do an English/French/… survey with respondents that speak a *local variant* of English/French/….

- <u>Write clear and simple questions</u>. If a question can be misinterpreted, it will be. Respondents should be able to understand questions *without* further explanation. You can break down complicated questions into their component parts.

- While this is a fundamental necessity for self-administered (written) surveys (mail, online), keep in mind that even for orally administered surveys, any additional explanations given by the survey administrator will influence answers, and hence reduce their consistency across respondents.

- <u>Avoid ambiguous words and professional or program jargon</u>. Use easily understandable words (e.g., "help" instead of "assist"), and consider possible mispronunciation by surveyors (e.g., "oppose" and "propose").

  - Ambiguous words

    - Consider "often" or "regularly" (How often is that? Use "one out of three," "twice last week," etc.), "government" (Local? National?), "older people" (How old is that?).

  - You can provide definitions, but if you do these should not be given on an if-asked basis but provided to *each* respondent.

- <u>Always provide relevant time referents</u> – day, week, month, year?

- <u>Avoid double negatives</u>.
  - Rephrase "The radio program should not be ended" to "should be continued."

- When <u>structuring questions</u>, begin questions with context, continue with the actual question, and end with answering options.
  - "You have participated in workshop X. Would you recommend your colleagues or friends to do the same? Definitely, probably, maybe, or certainly not?"

- Clearly <u>communicate the kind of answer you expect</u> and avoid multiple meanings.
  - The question "When did you move to this town?," for example, can be answered with reference to a particular year, age, or event. Answers to "What is your income" would be very different depending on whether respondents understand it to be annually, monthly, or daily, before or after tax, disposable or not, etc.

  This requires that you communicate the *pragmatic* meaning of a question by telling respondents what you want to know.
  - Suppose you want to know about whether interaction between two conflicting groups speaking different languages would be possible. If you want to ascertain language proficiency and ask "do you speak language X," however, people are likely to vary widely in their interpretations. There will be over-reporting (people that only speak some words answer yes) and under-reporting (people that have a conversational command of the language may think you want to know about

fluency). Hence, you should rephrase to something like "how well do you speak language X – not at all, can hold a basic conversation, strong command, fluent."

- Keep answer order consistent. If, for instance, the first yes/no question lists the answer options in the order of "(1) Yes" and "(2) No," do not switch the two for the next yes/no question. The same applies to rating scales.

Questions respondents are able to answer (truthfully)

Ask questions that respondents can in fact answer (truthfully) in order to avoid getting meaningless responses (or none at all).

- Only ask questions that respondents are able to answer. You should not ask questions that require knowledge or information respondents are unlikely to have, or ask for the causes of or solutions to complex real or hypothetical scenarios – except if your stated goal is to test knowledge or learn about people's hypotheses about causal chains.

  ➢ Examples of too demanding questions: "What is the local chief's position on the community radio station?" "How likely is violence to resume during the next month, and why?" "Please rate these ten development goals in order of importance" or "How has the radio drama X changed life in the community."

  o Answers to such questions will only give you a basic insight into respondents' understanding of the issues and usually add considerably to respondent burden (if you get an answer at all). This type of question is better suited for **→ Interviews**, or perhaps **→ Focus Groups**, as you have the opportunity to rephrase, clarify, qualify, and ask follow-up questions.
  o With regard to questions that presuppose a level of knowledge respondents are not likely to have, you can likewise use *screening* (*filtering*) or *qualifying* questions, though you should be restrictive with their use (they increase time required to complete the survey and make it more difficult to administer).

- Consider placing memory aids when appropriate. You can, for example, add an introduction or a short summary if you are talking about a specific project that people may not remember by its name. Similarly, you can for instance play the theme song of a radio show to remind respondents of the show you are asking about.

- Do not ask too precise questions. Often, answer categories are a good alternative (such as income brackets). In some instances, however, respondents can easily remember exact numbers (e.g., how many of your children go to school at least three times a week). In these cases, keep in mind that you can still

create answer categories later. For instance, you can instruct interviewers ask for a respondent's age, note it, and then tick the appropriate category.

➢ The question "How many times did you see THE TEAM on TV last month? Answer: ___ times" will not yield meaningful answers. Answer categories such as "between 1 and 5 times" are better.

- For closed questions, answer options should be _exhaustive_ and _mutually exclusive_ – particularly if you use alternative and not cumulative answer options. Specifically:
  o Categories should not overlap to make sure your data are accurate. If, for example, you use age categories 0-15, 15-30, 30-45 it is unclear which category to mark if somebody is 15 or 30.
  o Avoid unwarranted assumptions.

  ➢ If you want to know who watches or listens to a particular TV or radio show, it would be unwarranted to assume that everybody you ask has the will and opportunity to actually watch TV or listen to radio. If you ask "Have you seen The Team on TV?" the underlying reason for "No" answers may be that the respondent does not like to watch television, or does not have the opportunity to do so (e.g., owns no set). This question is fine if you want to assess how many of your respondents have seen "The Team," but the figure you would probably be interested in is how many of regular TV viewers (short-term potential audience) have seen the show. Your question(s) should capture this distinction.

  o You can address some issues arising from unwarranted assumptions by asking screening / filtering questions ("Do you watch TV?") before getting to your actual question.

  ➢ If you want to know the occupation of each survey respondent, it would be unwarranted to assume that people only have one occupation. A woman may, for instance, be a housewife, a farmer, and sell food on the streets. Therefore, any question that includes those answer options should be multiple choice, and not alternative choice.

  o Consider adding an "other - specify" category to the answer sets if you are not sure they are exhaustive. Make questions multiple choice (instead of alternative choice) if you cannot be sure answer options are mutually exclusive.

- It may be useful to include a "don't know" option for knowledge questions and a "no opinion" option for opinion questions. This depends on research intent. If you only want answers from respondents with informed opinions, for instance, a fallback category (no opinion) may be useful.

- Avoid patterned responses (e.g. respondent consistently "agrees" on several consecutive rating scale questions) by alternating negatively and positively phrased questions.

- Be aware of cognitive limits. Of particular relevance in survey design is *hindsight bias*, the tendency that retrospective judgments are biased by outcome knowledge. This includes, for instance, assessments of the inevitability of certain events, justifications of past actions or decisions, and tests of the validity of certain beliefs or knowledge.

> **Tip:** Read more on cognitive limits in a highly instructive article by Schwarz and Oyserman referenced below in the further resources section.

Subjective theories of stability and change

"Ross and Conway (1986) had students participate in a study skills training that did not improve their skills on any objective measure (and was not expected to do so). Following the training, researchers asked participants to recall how skilled they were before the training.

Applying a plausible theory of change, namely that the training improved their skills, participants inferred that their prior skills must have been much worse than they were after training. Hence, they retrospectively reported having had poorer pre-training skills than they indicated before the training, apparently confirming the intervention's success.

This result was obtained despite incentives to respondents to recall their earlier answers as accurately as possible. As Ross and Conway (1986) noted, you can always get what you want by revising what you had"

"To assess actual change, we need to rely on before-after, or treatment-control, comparisons, and if we have missed asking the right question before the intervention, little can be done after the fact to make up for the oversight."

Source: Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001, p. 144; referencing Ross, M., & Conway, M. (1986). Remembering one's own past: The construction of personal histories. In R. M. Sorrentino & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation and cognition* (pp. 122–144). New York: Guilford.

Avoiding bias

To avoid getting biased (or no) answers, take care only to ask questions that respondents are able and willing to answer in an unbiased way

- <u>Keep open-ended questions to a minimum</u>. Though useful in some instances, they are typically more burdensome to answer. If overused, they will decrease your response rate or the quality of answers.

- <u>Avoid leading questions</u>, i.e. those suggesting that a particular answer is "right" (and thereby inducing the respondent to answer in that manner).
  - This includes questions that reference opinions by authorities or the majority ("Most people think X. Do you think X?", or questions that are introduced with phrases like "Don't you believe that Y?")
  - Be sure to provide balanced scales on rating questions. An example of an unbalanced one would be "outstanding – excellent – very good – poor" (it is skewed towards the positive).

- <u>Be careful with sensitive questions</u>. This includes questions that may be considered too personal (age, income, use of legal drugs (alcohol), etc.), questions that are incriminating (use of illegal drugs, possibly prostitution, etc.), or questions that are otherwise sensitive (e.g., "Did you vote in the last election?"). Besides being inappropriate, such questions increase respondent burden (this can prompt people to abort the survey), are unlikely to elicit honest responses, and may put respondents at risk. Some of these issues can be circumvented by asking such questions in a careful manner. Consider

  - Using categories, e.g. for income. Also provide an artificially low answer option to increase comfort;
  - Using intentionally *biased* questions to counterbalance bias arising from the sensitivity of the question – You can, for instance, legitimize an honest answer by referring to an authority (experts, leaders, etc.) or giving excuses for the socially undesirable response;

  ➤ Example: "There are many reasons people do not get a chance to vote. Sometimes there is an emergency, sometimes they get ill, or they cannot get to the polls. Do you remember voting in the election last April?"

  - Asking indirectly. Instead of asking for age, for example, ask for year of birth (if you can assume people know their year of birth).

Designing the Questionnaire

Questionnaires should be designed in a way that makes reading questions and recording answers as easy as possible for respondents and surveyors.

Title and introductory information

Give the survey a clear and succinct title that reflects its content. Write an introduction that includes study purpose, describes how findings will be used, and provides a confidentiality statement as well as the approximate amount of time respondents will need to complete the survey. Keep it short.

Sampling instructions

(This concerns orally administered surveys only.) If you use purposive sampling (see section on sampling above) in which your surveyors are asked to interview specific numbers of respondents that fit particular characteristics (e.g., fifty women, of which 25 under the age of thirty, etc.), you may want to include sampling instructions on each survey to ensure that survey takers remain aware of these instructions.

> **Sample Tally Sheet**
>
> **Men**
> [2] [3] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
> Of which   35/older   [2] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
>   34/under   [3] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
>
> **Women**
> [1] [4] [5] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
> Of which   35/older   [1] [4] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
>   34/under   [5] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Except if your enumerators are good at math, do *not* use percentages for such instructions (50% women, 50% men), but provide absolute numbers. Depending on the skill and experience of your interviewer, also provide a tally sheet that makes tracking progress easy.

You can use tallying sheets like one in the box, in which survey takers are asked to write survey IDs in boxes next to demographic quota to track their progress. The following, simple example, tracks a sample of 28, divided equally into men and women as well as those over and those under 35 years of age:

Interviewing instructions

Provide clear and comprehensive instructions on
- How to mark answers (circling, ticking, underlining);
- How to answer (check one, check all that apply, check a maximum of two, etc.);
- Whether all questions need to be answered, or which ones are optional;

- Which questions to skip, and under what conditions;
- For which questions answer options are supposed to be read out loud (or not).

It is better to repeat directions too often than not to.

<u>Highlight instructions</u> (consistently) through formatting (caps, italics, bold, position relative to question, color, etc.)

<u>Be very clear with directions on screening/filtering questions</u> – i.e. questions that determine whether respondents will be asked further questions on a subject or not ("Do you watch TV (Yes/No)? > If yes, go to question (4); if no, go to question (7)"). Ideally, you use visual aids like arrows, colors, indents, question numbering systems, etc. to clarify which question should be answered next. This is of particular relevance for written (self-administered) surveys (mail, online), or for surveys that are administered orally by inexperienced survey takers. If you are doing an online survey, consider using platforms that perform filtering automatically (i.e. survey-takers are presented only with those questions relevant to them).

Note that you can often **shorten your survey** considerably (i.e. reduce respondent burden) **by leaving out filtering questions** and replacing them with one (somewhat loaded) question.

> Assume you have a set of filtering questions like this:
>> 1 "Do you have children?" Y (go to 2) N (go to 4)
>> 2 "Do they attend school?" Y (go to 3) N (go to 4)
>> 3 "How much did you pay last month for school fees?"
>> 4 (next question)

It is much shorter to ask "How much did you spend last month on school fees for your children?" and include "Don't have children" and "Children don't go to school" answer options. Nonetheless, the question makes two unwarranted assumptions: that the respondent has children and (some of) those children attend school. It may also be perceived as loaded in the sense that it suggests respondents should be spending on school fees. Depending on your research intent, you may be willing to accept these drawbacks in the interest of reducing respondent burden.

Tracking information

If you are using multiple survey administrators <u>note the identity of the surveyor</u> on each survey. When you analyze surveys after they have been administered and notice suspicious correlations or similarities between answers (that lead you to conclude a surveyor has asked leading questions, given example responses, or simply faked the answers) you can easily identify and throw out the data in question.

If you use a paper survey, also add a space where enumerators (or you) can put unique identification numbers on each survey. These are important for later analysis – if you find inconsistent data in a spread sheet or database, you can use IDs to refer back to the original paper document to check whether data errors or inconsistencies were caused by data entry mistakes (you will be able to avoid discarding data).

Question order

Organize questions according to topic area and provide meaningful headers.
Include short sentences that lead from one question group (topic section) into another. ("Now that we have talked about the workshop itself, I would like to ask you some questions on what you took away from it.")

Order questions from easy and comfortable at the beginning (typically knowledge questions) to sensitive and challenging (typically behavior questions) at the end. People are more likely to answer difficult questions if they have already invested time in filling out a large share of the survey.

Be aware that question context imparts meaning.

  ➢ If, for instance, you survey former child soldiers and ask them whether they have gotten into a fight recently, they will construe "fight" differently if there is a preceding question that mentions or asks about violence.

Ask for demographic information at the end of the questionnaire (it can be sensitive – age, ethnicity, etc.) – except, of course, if certain demographics are used as criteria for exclusion from the survey (e.g., if it is only addressed to a certain age or occupational group).

Further options regarding question order are the following:
  • From general to specific; (if specific questions are difficult / sensitive)
  • From specific to general (if you want to help with recall);
  • From most recent to past (if you want to help with recall);

Add at least one open-ended question at the end of the survey for comments on the survey or enumerator.

Numbering and coding questions

Number your questions and code your answers once you have a fairly definite version of the questionnaire (in most cases, you should test the survey first). This allows survey takers to begin entering results into spread sheets or databases during the period of survey administration (should they have time to spare).

For more on coding, see the section on data analysis below.

Formatting

Formatting should be clean and straightforward.
- Leave sufficient white space;
- Avoid clutter;
- Use easily readable typeface in easily readable size;
- Mark *smart* use of highlighting and contrasting options such as capitalization, text styles (bold, underline, italicized), indents, and white space. (If you overuse these, contrast is lost.)

Do not break questions between pages. Keep questions that are conditionally linked (if answer A -> go to question #3, otherwise #2) on the same page, even if this results in more white space. This way, enumerators do not have to flip back and forth to see how respondents answered on previous questions.

Align response categories vertically (not horizontally) to avoid confusion about where to mark responses (the box to the left or to the right?). Scales and paired comparisons are exceptions, but make it visually unambiguous how answers are to be marked.

Leave sufficient space for open-ended questions. Note that the amount of space you provide indicates how long an answer you desire.

Mail and online surveys

Consider the following for written, self-administered surveys:

Keeping the survey short is paramount. Self-administered surveys are easiest to abort. Always ask yourself whether you (as a hypothetical member of your population) would be willing to complete it.

Make the questionnaire easy and comprehensible. Avoid clutter, leave white space to make it look easier (StatPac, nd.).

Aim for a visually appealing design and format to make your survey stand out.
- *Mail surveys:* Consider ink colors, paper color, paper quality for mail surveys.
- *Online surveys:* If you have (access to) some web-development knowledge (basic CSS and HTML), use *LimeSurvey.* It is free, very customizable and much better than SurveyMonkey (http://www.limesurvey.org).

Make the survey <u>consistently interesting</u>. Vary answer types – do not, for example, ask rating scale question after rating scale question, respondents will likely get bored and fall into response sets (same answer to each question). At the same time, try to preserve a smooth question flow.

Have realistic expectations – put the <u>most important questions in the first half</u> of the questionnaire, as respondents often send back questionnaires that are only half completed.

Translating

If you need to translate your survey, you should use translators who
- have experience with surveys and are thus aware of the peculiarities of question design;
- are fluent in both relevant languages.

This is *crucial* to maintain the quality of your questionnaire (and hence the reliability and usefulness of answers).

Give translators a detailed briefing on survey objectives and questions. Explain each question and the kind of information you hope to elicit.

If you have the time and resources, use a different translator to translate the survey back to English (the original language) in order to check for possible errors.

Lesson Learned: Translation

In one recent study a great deal of time and effort was taken to carefully translate a questionnaire from English into the local language. It was discovered during the training that most of the enumerators knew how to speak the local language but *did not know how to read it.* Enumerators conducted the surveys in the local language but did the translation from English mentally during the interviews.

Source: Search for Common Ground, internal document on lessons learned.

Testing the Survey

It is crucial that you test your survey instrument before administering it. The general rationale is to assess whether your survey, in its current format, actually generates reliable and useful data.

Issues to look for

Mirroring the considerations you should apply in question design (and questionnaire formatting), check for the following issues. (This list is not exhaustive, and only highlights some issues. Refer to the section on <u>question design</u> for a more specific list of problems you should look for.)

- **Useless / duplicate information** (your questions ask for data you do not need)
  - Variability in responses: Is there any question that people consistently answer the same way (including rating scales)? If this is not intentional, the question may be pointless in the first place ("Are you alive?") or in need of rephrasing or other changes.

    ➢ If you get consistent "Yes" answers to "Are you satisfied with X," change the question to "How satisfied are you with X" and introduce a rating scale.

  - Redundant information: If you get the same information twice – which is easy to notice with open-ended questions – you may want to eliminate or rephrase one question.

    ➢ In a survey in Sierra Leone, for instance, most respondents understood the question "What programs do you like to hear on the radio?" to mean the same as "What type of topics and issues would you like to hear about on the radio?" – it may have been more appropriate to rephrase the second question along the lines of "What should the radio talk about in the future that it is not talking about already?"

  - You may consider converting open-ended questions that yield responses you can reasonably and exhaustively classify to closed alternative or cumulative choice questions to facilitate later analysis.

    ➢ If, say, you ask testing subjects a question on how they have benefited from the local community radio station, you may find that respondents give a relatively consistent set of answers. Having realized this in testing, you may choose to make this a multiple choice question with the answer options "It reduced crime," "It provides entertainment," "I know what is happening in my community," and "I can hear programs in my own language." In this case, you would still like to add an "Other – Specify" answer option, since you know that these answer choices are not exhaustive.

- Do the questions provide the information you seek? Try answering your research question(s) with the data you gather during testing. You may find that you need additional information, can omit certain questions, and should rephrase others.

- **Low response rates** (respondents unwilling to begin or complete the survey)
  Check for anything that unduly increases respondent burden (bad introduction, bad formatting/instructions, inconveniences in self-administered surveys, sensitive questions, survey length, etc.).
- **Unreliable information** (respondents do not understand questions or interpret them differently)
  - Clarity of language: Do respondents need additional explanations to understand the questions or particular words, or give feedback to that effect?
  - Response sets: Are there respondents who tend to always agree or disagree? If so, consider varying question phrasing between positive and negative.

- **Meaningless information** (respondents unable to answer)
  - Difficult questions: Are respondents able to answer the questions? Do questions assume knowledge that respondents do not have?
  - Exhaustiveness: Check whether each answer to a closed question can be appropriately marked in the list of choices you prepared. If you offer an "Other – specify" option, this may yield additional items you would like to include in your list.
  - Do many respondents try to qualify their answers? This may indicate that your answer choices do not accurately reflect what respondents want to say.

- **Biased information** (respondents unable or unwilling to answer truthfully)
  - Bias is very difficult to detect. You will mainly need to rely on your common sense. Consider that bias can result from both your questions and the circumstances of survey administration (more on this below).
  - Depending on the resources at your disposal, you can, however:

    - Compare responses to existing records;
    - Compare responses given in distinct circumstances you suspect to be relevant (e.g. morning/evening; different survey administrators (e.g. male/female or local/expatriate); presence of others/alone);
    - Compare data from alternatively worded questions asked of comparable respondents. An example would be to ask one set of respondents "Local government knows about your development needs. Do you agree/disagree?" another "Local government does not know about your needs. Do you agree/disagree" and yet

another "Does local government know about your needs?
Yes/No."

- **Clarity of instructions/formatting**
  - Are survey administrators (or, with self-administered surveys, respondents themselves) comfortable with instructions? Do they know where to mark answers, how to mark answers, and correctly follow filtering instructions?
  - Is there enough space for open-ended responses?

Through testing, you will also learn how long it takes to complete the survey. Include this information in the introduction. In addition, testing will allow you to attempt coding and analysis to make sure the data can be analyzed in the way you intended.

Testing Process

Key to testing is that you *simulate actual data collection procedures as closely as possible*. This includes characteristics of respondents (culture, ethnicity, language, education, place of residence, occupation, etc) and mode of administration (e.g., ethnicity, dress, behavior, and education of survey administrator).
- ➢ If you plan to survey rural dwellers, try not to test your survey in a city, as a city's population will differ in, for instance, education and literacy levels;
- ➢ If you are going to conduct a mail survey, do not give any additional verbal explanations to your test audience;
- ➢ If you intend to employ local enumerators in administering a face to face survey, consider doing the same for testing.

Do not test your survey on your chosen sample but select a different test group (e.g. in a different location) to avoid surveying respondents twice.

Depending on the resources at your disposal – and your skill in survey design – you should do extensive testing to the extent that you are genuinely interested in gathering useful and reliable data. The following outlines a possible three-step testing process. You should, however, adjust it to your needs and resources:

- **Step 1:** Feedback from co-workers and/or acquaintances not familiar with development jargon and project context
  - Discuss/review survey questions and questionnaire design with colleagues – preferably those that have experience with survey design. You can also administer some surveys to colleagues with whom you have not yet discussed the survey.
  - Review questions and survey design based on the feedback you get, but do take it with a grain of salt if colleagues differ from your sample in relevant dimensions (level of education, language, trust towards you, etc.).

- **Step 2:** Small-scale pre-testing
    - Administer the survey to a few individuals from your target population to get in-depth, qualitative feedback. As this is likely to be fairly time-consuming, only discuss some questions, not the whole survey, with each interviewee.
    - If you have the time and resources, consider testing different variations of one particular question with different people.
    - Ask them question along the lines of: Whether they understand questions, how they interpret them, why they are unwilling to answer to some, whether and why they think particular questions are difficult, why they are not willing to complete the survey, why they seem to always agree (if they do), etc.
    - Review questions and survey design. If you change the survey substantially as a result, consider repeating this step.

- **Step 3:** Testing
    - Administer the *complete* questionnaire to a set of respondents. Ask for comments at the end and separately capture respondents' reactions to the survey (e.g., "respondent was visibly uncomfortable with question X" or "needed to explain question to respondent").
    - Review questions and survey design. If you change the survey substantially as a result, consider repeating parts (or all) of the testing process.
    - If you plan to use enumerators for survey administration, use them in testing. Use more than one, as different enumerators will uncover different problems.

Administering the Survey

When administering a survey, make sure that each is assigned a unique identifier number (ID) as soon as possible. (This is not an issue for online surveys.) Survey IDs will later enable you to check whether inconsistent data can be traced to errors in data entry.

Guarantee confidentiality. Tell respondents how you will attribute information they give you – will you use respondents' names, summarize (e.g., male school children), or make no attributions? Despite surveys typically being anonymous, be sure to guarantee confidentiality in settings where some opinions can put respondents in danger. Individuals can in some cases be identified even if you do not use their names (a female teacher older than 50 interviewed in village N is likely to stand out when there is only one school, and most teachers are male). This includes not only stating your intent, but taking further measures – e.g. anonymizing data, and taking storage precautions.

Orally Administered Surveys

For **orally administered** surveys (face to face, phone), be aware of the following:

- Introductions are important, and most refusals occur at this point. You need to establish legitimacy quickly. This includes informing the potential respondent of
  - Identity of the survey administrator and organization;
  - Survey topic;
  - Approximate survey duration;
  - Why the respondent should cooperate (you can, for instance, illustrate how the purpose of the survey will benefit the respondent).
- Thank respondents for their participation.
- Minimize bias. Sources of bias include:
  - Induced bias
    - o Make sure that *questions are consistently administered and communicated* by survey takers. They should not provide additional information, instructions, or examples.
  - Respondent effect

    Generally, respondents are likely to give answers intended to impress the surveyor. Include verification questions (i.e. check for consistency) and/or use other data collection methods to corroborate survey results (See → **Mixed Methods Module**).

  - Perceived study purpose

    Respondents will give different answers depending on the perceived study purpose. Clarify it to the extent necessary (e.g. avoid people perceiving your survey as a government study), but remain vague (so respondents do not give answers that they think you want). Asking very specific questions also reduces this type of bias.

  - Interviewer's effect / contextual and cultural issues

    - o Attributes of the surveyor induce people to give biased answers. A formally educated surveyor of different ethnicity using special terminology, wearing clean and uncommon clothing, and being paid is, in poorer settings, likely to be perceived as an authority figure. This perception will influence responses.
    - o Norms (regarding, e.g., the role of women or youth as opposed to men or elders) influence not only the bias of responses, but can in some cases expose respondents to physical danger. In such sensitive circumstances, you should conduct surveys in private – which can be

very difficult, especially in rural contexts. Also guarantee and ensure anonymity – particularly if you ask sensitive questions.
- Generic remedies to these issues – given your questions are good – are to use experienced surveyors or at least to train interviewers well (see also below), and to verify information either within the survey (verification questions) or by using other research methods (See → **Mixed Methods Module**).

- To remedy bias, and out of simple respect for respondents, survey takers should (Kumar, 2006)
    - Dress simply and appropriately, respect local norms of dress and behavior;
    - Conduct interviews at a time appropriate for respondents, which means making appointments with people that are likely to have scheduling conflicts;
    - Honestly answer questions that respondents may have;
    - Avoid giving the impression that the survey is a quiz;
    - Refrain from signaling their approval or disapproval of answers, *particularly* if respondents give wrong answers to knowledge questions;
    - Show respect and appreciation for respondents' views and opinions;
    - Read questions slowly (if interviewers hurry, respondents are likely to do the same);
    - Reassure respondents where necessary – for instance putting respondents from marginalized groups at ease by telling them that no answer is right or wrong, and that the point is just to elicit respondents' views;
    - Follow the question sequence.

- If responses are not forthcoming, survey takers can (Kumar, 2006)
    - Repeat questions in response to obvious misinterpretation, to give respondents more time, and to prevent them from straying from the subject;
    - Note that enumerators should *avoid reformulating* questions – ideally, you discovered comprehension difficulties during testing, and will only rarely be confronted with respondents that do not understand your questions. If reformulation / explanation is indeed rarely necessary, and if survey takers are trained well, you may choose to let them reformulate if they deem it appropriate.
    - Pause for answers;
    - Convey that a more comprehensive response is expected by pausing and using gestures (nodding, looking);
    - Repeat respondents' replies to encourage them to say more;
    - Use *neutral* comments or questions ("Is there anything else?" "Do you have any other reasons?" "Could you tell me more about this?" "Why do you feel this way?" "When did this happen?" "What do you mean?" "In what way?").

- Gently ask for clarification of inconsistent, ambiguous, or contradictory responses, and take the blame ("I am not sure if I got the point." "I want to make sure I understood you correctly").

- When recording answers, survey takers should (Kumar, 2006)
    - Use the respondents' language – including phrases, grammar, peculiarities of speech, emphases – and avoid distorting respondents' true intent;
    - Note nonverbal cues where appropriate – such as skeptical expressions;
    - Repeat answers while taking notes to demonstrate active listening, give them time to write, and give respondents time to reflect;
    - Interpret answers to rating scale questions by identifying the answer option with the closest fit - a definite "yes" uttered with vehemence, for instance, may best correspond to "strongly agree;."
    - Edit any notes immediately (same day) after the interview.

Be aware of the practical necessities of administering a survey, particularly with face to face surveys – make sure, for example, to bring enough survey copies to places where you are unlikely to find photocopying facilities and factor in any survey copies you intend to use for training purposes.

Self-Administered Surveys

For **self-administered surveys** (mail, online), consider the following:

- Carefully craft good cover letters as those increase the response rate. A good cover letter (Creative Research Systems, n.d.)
    - Asks recipients to take the survey, and explains how this will improve some aspect of the recipient's life – appeal to altruism;
    - Includes a short introduction – who are you (organization), why are you doing the survey?
    - Provides instructions on how to complete the survey;
    - Indicates the timeframe in which the survey should be completed;
    - Assures confidentiality;
    - Provides a direct link if it is an online survey;
    - Includes contact information for questions;
- Make surveys convenient.
    - Mail surveys: Include a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope. Postage stamped envelopes get better response rates than business reply envelopes (though they are more costly) (StatPac, nd.)

- Online surveys: Make sure that respondents get a link they can click (via email), do not have to register, and have a status bar that shows their progress.
- Consider providing <u>incentives</u> (StatPac, n.d.)
    - At the same time, be careful with incentives that are conditional upon the completion of the survey (such as raffles) – if the primary intent is to get a reward, respondents may be tempted to provide answers that in no way correspond to the truth.
    - In addition, avoid insulting potential respondents with rewards they do not want.

Using (Local) Surveyors

If your survey is to be administered by individuals without prior experience, be sure to train them properly. Keep cultural considerations in mind when selecting surveyors.

If you use non-probabilistic sampling, also keep in mind that *local* surveyors will likely interview people they know and are familiar with. A male student, for instance, will likely interview fellow students, teachers, men, and youth in disproportionate numbers. In such instances, it makes sense to give specific instructions to each survey taker – for example not to interview more than a certain number of teachers, students, and youth – even if these demographics are not part of your initial sampling strategy.
Survey takers should be paid per survey to encourage higher productivity and conscientious work. Consider the total number of surveys enumerators can reasonably complete in one day (allow for survey duration, travel time, meals, etc.) and base your per-survey rate on an adequate daily rate. Consider limiting the number of surveys enumerators are allowed to complete on any given day to discourage hasty and sloppy survey administration.

Regarding training, consider that
- You should bring additional copies of surveys for training if photocopying facilities are not available on location;
- Local surveyors may not have formal education and may need extensive instruction;
- If enumerators are literate, consider providing a supplementary explanatory sheet that gives more detailed instructions, such as:

Question	Instructions
7	Do not read response categories out loud. Wait for respondent to answer, mark appropriate categories. Probe for additional answers by asking "What else did you do?" but do not help the respondent with answers.
9	If possible, try to write down the <u>titles</u> of the radio programs the

respondent likes (e.g., "Comedy Hour," "Request Hour"). If the respondent answers "entertainment," for example, ask for the name of the entertainment program, but <u>do not</u> give examples or help respondents with the answers.

Crucial elements to training are the following

- While you can give general instructions – such as on the survey purpose, how to ask questions, not to give explanations, how to behave, sampling strategy – to a *group* of surveyors you want to employ, actual training should be *one-on-one*.
- First, talk the trainee through the survey, explain the purpose of each question, highlight how it should be answered and marked, emphasize that instructions should be followed, and that surveys need to be complete.
- Then, administer one or two surveys yourself to demonstrate how they are supposed to be administered.
- After, let the trainee administer surveys in your presence until you are satisfied with his or her performance. Usually, you should plan to do *at least* five surveys like this, ideally more, and give feedback after each one (this can take several hours, so make sure to plan appropriately). Be sure the trainee
  - Asks the questions as they are;
  - Asks questions in the right order;
  - Marks answers correctly;
  - Does not offer explanations, interpretations, or examples of answers (to avoid bias) – if you have not tested the survey instrument properly, you may experience significant difficulties at this point;
  - Introduces the survey and him/herself appropriately, and gives neutral feedback, behaves appropriately (see also <u>above on avoiding bias</u>);
  - Delivers complete surveys (i.e. all questions answered);
  - Understands and follows the instructions;
  - Writes legibly;
  - Does not distort respondents' intent.
- As soon as you think the trainee is ready, begin by handing out surveys to be administered in small packages. Start with a small number (e.g., 10 on the first day) and increase subsequently. Have the trainee return completed surveys each evening. Check whether the survey is being administered correctly. This includes (apart from the above list)
  - Making sure that the trained enumerator follows sampling instructions, and tracks his or her progress;
  - Checking if the answers are likely to be biased or made up. If your surveyor is faking responses, asking leading questions, or not appropriately recording responses, you will likely find similarities across surveys. Compare different

answers to one particular question and check for similarities such as the order of responses to open questions, phrases/words used, unexpectedly sophisticated or unlikely answers, and suspiciously extensive answers.

- Generally, avoid paying upfront. Exceptions may be where you have to pay surveyors for local transport, or more extensive travel, as well as lodging.

Analyzing Data

Data entry is an area that causes a lot of problems, which result from:
- Poorly set up data templates;
- Different data entry clerks using different templates;
- Data entry errors;
- Missing data (e.g., "Other" is selected, but respondents' specification is omitted).

Before you analyze data, you need to transfer survey responses into a format in which you can analyze them with data-processing software. In practice, this means developing a table into which you can enter your data (data entry template), and translating this data into numbers to facilitate analysis. This section assumes that you are using MS Excel for data analysis. Note that other software (MS Access, SPSS) is available.

If you conduct an online survey, coding is typically done automatically. Make sure, however, to pick a service that allows you to export data into relevant formats – some allow you to export directly into MS Excel, but any service that offers you to export into "Comma Separated Values" (CSV) is fine. You can import such files into standard software, including MS Excel. Note that you can bypass the coding/data entry process by re-creating your (paper) survey online and converting your data into an electronic format by simply "completing" as many online surveys as you have on paper. If you are experienced with MS Access, you can set up similar data entry forms. This is, however, likely to take longer than the coding process outlined here.

Note that if data entry is performed by individuals that are not familiar with the survey and the data template, you should train those individuals. Let them enter several surveys into the data template, check for entry errors, and give feedback.

Generally, be sure to verify data before performing analysis. (See Validating Data below on how to support this process using Excel's data validation functionality). In particular,
- Check whether you have the correct number of surveys entered in your data template. Identify duplicate entries via the unique survey ID.
- Check for missing data, i.e. whether all questions that were (or should have been) answered are indeed entered into your data template. Also check whether questions

that <u>should not</u> have been answered are indeed blank (or filled with zeroes, depending on your coding scheme).
- Check whether data is plausible.

Coding Responses

The purpose of coding is to translate questions and answers into a format suitable for analysis with data-processing software. In effect, you will translate a survey into a table in which each column corresponds to one answer, and each row corresponds to one completed survey [See Table (2) for example]. Do not forget to include one column that identifies the hardcopy survey that each row refers to via the unique survey ID you (should have) assigned to each returned and completed survey.

First, number your questions (if you have not yet done so). Then, assign unique numbers to each answer option.]See the Example Box].

Sample Survey Questions for Coding

1   **What is your sex?**
 	
     ☐ Male
     ☒ Female

2   **Please name your favorite radio shows.**
     Check all that apply.
 	
     ☐ Storytelling
     ☒ Comedy hour
     ☐ Local news
     ☒ Other(s) - - - - - - - > *Specify all*: Music_____

3   **The radio gives you important information about what is happening in the village. Do strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?**
 	
   Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree
      ☐   ☐   ☒   ☐

Note: These questions are arbitrary and only intended to demonstrate coding principles. Question numbers in **bold** in the left column. Numbers are arbitrary.

Based on the numbers you have assigned, begin by creating columns for each answer. Specifically,
- Use <u>one</u> column for questions with <u>alternative</u> answer options. (Questions 1 and 3 in the example.)

- When you enter actual responses into your table, you can conclusively identify which answer was checked by entering the corresponding answer number into the cell.
- Note that this is a shortcut. You could, of course, use one cell per answer option, and indicate in your data table whether that option was checked ("1") or not ("0"). Because you know that closed questions with alternative answers (should) have <u>only</u> one answer, however, you can use a single cell to accommodate all possible answers.
- For Question 3 in the example above, you would code "strongly agree" as "1", "agree" as "2", and so on.
- Use <u>multiple</u> columns for questions with <u>cumulative</u> answer options. (Question 2 in the example.)
  - When you enter actual responses into your table, you need one column for each answer option because it is difficult (though not impossible) to assign <u>one</u> number that uniquely identifies the myriad of answer combinations any individual may choose.
  - Use "0" for not checked, and "1" for checked.
  - You need one column for each answer option. (Depending on your experience with data processing software, you may want to split "Other – Specify" type questions into two columns – one indicating whether "Other" was checked, and one containing whatever was written next to "Specify." This makes analysis easier.)
- Use <u>one</u> column for any <u>open-ended questions</u>.
- See the Sample Data Table.

Sample Data Table

ID	Q1	Q2.1	Q2.2	Q2.3	Q2.4	Q2.4-S	Q3
001	1	0	1	0	1	Music	3
002	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
003	1	1	1	0	1	Music	3
004	0	0	0	1	1	Requests	1

Note: This data is entirely fictional, but based upon the previous coding sample survey. Refer to the text for explanations. Column names ("Q1," "Q2.4-S") are completely arbitrary – just make sure they are clear to you and anybody who may want to use the data later. Note that each survey is identified by its unique ID.

You can, of course, add additional columns <u>to quantify answers</u> to open-ended questions if you discover patterns in those answers. (Ideally, however, you would have recognized such patterns during testing, and replaced the open-ended with a closed question.) In the sample data table above, for instance, you would add columns to quantify data in Q2.4-S – in this instance a column each for "Music" and "Requests" – and denote whether a respondent mentioned either of those by putting a "1" or a "0" in the respective cells of a given row.

Consider also adding columns to denote invalid or biased data. Suppose, for instance, that you are doing a radio listenership survey in which you also ask respondents to rate seven particular programs using rating scales. If you strongly suspect that some respondents have fallen into response sets (e.g., checked the highest rating available on all rating scale questions, but not because this reflects their opinion), or if data are incomplete, you can add a column "Ratings Biased" or "Ratings Incomplete" to facilitate the exclusion of respective values in future analysis. Instead of deleting the entire survey from your dataset, you can perform analyses with answers you think likely to be correct (such as gender, whether a person listens to the radio, etc.), while dynamically excluding answers you believe are biased (more on that later).

Preventing Data Entry Errors

You should – obviously – make sure that data is copied correctly from paper to data table. MS Excel offers some tools to do this. (The instructions below are tailored to Excel 2007. Consult the "Help" section of earlier Excel versions if you do not have Office 2007.)

- **Fix your table headers in place**
    - You should fix your headers in place, so that they will always be in the top row even when you scroll down.
    - To do this, make sure you have selected the relevant spreadsheet, go to the "View" tab, click "Freeze Panes" (in the "Window" group), and click "Freeze Top Row." If you want to freeze more than one row, simply select all rows you want to freeze, and click "Freeze Panes" instead of "Freeze Top Row."
- **Use data validation**
    - You can prevent users entering values that are obviously incorrect. Suppose, for instance, you have coded "male" as "0" and "female" as "1." Using Excel's data validation feature, you can make sure that data entry clerks receive a warning box if they enter a value that is clearly wrong, such as "2" or "male."

- To do this, given that you have your headers in place and a coding scheme developed, select an entire column by left-clicking its header number or letter. Keeping the selection, go to the "Data" tab, locate the "Data Tools" group, and click on "Data Validation."
- A dialogue box opens. Under "Allow:" you can specify the *correct* values for this column.

    - For age, for instance, you would use "whole number," select "between" under "Data:" and enter a relevant minimum and maximum value (for instance 7 and 99). Data entry clerks will be alerted if, for example, they enter 159 instead of 15 by accident.
    - You can also specify *lists* of accepted values. Choose "list" under "Allow:" and enter accepted values in the "Source:" field, separated by commas. For the rating question in the above example, you would enter "1,2,3,4"
- In the same dialogue box, note that there are two more tabs. Under "Input Message," you can make a small box appear whenever a particular cell is selected. You can specify a "title", like "Gender" (for a gender column), and specify an "input message," which gets displayed as well For instance, write "Male=0, Female=1" so that data entry clerks are reminded of the coding each time they select a cell in the "Gender" column.
- Under the "Error Alert" tab, you can specify the title and content of the message box that gets displayed when a user enters wrong values.

The Basics of Data Analysis using MS Excel

Keep your data *organized* using multiple spread sheets within a given workbook. Use one spread sheet for raw data, one in which you perform any edits of your raw data, one for basic figures (number of people surveyed, disaggregated by gender, age, etc.), and further sheets for advanced calculations.

Generally, <u>do</u> consult the web for any help using Excel – there is a wealth of tutorials with good illustrations and explanations available, official and other. The rest is trial and error.

Pivot Tables

Pivot tables are useful to give you a quick overview of your data and trends. They can, however, be a bit cumbersome and inflexible.

Create a new worksheet, navigate to the "Insert" tab, and click "Insert Pivot Table" in the "Tables" group. A dialog box appears and prompts you for a data source. Press "F3" on the keyboard to paste the data range you previously defined as `Data_ALL` into the "Table/Range" field. Confirm with "OK."

The pivot table has three main areas – column fields, row fields, and data items. Actual operations (counts, sums, averages, etc.) are performed on <u>data items</u>. For count operations (how many X say Z?), use the "ID" field as the data items: Locate "ID" in the sidebar to the right, and drag it to where it says "Drop Data Items Here." If you wanted to do age averages by demographics, you would use your "Age" field as a data item – provided you actually have numerical age data available (i.e. not just categories). You can play around with different operations by double-clicking in the top-left corner of the Pivot Table, where it should now say "Sum of ID" or "Count of ID." As in this example, we intend to do a demographic breakdown similar to the one above, be sure to switch to "Count of ID" by double clicking in the top left corner and choosing "Count" in the "Summarize by" tab in the dialogue box that opens. Confirm by clicking OK.

You should now see a table like this:

Count of ID	Total
Total	28

By dragging and dropping fields listed in the sidebar to the right onto this table, or into the boxes below the field list on the sidebar, you can differentiate the ID count. Drag the "Gender" field down to the box in the sidebar that says "Row Labels." Your table should now look like this:

Count of ID	
Gender	Total
0	14
1	14
Grand Total	28

Excel counts the number of rows that have any value in the "ID" column broken down for different values (0 and 1) of the "Gender" column. Instead of absolute values, you can also <u>display percentages</u>: To do so, double click where it says "Count of ID" (or find "Count of ID" in the box on the sidebar labeled "Values," left-click, and select "Value field settings…"). In the dialogue box, switch to the tab labeled "Show values as" and chose "% of total" from the drop-down list. Confirm by clicking OK.

To differentiate your data further, drag the "Age" field into the "Column labels" box in the sidebar to the right, and drag the "Town" field to the "Row labels" box, placing it

<u>before</u> the "Gender" field that should already be there. Your table should now look like this:

Count of ID		Age			
Town	Gender	0	1	2	Grand Total
0	0	7.14%	14.29%	10.71%	32.14%
	1	7.14%	3.57%	10.71%	21.43%
0 Total		14.29%	17.86%	21.43%	53.57%
1	0	3.57%	7.14%	7.14%	17.86%
	1	10.71%	14.29%	3.57%	28.57%
1 Total		14.29%	21.43%	10.71%	46.43%
Grand Total		28.57%	39.29%	32.14%	100.00%

You now have an overview of the demographics of your survey. Note that you can filter those results. In Excel, you should see buttons with downward arrows next to the fields "Town," "Gender," and "Age." If you click those, you have the option of un-checking certain values. Should you only want to see data for respondents in the highest age group ("2"), click the arrow next to "Age" and un-check the values "0" and "1."

Experiment with pivot tables to learn how they work. Excel also offers you to do "Pivot Charts" based on a pivot table. (Find this option under the "Pivot Table Tools" tabs in the ribbon, which appears once you select a pivot table.)

Appendix: Survey Budget

Note: What follows are general suggestions on which factors you may need to take into account when budgeting for a survey. The emphasis rests on face-to-face surveys.

Survey Design and Testing

Consider wages (staff salaries or cost of external consultants), supplies (paper, notebooks, pens), transport to testing sites.

Survey Administration
To establish the cost of survey administration, consider including the following in your calculations:

(1) Survey supervisor wages

(2) Survey supervisor transport, accommodation, meals

(3) Enumerator wages

1. Determine how long it will take to complete a survey (if you did not establish this during testing, conduct a survey with a colleague or give your best estimate);
2. Based on this figure, determine how many surveys can reasonably be completed within one day.
   - Take into account time needed for enumerators to travel between respondents, security situation (e.g., is it safe for enumerators in the evening?), at what time you can reasonably expect respondents to be able and willing to answer (e.g., are they working during the day?), and similar factors.
   - Be sure to account for contingencies, particularly in a developing country context. For instance, travel may simply not be feasible (particularly in the rainy season), cars or motorbikes may break down, and very rarely are people "on time" for appointments (respondents, drivers, etc.).
3. Calculate man-days needed for the survey by dividing sample size by the number of surveys that can be completed in any given day;

4. Decide on what to pay enumerators (per hour / per survey / per diem), and calculate or estimate per diem;

5. ➔ Multiply man-days by per diem to get an estimate of the expected cost for enumerators.

(4) Enumerator travel/accommodation

6. Decide how many enumerators you want to use. You may have a fixed time-frame in which the research must be completed – in this case, divide target time in days by the number of surveys that can reasonably be completed in a given day to get an estimate of how many enumerators you will need.

7. Estimate transport cost, both fixed and variable, per enumerator. This may include:
    a. Travel to and from a research site and/or travel between areas (e.g., towns) in a given research site;
    b. (Daily) travel from enumerator's home to your office to collect survey forms in the morning and deliver completed surveys in the evening;
    c. Travel cost associated with getting from one to the next respondent.
8. Also estimate cost for accommodation and meals per enumerator, if applicable.
9. ➔ Based on these figures, calculate additional cost for enumerators due to travel/accommodation expenses.

(5) Supplies

10. Calculate cost for copying paper questionnaires, take into account number of pages per questionnaire, sample size, additional questionnaires for training and contingencies;
11. Also allow for pens, envelopes, notebooks, and other necessary equipment.

Recruiting and Training Enumerators

Take into account cost of recruiting. Estimate training cost based on number and salaries of trainers, expected duration of training, transport to training sites, etc.

Data Analysis / Report Writing

Data entry clerks, data analysis in-house or external, report writing internal/external, cost for design.

Resources Consulted

Church, C., & Rogers, M. M. (2006). *Designing for results: Integrating monitoring and evaluation in conflict transformation programs.* Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground. http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

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World Bank (2004). *Monitoring & evaluation. Some tools, methods & approaches.*
Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/yjg8mp2

http://devcompage.com/2009/07/05/how-to-develop-a-realistic-survey-budget/

http://www.greatbrook.com

http://stattrek.com

Additional Resources

http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/ucla.pdf
>
> A list of further (web) resources on writing survey questions, sampling, and other related topics.

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG566.pdf
>
> Kumar, K. (2006). *Conducting mini surveys in developing countries.* Washington, DC: USAID.
>
> (A very practical and useful guide. Though focused on mini-surveys, most of it is applicable to more extensive surveys as well).

http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php
>
> Research Methods Knowledge Base – a comprehensive guide on surveys with a more scientific approach. Good visualizations.

Schwarz, N. & Oyserman, D. (2001). Asking questions about behavior: Cognition, communication, and questionnaire construction. *American Journal of Evaluation, 22*, 127-160.
>
> Highly insightful article on the relevance of cognitive bias when asking questions about behaviors and attitudes.

Online survey hosting. Free, flexible, complete functionality: http://www.sissurvey.net; http://www.limesurvey.org, or free with limited functionality: http:/www.surveymonkey.com

Literature Review Module

This module will help the user understand what a literature review is, how it can best be used, and provide resources and methods to search and review literature

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents
(Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)

- ➤ **What is a literature review?**

- ➤ **What is a literature review for?**

- ➤ **Why review the literature?**

- ➤ **When should they be done?**

- ➤ **How do I get started?**

- • **Step 1**

- • **Step 2**

- • **Step 3**

- • **Step 4**

- ➤ **Some tips for literature reviews**

- ➤ **Additional Resources**

Purpose of module – To illustrate best practices in evaluation by using literature reviews to compare what has been done in the field. Increase knowledge base of staff working on evaluations and analysis. Gives reader an understanding of what has been attempted, succeeded, and failed.

What is a literature review?

A literature review collects and analyses the published information on a particular topic or situation. The review can focus on a certain time period. Literature reviews will also show the research methodologies used to study an issue or the different monitoring and evaluation methods.

It will review all relevant documents: reports, guidelines, academic articles, news articles, journals, study notes, whitepapers. A simple literature review can be a summary of the sources, but a more useful review will organize the sources, summarize, and analyze the information relevant to your project. All sources are synthesized and re-organize to point out key information.

A Literature Review is:
- The **selection of available documents** (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence. [This selection is] written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and
- The **effective evaluation** of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. (Hart C. 1998. *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the*

Literature reviews do not produce any new or original information on a subject, rather they gather and illustrate the existing studies of your topic. However, they can provide new interpretations of the material and may even evaluate the literature to give advice for the reader on relevant proposal direction and/or evaluation strategy.

Back to Top

What is a literature review for?

- Literature reviews help in baseline assessments, concept notes, and conflict analysis
- To collect information on previously conducted research and practice concerning a topic
- Help you understand the situation
- Illustrate what practice has been done, what works and what does not work
- Identify gaps in the research and practice
- Help justify your project and evaluation

Why review the literature?

- Gives a quick and solid overview guide on a particular subject matter, especially when you do not have time to do a full research.
- Keeps you up to date on what is going on currently in the field.
- Shows the wide-ranging results of previous research and practice on a problem or situation.
- Allows for a broad view on an issue or situation in order to focus on the topic area.
- Finds research and practice you were not aware of and which are relevant to the

What are the key sources?

What are the major issues and debates about the topic?

What are the political standpoints?

What are the origins and definitions of the topic?

What are the key theories, concepts and ideas?

What are the epistemological and ontological grounds for the discipline?

Literature search and review on your topic

How is knowledge on the topic structured and organised?

What are the main questions and problems that have been addressed to date?

How have approaches to these questions increased our understanding and knowledge?

Some of the questions the review of the literature can answer

Adapted from Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. London, Sage, p. 14. Source: The Learning Centre UNSW http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au

project.

When should they be done?

Literature reviews are done during the development of a proposal and as part of the data collection for conducting an evaluation. It is the foundation and support for developing evaluation approaches, and a first viewpoint of a situation or problem.

How do I get started?

- ❑ **Step 1:**
  - ❑ Determine the scope of the program or the program evaluation to decide what literature to focus on. Then, the scope can become more precise and the methods needed in an evaluation will become clearer.

- ❑ **Step 2:**
  - ❑ Search for literature. Collect all relevant documents and sources. See Resources below for helpful places to search for literature.

- ❑ **Step 3:**
  - ❑ Organizing and synthesizing sources: list publication; author; summarizing main points of the article; list main points concerning a specific theme (e.g. how author views the effectiveness of a certain peacebuilding or evaluation approach). Always note page numbers where possible for reflection, if needed.
  - ❑ This can be summarized in simple paragraphs or in table form. Organizing your literature and summaries in a table allows you to quickly refer to and find specific sources.
  - ❑ You can organize your review summary chronologically, thematically, or by relevancy

Economic Sanctions Literature Review

Article	General Overview	How Author Viewed Effectiveness of Sanctions
Zhou, Weifeng. '*Linking International Trade and Labour Standards:* The *Effectiveness of Sanctions under the European Union*' 2011	• EU approach more incentive based, including different preferences for various country circumstances. • Giving additional preferences for 'good behaviour' (e.g. GSP+) (p.	• The EU sanction and withdraw of GSP for Belarus and Myanmar were unsuccessful. This was partly due to the countries close ties with strong economic countries, Russia and China (p. 76). • Sanctions are effective when (pp. 67-68, 76):

	65) • Goal: stimulate export growth, contribute to reducing poverty, and promote sustainable development. (p. 65)	• When used against close trading partners (not the case with EU-Belarus & Myanmar). • Used by a large country against a smaller target • When sender's goals are modest • When sanctions are costly to the target but not the sender • When sender and target are allies • When the target does not receive aid from third parties • When sanctions are short-term
Hufbauer & Oegg. *'Targeted Sanctions: A policy Alternative?'* 2000.	• Focuses on humanitarian issues, travel sanctions, arms embargos. • Targeted sanctions: "impact leaders, political elites, segments of society believed responsible for objectionable behaviour" (p.2). Focuses on certain groups of individuals aiming to directly affect the actors.	• "Travel sanctions seem to be primarily symbolic measures…" (p. 3). • "Financial sanctions in general have a less immediate impact on trade flows and therefore cause less suffering" (p. 4). Additionally, they have proven to be more likely to achieve a policy change in the target country. • Identification and tracking of funds belonging to an individual can be difficult.

- ❑ **Step 4:**
    - ❑ Analyze the literature and write out the key points for your evaluation purposes.
    - ❑ Examine the literature's strengths and weaknesses in relation to your situation. Make notes both the relevant information that you find and your thoughts about this information. This will help you draw your ideas together when you develop your evaluation strategy.
    - ❑ Assessing each literature material:
        - ➢ Argument's legitimacy supported by evidence
        - ➢ Author's objectivity. Is some data ignored or biased?
        - ➢ Which sources are most/least persuasive
        - ➢ Contribution. Does the literature significantly contribute to the field and help understand the subject

Sample Literature Review Text:

"In 1984, Jenny Cushman, in her perspective article, 'The Chinese community in Australian historiography' made a passionate plea for historians to move away from studies of Australian attitudes to "relocate the Chinese experience within the Chinese community itself". She further urged researchers to investigate the way Chinese customs, legal notions and kinship relations were adapted to the Australian physical and social environment. It is tempting to credit many of the succeeding changes to Cushman's appeal. However, the new approaches must be viewed within the context of the changing tide of historiography and the impact of 'multiculturalism'.

...

But to say this is to point to wider implications for history making in Australia. The Eurocentric histories of the past cannot simply be corrected by including the 'Chinese', especially if clear ethnic separations based on assumed single identities are maintained. It is necessary to go beyond Orientalist contrasts between us and them, Australian and Chinese, and to engage in a re-examination of sites of difference and dialogue. These sites will show the need to envisage multiple identities. They may also sometimes point to shared experiences of a shared world. Separate histories of ethnic peoples are not enough, especially if they serve to contain and exclude these peoples. Instead there is a need for a new synthesis in Australian history. The crucial need for historians is to personally engage with the contemporary politics of difference."

*Text source: Ryan, J. (1997). Chinese Australian history. In W. Hudson & G. Bolton (eds) *Creating Australia: Changing Australian history*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, (pp. 75, 77).

Some tips for literature reviews?

❑ Keep your literature search narrow to limit the number of document results. Picking three or four different themes (objectives) can help narrow your search. Sum up what the literature tells you about each theme to compare the different points of view of the authors and to point out if any questions remain unanswered.

> Literature Review Example
> - ***Literature Review on Effectiveness of the Use of Social Media***, 2010
> - ***Theory of Change Review****: A Report Commissioned by Comic Relief,* 2011
> - ***Conflict Prevention: Methodology for Knowing the Unknown***, 2004

❑ Search for other literature reviews in the field you are working in. Finds ways you like to organize your review and synthesis.

❑ While relevance is important, review the most current sources. Documents between 5-10 years old are a good target.

❑ In Internet searches, insert your research subject with the word "review" to find articles to include in your synthesis.

❑ Use the bibliography of articles you have already read to find more articles, reports, and other documents for review.

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of a literature review

- Google scholar
- EBSCOhost
- JSTOR
- Lexisnexis (news articles, law journals, government reports)
- Heinonline (legal research)
- Organization's publications and research:
    - OECD DAC
    - SIPRI databases
    - ICRC
    - Mercy Corps
    - CARE
    - DCAF (security sector governance and reform)
    - Human Rights Watch
    - International Crisis Watch

Resources on writing literature reviews:

Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. London, Sage.

The Learning Centre, UNSW, Getting started on your literature review.

Hyland, K. (1999). *Disciplinary discourses: Writer stance in research articles*. In C. Candlin & K. Hyland (eds) Writing: Texts, processes and practices. London: Longman.

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Pre- and Post- Testing Module

This module will help the user understand what pre/post-test are, how it can best be used, and provide practice activities on how to complete one.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Compiled by
Shiva K Dhungana
DM&E Specialist
Search for Common Ground, Nepal
(Disclaimer: This guideline is NOT original work of mine. It has been modified and adapted based on the literature from http://www.wa.gov/esd/training/toolbox/CreatingTestsGuidelines.pdf and my past experiences and reflection of working with pre- and post-tests. You may circulate this to your colleagues outside SFCG also, but make sure that they will not mention it as an original work of SFCG.).

What are Pre- and Post-Test?

A **pre-test and post-test** is designed to be used with workshops or curricula that have learning objectives as their guiding framework. Learning objectives create realistic estimates for the trainers of what the participants will learn and be able to do by the end of the training. These learning objectives are established in the design of the project.

Learning Objective Example

- Women legislators become better equipped with skills in policy formulation, engaging with the media, articulating and promoting women's issues and public speaking.
- Aspiring and elected/appointed female politicians become empowered as decision-makers and leaders.

The pre-test and post-test are meant to collect data from before and after an event that will allows us to determine whether there was any change in knowledge, attitude, or skill (behavior) (KSA). The **questions** are selected by using the learning objectives, established workshop modules, or curriculum lessons. The questions are the same on both tests, and except for minor changes in verb tenses, they should always be exactly the same. The questionnaires should be developed collaboratively by the training team insuring that everyone has the same understanding of the questions. Also, the training team should take into account issues of the literacy skills of participants when developing questions for the pre-and-post tests.

What are pre- and post-test for?

A pre-test is given to participants before they begin the training as a means of measuring how much they already know about the topic/issues or the concepts to be discussed in the course. At the conclusion of the training, the participants fill in the post-test that measures their ability to apply knowledge or perform a specific task learned in the course.

Comparing participants' post-test results to their pre-test results enables you to see whether the training was successful in increasing participant knowledge/attitude/skills

of the training content. In addition, a pre- and post-test give trainers an understanding of which concepts or competencies were well received and integrated during the training and which ones need additional time or need to be covered using alternative methods.

Why take two test?

- A pre-test collects data on what participants already know about the topic(s) to be covered in a course. They are used at the end of the event to provide a comparison of how knowledge/attitude/skill of individual participants have changed as a result of a training or course. Trainers can also use them pre-workshop to help them know, before they conduct a workshop, what areas of content may need more attention.
- Trainers can compare the results of the two tests and identify areas where participants need additional practice or where there are gap in knowledge that need to be reinforced with follow-up work.
- Pre-test scores that don't improve during the post-test tell the trainer that the training content and delivery methods may need to be modified, the focus of the training might need to be readjusted, or the test questions might not be looking at the appropriate aspects of the training.

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How do I get started?

❑ **Step 1**

Look at the <u>learning objectives</u> and <u>content outline</u> for the training. Identify the specific points that the participant must know (or is expected to know) by the end of the training. If a training or course does not have learning objectives, then they need to be developed before designing pre/post-tests. In the SFCG program, Radio For Peacebuilding (R4PB), for example, learning objectives are created during a Curriculum Summit and other youth leadership training. Design may be initiated by identifying activities believed to address a need and then learning objectives for each activity are identified, or the learning objectives may be identified first and activities will flow from them.

You may be developing similar trainings for different audiences. For example the learning objectives for youth R4PB could be slightly different than the learning objectives for R4PB training for working radio professionals. Thus, the pre/post-tests for each may differ between the trainings, but, again, for each training type and different audience, the questions on the pre/post should be identical for that type or audience.

❑   **Step 2**

Choose the best test item format for the learning objective you are measuring. Test items can take many forms:

Test format	Learning objectives	Examples from Leadership Wisdom Initiative, SFCG Indonesia
Short answer	Conceptual understanding	Explain the difference between interest and position.
Multiple choice items	Practical understanding	What does "coaching" mean? A, B, C, or D
Story problems	Attitude change	Please describe, in your own words, what does it means to be a compassionate leader? Has your perspective on what it takes to be a compassionate leader changed over the course of the leadership training? Please explain.
Hands-on simulations	Skill demonstration	Develop a skills check-list. Apply the check-list by asking participants to participate in a role-play that uses these skills. Toward the end of the training, provide opportunities to practice and use the check-list again to compare change.
Short answer	Conceptual understanding	Explain the difference between interest and position.
Multiple choice items	Practical understanding	What does "coaching" mean? A, B, C, or D

It is possible to have all three methods in a single training depending on what you want to know or what the content of the training teaches. When you feel it most appropriate or needed, include open ended questions occasionally as follow-ups to gain more insight on the most important questions.

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Examples:

Testing the skills: While testing skills is best done by having practice exercises that can be observed by trainers and fellow participants who can give immediate feedback, you can ask skill-related questions on a pre/post-test, e.g., Rate your comfort level with facilitating a focus group or I feel confident that I can write a radio script on land owners rights. Give a scale of 1 to 5 (always use an uneven number) where 1 can be best or worst and 5 is the opposite. See example below.

Knowledge testing: The learning objective states that the participant will be able to list the different types of dialogue methods.

> ### *Example*
> In a training program in communication, skills we want to evaluate the results of the knowledge gained by administering a pre/post-test to each person enrolled in the training. One pre-test question reads "I can identify different types of communication methods" and the respondents are to answer on a five-point scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Seldom, Never). One respondent indicates he "Seldom" can identify communication methods. During the training, the various methods become clearer to him and easier to understand. Thus, on the course post-test, he responds to the same item with "Often". It appears that the program had a positive effect on knowledge where the participant's frame of reference on the pre/post-test had changed.

Perception testing: If the learning objective states that people have changed perception or understanding about certain issue/subject or definition, it would be better to give a statement and ask them if they agree, disagree or are neutral Or, ask them if it is true, false or 'don't know'. If the objective says that the participants of a peacebuilding M&E training will no longer consider 'quantitative numbers' as the only data that provides quality indicators for an evaluation, then we can ask a simple question related to this and ask them if they agree, or disagree.

Conceptual understanding testing: If the training objective states that the participants will have increasing understanding of leadership skills or the meaning of trust, then a multiple options question with different levels of leadership skills or trust levels based on a practical example would be a better question.

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Attitude testing: If the learning objective states that the participants will change their attitude at the end of the training, then giving a story or a real life example and giving them a statement about the attitude change and asking if they agree or disagree before and after the training could be a better option.

❑ **Step 3**

Develop <u>test administration instructions</u> for the trainer. Provide the answers to the test questions, amount of time required for the test, and any other information the trainer needs to administer and correct the test. Probably the most important part of this is setting up an identification system that allows for comparing of individuals' responses. There are various ways of doing this. People can put in the day and date of their birth (but do not ask for the year, as people are often sensitive about their age), the last four digits of one's telephone number, the last four digits of an official identification card, e.g., driver's license, U.S. Social Security number and the like. **If pre- and post-tests cannot be matched to each other, then they must be discarded.**

❑ **Step 4**

<u>Test your test</u>!   Ask another person to review your instructions and test items. Also, do a pilot test of the pre-test to check for the following points:

- Are the instructions clear?
- Is there enough information in each test item to determine the answer?
- Are any test items misleading or confusing?
- Are any of the questions leading, that is, do they too easily direct the respondent toward a particular answer by the way they are constructed?
- How much time was needed to complete the test?

Revise your test items and trainer instructions based on the feedback you receive.

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❑ **Step 5**

In order to analyze the data, you need to develop a spread sheet (Excel, Access, SPSS, etc.) for entering the data from the pre and the post-test for each participant. This allows you to create graphs and charts, determine averages, etc. **Caution!!** The data for

the pre- and the post-test should be entered on separate pages. Once the data is entered, no one should change the data. All data analysis, creation of charts, graphs, etc. should be done on separate worksheets.

Hurray! You are done!

How many test items should we write?

There is no magic number of test items that you should create. However, you should write at least one test item for each learning objective, and probably no more than two if the objectives are complex or require thorough knowledge of a particular topic. Every session of a workshop usually has its own learning objectives. A pre/post-test needs to be a reasonable length. If they are too long, participants will not fill them out carefully. Generally, even a five-day workshop won't have more than three to four sessions per day; a total of 20 questions max, which is in the normal range. An alternative would be to develop a pre and post for each day.

How much time should be allotted for a test?

Pre/post-tests are rarely designed to test participants on how quickly they can complete a test, therefore, it is better to provide enough time required for the participants (depending on their level) than not enough time. The reason for this is simple. Many adults experience test anxiety, read slowly to aid comprehension, have learning disabilities that often result in the need for additional time, or require more time to recall information from memory. Putting your test through a trial run will give you a better idea of the time needed to administer it.

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Some tips for writing test items

General Tips

- Test items should be based on information that directly reflects the learning objectives.
- Don't test on trivial details.
- Start with the easy, demographic questions to minimize test anxiety.
- Use clear and concise (and local) language when writing test items.
- Avoid using double negatives in the questions. This can make the test item difficult to understand and confuse the participant.
- Avoid trick questions that measure the participant's ability to guess rather than their actual knowledge.

Multiple Choice Tips

- Test items should have only one correct answer. Make sure wrong answer choices are not plausible.
- Each test item should be independent and not based on a previous test item.
- Avoid unintentional clues such as "always," "all," and "never."
- Don't make the correct choice longer than the incorrect choices. If we do this, participants become "test-wise" and can guess the correct choice.
- It is advisable not to use "all of the above" or "none of the above" as choices.
- Create between 3 and 5 responses.

> *Example*
>
> If the question is: As a journalist, how do you rate your knowledge on rumor management skills?
>
> We should provide a scale that includes all numbers between 1 and 5 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and ask participants to circle one.

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Self-Rating Tips

If we are asking participants to rate themselves on certain knowledge or understanding, we can give range 1 (poor or no knowledge) to 5 (excellent)

Case Example - Leadership Wisdom Initiative, SFCG Indonesia

Topic	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. I can identify specific situations that tend to create an intense emotional response (e.g., where I might lose my temper).					
2. I have the tools I need to help others address their own leadership challenges.					
3. Good leaders should be able to figure out the best solution to a problem without asking others for help.					
4. Leaders should only care about the group they represent.					
5. Coaches should provide solutions to their clients regarding the best way to approach a situation.					

Additional Tips:

Performance Scenarios (simulation) Tips
- Create performance scenarios that directly correlate to the learning objective, especially when you want a participant to demonstrate a specific skill.
- Make the simulated situation as realistic as possible.
- Provide directions that tell the participants what response they must provide (such as designing and operating an online Survey)
- If applicable, provide the parameters of the scenario (such as time limits) in the directions.

Example
If you are implementing a program on reconciliation, then you will focus on, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
a. Peace, Justice, Compassion and Truth
b. Compassion, Justice, Peace and Truth
c. Peace, Justice, Mercy and Truth
d. Forgiveness, Justice, Mercy and Truth
e. Peace, Justice, Realization and Truth

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- Develop a criteria check-list to assess skills pre and post.
- If applicable, provide the parameters of the scenario (such as time limits) in the directions.
- Develop a criteria check-list to assess skills pre and post.

Fill-in-the-Blank Tips

- Place blanks at or near the end of the test item.
- Use no more than 2 blanks per test item.
- Consider converting a fill-in-the-blank item to a multiple-choice item. These provide the participant with a defined set of choices and are easier for the trainer and data entry person to process.

True/False or Agree/Disagree Statement Tips
- True/False or Agree/Disagree forced choice questions may be useful with low literacy rates. But we need to remember there is always a 50/50 chance of getting the right answer whether participant knows or does not know.

If you follow the steps listed here, you will be able to create a successful pre/post-test that will provide you with the data you need to determine if an event met its training objectives.

Enjoy creating pre- and post-tests!!

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Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Module

This module will help the user understand what a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is, how it can best be used and also provide a guide for how to write one

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **Pre-test your knowledge** ➢ **What is a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan?** ➢ **What are M and E Plans used for?** ➢ **Why should we write an M and E Plan?** ➢ **Who should an M and E Plan be used?** ➢ **Who should be involved?** ➢ **How to write an M and E Plan**	➢ **Additional Resources**

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

Tool 1: M&E Plan Checklist
Tool 2: Sample Information Maps
Tool 3: M&E Matrix Templates
Tool 4: Information Map Template
Tool 5: USAID Indicator Reference Sheet Template
Tool 6: Results Framework Sample

True or False Questions:
Please answer the following True or False questions. Read each statement below. If you agree with a statement, write A = YES. If you disagree with a statement, write B = NO. Also, explain why you believe that statement is wrong.

_____ 1. A M&E Plan is an optional step in the DM&E process.

_____ 2. A M&E Plan should be developed before monitoring and evaluation of a project begins.

_____ 3. Strategic Partners should be included in the development of a M&E Plan.

_____ 4. It is important for a M&E plan to include all M&E activities.

_____ 5. A M&E Plan cannot be altered throughout the course of the project.

Answers: 1 B; 2 A; 3 A; 4 A; 5 B
If you answered 3 or more incorrect, you must complete this module!

What is a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan?

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan (M&E plan) is a document used by the project team to help plan and manage all Monitoring and Evaluation activities throughout a particular project cycle. It also should be shared and utilized between all stakeholders and sent to donors. It keeps track of what you should monitor, when you should monitor, who should monitor, and why you should monitor.

Think about the M&E Plan as a Work Plan specific to Monitoring and Evaluation activities. Generally, the M&E Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives of overall plan
- M&E questions and methodologies
- Implementation plan
- Matrix of M&E indicators and expected results
- Proposed timetable of all M&E activities
- M&E instruments for gathering data

The **M&E Plan** is a flexible guide to the steps you can use to document project activities, answer evaluation questions, and show progress toward project goals and objectives. As a guide, the M&E Work Plan explains the goals and

The M&E plan should have a rigid flexibility; rigid enough that it is well thought out and planned but also flexible to account for changes that can improve or identify better monitoring and evaluation practices. This is especially important in the ever-changing and fast-moving conflict environment

Tip: An **activity** in the context of this module is any specific action, function, or work that deals with monitoring & evaluation. For example, a monitoring activity is a conducting a pre-post test for a training or workshop. An example of an evaluation activity is writing a mid-term evaluation.

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What are M and E Plans used for?

The M&E plan allows all staff involved with the project to have a reference sheet of all the monitoring and evaluation activities during the progress of the project and highlights data. It helps to identify "who is supposed to do what to collect which data and when it is collected" and how that data has changed over the course of a certain period. The DM&E coordinator and project team can use the M&E plan to contribute to evaluation design and monitoring implementation.

Why should we write an M and E Plan?

In short, the M&E Plan is used for the purposes of management and good practice. It is a critical tool for planning, managing and documenting data collection. The M&E Plan keeps track of the progress we are making, monitors the indicators being used as well as their results. In this way it contributes to the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system by assuring that data will be collected and on schedule. Additionally, it works to build ownership and of the M&E system by the project team, creating additional responsibility and accountability for the success of the M&E activities.

When should the M and E Plan be used?

The M&E Plan should be used as a reference throughout the length of the program cycle, tracking all programs and updated to include all monitoring and evaluation data and results. It should be constantly updated to include up-to-date information of monitoring and evaluation progress. This includes indicator results after each activity or intervention, data collection methods and sources, and who will be collecting data. If they occur, It should also be used and to track changes and updates to monitoring and evaluation activities.

When should it be written?

The M&E plan should be completed one month after the project contract has been signed. This is a USAID requirement.

Who should be involved?

The M&E plan is intended for the use of the organization. Therefore, the M&E plan should be designed by those who are involved in the program, including strategic partners. This allows the creators of the M&E plan to also be the users. This participatory approach ensures project team support and learning, which can increase effectiveness of the M&E and organizational capacity. However, the exact roles that the

DME coordinator, program manager, and project team can vary by program, context, and personnel. At the very least, the **Project manager, DME Coordinator, researcher or field staff,** and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the goal and objectives for the project. The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of the goal and chosen objectives.

> **Tip:** SFCG often works with its local **strategic partners** to implement projects. To create ownership, SFCG also strives to include the ideas of strategic partners in all of their projects. Therefore, when at all possible, strategic partners should be consulted when designing the M&E Plan.

How to write an M and E Plan?

What should be included?

This section of the module will walk through the creation of an M&E Plan. **There is no standardized template or structure to an M&E Plan, so therefore the plan can be modified to best fit the programme, communication, and organisational needs.** However, an effective M&E Plan should include:

1. Executive Summary
2. Project Background
3. M & E Planning
4. Monitoring and Evaluation System
5. Project Risk Matrix
6. M & E Information Map
7. M & E Work Plan Matrix
8. M & E Timetable
9. References
10. Annexes

(You can click on the underlined step to go directly to the location of the step in this module.)

The length of an M&E plan depends on the complexity of the M&E system, the size of the project, and specific donor criteria. **While there is no specific format for an M&E Plan, there are specific criteria that should be included in the M&E Plan.** These criteria will be explained throughout the module, and a full list of criteria can be found at the end of the module. This module explains the suggestions made by USAID and the European Union. However, since the European Union does not require an M&E plan in

all project (only those with a budget above $300,000), it focuses mainly on the requirements of USAID.

Documents to have on hand:
A few documents can act as references to aid in writing the M&E plan:
- Project Proposal
- Logical Framework
- Results Framework (For USAID projects)
- Checklist for M&E Plan (Click here to jump to checklist)

These documents have much of the information that goes into an M&E plan. Using these documents not only provides an easy reference, but also ensures continuity between all project documents. However, the information from these documents should not make up the complete M&E Plan, especially if they are below standards. The M&E Plan should always include more specific information than what is included in these documents, and if needed, revised goals and objectives

Tip: When making an M&E plan, carefully consider **resource and budget limitations**. Data Collection costs, in terms of human and financial costs, is an important consideration. Do you have the time and resources available to cover all the M&E activities? An M&E plan should be developed with these restraints in mind. Think about the budget in terms of the value of the data collection in relation to the actual cost of data collection.

Step One: Executive Summary:

This section of the M&E Plan should be quite short – Just a quick synopsis of what the M&E plan contains and what it is about.

Step Two: Project Background:

This section provides context to the M&E Plan. It should begin by explaining the project:
- Name
- Funding agency
- Date preliminary work (needs assessment and project design) began
- Implementation start date and project termination date
- Main **goal** and **specific objectives** of the project
- Principal strategies
- Target population and groups
- Final number of beneficiaries
- If possible, map of region with project areas located on it

Step Three: M&E Planning:

This section explains how and who planned the Monitoring & Evaluation system. It should answer two questions: What were the key issues/decisions? Who participated in the decision making? Key information to include in this section is:

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- Date of M&E plan preparation
- Period of time in which the M&E plan proposes activities
- Who made decisions and how were decisions made regarding M&E plan
- Who should collect what information and at which time it is collected

The roles of who is collecting information and at which time it is collected depends on the project team and what best suit the project. There are no prescribed roles in which a person or team is responsible for across all projects. For example, the DM&E Coordinator is not always responsible for data collection. With that said, the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in the project should be clearly defined with specific tasks and the time in which those tasks should be performed.

Step Four: Monitoring and Evaluation System:

This section should include a description of all the Monitoring and Evaluation activities of a project, summarizing each individual activity. This includes describing each monitoring and evaluation technique used what it is going to be used for, who is collecting that data, and how the data will be used. It should also include key indicators for each M&E activity.

Step Five: Project Risk:

SFCG is committed to the principles of 'do no harm' and as such is always careful to consult with local partners to develop potential risks associated with an intervention. Therefore, this section should highlight potential areas of risk while also providing contingency plans if risks do occur. It should also include potential ways to mitigate these risks. Risks can include:
- Changing security conditions
- Miscommunication issues
- Misperceptions of project
- Legal and governmental barriers
- Financial mismanagement

Step Six: M&E Information Map:

The M&E Information map is utilized as a visual tool for knowledge management. M&E information maps can take on many different shapes, but all should include:
- Proposal documents (Budget, LogFrame)
- Project documents (Work Plan, M&E Plan, Baseline)
- M&E data collection sources (Reports, Surveys, Meetings)
- M&E reports (Annual Report, Mid-term Evaluation, Final Evaluation)
- M&E stakeholders (SFCG Staff, Beneficiaries, Donors)

The purpose of an M&E information map is to ensure that the proper documents and information is disseminated and correctly used throughout the project cycle. In short, it's a visual representation of the gathering, processing, and feedback of data within the project. This step is extremely important in making sure that monitoring and evaluation activities inform future decision making and feedback to the project.

Click to see an M&E Information Map example (tool #2)

Step Seven: M&E Work Plan Matrix:

The M&E Matrix summarizes a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan by including a list of methods to be used in collecting the data. The matrix provides a visual format for presenting the indicators-and their corresponding activities-for each project objective. Again, there is no specific template. As a result, the M&E Matrices tend to include a wide range of information. What information is or is not included is determined by either (1) what is deemed most important to the team that is utilizing the M&E plan or (2) donor suggestions/requirements. The most common information included is:

- Indicator and definition
- Who is responsible for data collection?
- How is data collected?
- Where is data collected?
- When is data collected?
- Targets
- Disaggregation

But some matrices also include:

- Responsible partner
- Baseline/Benchmarks
- Why is data collected?

M&E Matrix – USAID Format

1. Indicators and their definitions
2. Data source
3. Frequency of data collection
4. Responsibilities for acquiring aata
5. Target

Click here to see a USAID template (Tool #3)

M&E Matrix – EU Format

1. Results description and indicator
2. Source of information
3. Methods of data gathering
4. Who to collect, analyze data
5. Frequency of reporting

Click here to see a EU Template (Tool#3)

Terminology:

Sometimes the terminology can become overwhelming and tricky, especially when writing for different donors. While donors often use different terms, the underlying meanings remain the same. Here is a table translating the different terms used by USAID and EU:

	USAID	EU
Indicator	Indicator	Results/Indicator
Wider or Long Term Effect	Goal	Overall Purpose
End of Project Effect	Strategic Objective	Project Purpose
Intermediate Effect	Intermediate Results	*no specified term*
WHERE is Data Collected?	Data Source	Source of Information
HOW is Data Collected?	Method of Data Collection	Methods of Data Gathering
WHEN and HOW OFTEN is Data Collected?	Frequency of Data Collection	Frequency of Reporting
WHO is Collecting Data?	Responsibilities for Data Collection	Who to Collect, Analyze Data
Target	Target	*no specified term*

This section should also include a short paragraph stating:
- Who prepared the M&E Matrix (and who assisted)
- Formatting of matrix
- Changes from LogFrame or Project Document (If necessary)

Step Eight: M&E Timetable

The M&E Timetable is fairly straightforward. It provides an answer to the question "When are each of the monitoring and evaluation activities being implemented?"

Click here to see a template of a M&E Timetable (Tool #4)

> **Tip: Integrate M&E Plan into Work Plan** When possible, the M&E Plan should be integrated into the Work Plan. For example, the M&E Plan timeline can be integrated into the work plan timeline. This allows for all those involved on the project to be aware of the M&E activities.

Step Nine: References:

A list of documents referred to within the M&E Plan.

Step Ten: Annexes:

With each M&E Plan, a number of annexes should be included. Potential annexes are:
- Indicator Reference Sheet (USAID Requirement)
- Results Framework
- Budget

Indicator Reference Sheet

USAID requires an Indicator Reference Sheet to be filled out for each Indicator; otherwise they generally are not used. An Indicator reference sheet gives a full description of each indicator. The reference sheet can be used as a quick but complete overview of each indicator, including its full description, where the data comes from, and how it can be analyzed.

Click here for an Indicator Reference Sheet Template (tool #5)

Results Framework
A Results Framework (RF) is a graphic that provides a strategy to obtain a strategic objective that is developed through cause-effect logic. A Results Framework has four key parts:
- Strategic Objective
- Intermediate Results
- Hypothesized Cause-Effect Linkages
- Critical Assumptions

An RF is generally developed before an M&E Plan, as it is a required part of the project proposal documents. The RF provides a great resource to use while creating the M&E Plan to ensure the plan aligns with the larger objectives and goals of the project. That being said, if there is new information and analysis, the RF may and should be updated at this point in the project cycle.

TIP: Although not a requirement for a USAID M&E Plan, an RF is required for all project proposals for USAID.

Click here for a Results Framework Example (Tool #6)

USAID Requirements

USAID has a set of requirements for an M&E Plan. These revolve around indicators, key benchmarks (or baseline values) and targets. Therefore, sections of an M&E Plan that MUST be included when USAID is the donor are:
- Indicator Reference Sheet
- M&E Timetable
- M&E Matrix
- M&E System
- Budget Annex

The table below shows each USAID requirement in an M&E Plan and where the information should be found in the M&E Plan.

USAID Requirement	Corresponding Location in M&E Plan
State the full set of performance	Indicator Reference Sheet

indicators	M&E Work Plan Matrix*
Provide baseline values and targeted values	Indicator Reference Sheet M&E Work Plan Matrix*
Disaggregate performance indicators by sex wherever possible	Indicator Reference Sheet M&E Work Plan Matrix*
Specify the source of the data and the method for data collection	Indicator Reference Sheet M&E Work Plan Matrix*
Specify the schedule for data collection	Indicator Reference Sheet M&E Work Plan Matrix*
Describe known data limitations	?
Describe the data quality assessment procedures	?
Estimate the costs	Budget Annex
Identify possible evaluation efforts	M&E System
Include a calendar of performance management tasks	M&E Timetable

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*The M&E Matrix technically has no requirements or specific template. However, this information is often included on the M&E Matrix. A project team can use their discretion on which information to include or not include based what is important for them or donor suggestions and terminology.

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TOOL 1 Checklist for M and E

Checklist for M&E Plan

Use the following checklist to ensure that all major components of the M&E Plan are covered:

- ❑ **Executive Summary**
- ❑ **Project Background**
  - ❑ Name
  - ❑ Funding agency
  - ❑ Date preliminary work (needs assessment and project design) began
  - ❑ Implementation start date and project termination date
  - ❑ Main goal and specific objectives of the project
  - ❑ Principal Strategies

- ❑ Target population and groups
- ❑ Final number of beneficiaries
- ❑ If possible, map of region with project areas located on it
- ❑ **M & E Planning**
  - ❑ Date of M&E Plan preparation
  - ❑ Period of time in which the M&E plan proposes activities
  - ❑ Who made decisions and how were decisions made regarding M&E plan
- ❑ **Monitoring and Evaluation System**
  - ❑ Description of all activities in M&E System
  - ❑ Overview of key indicators
- ❑ **Project Risk Matrix**
  - ❑ Analysis of potential risks
  - ❑ Contingency plans for each risk
- ❑ **M & E Information Map**
  - ❑ Proposal documents (Budget, LogFrame)
  - ❑ Project documents (Work Plan, M&E Plan, Baseline)
  - ❑ M&E data collection sources (Reports, Surveys, Meetings)
  - ❑ M&E reports (Annual Report, Mid-term Evaluation, Final Evaluation)
  - ❑ M&E stakeholders (SFCG Staff, Beneficiaries, Donors)
- ❑ **M & E Work Plan Matrix**
  - ❑ Indicator and definition
  - ❑ Who is responsible for data collection?
  - ❑ How is data collected?
  - ❑ Where is data collected?
  - ❑ When is data collected?
  - ❑ Disaggregation
  - ❑ Targets
- ❑ **M & E Timetable**
  - ❑ Each M&E Activity is accounted for
- ❑ **References**
- ❑ **Annexes**
  - ❑ Indicator Reference Sheet*
  - ❑ Results Framework*
  - ❑ Budget

*USAID requirement

Sample M&E Information Map

Proposal Documents

Budget,
Log frame,
Proposal
Documents,

Project Documents

Work Plan
M&E Plan,
Baseline Report

Mid-term Evaluation

Evaluation

M&E Data Collection Sources

Output	Outcome	Process

Activity Reports

Evaluation Training Forms

SMS Listenership Analysis

Semi–Structured Interviews

Pre and Post Tests of Training s

Quarterly Reflective Meetings

M&E Stakeholders

- SFCG Staff
- Implementing Partners/Technical Partners
- Country Director
- European Union
- Beneficiaries

M&E and Monthly Reports

- Annual Reports
- Mid-term Evaluation
- Evaluation

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TOOL 3 – M and E Matrix Templates

M&E Plan Matrix template: USAID Format

RESULT	INDICATOR		INDICATOR DEFINITION	DATA SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION	TARGET
Specific objectives:						
Expected outcomes						
Activities / Outputs						
component						
component						
component						

M&E Plan Matrix template: EU format

Ref No		Result Description and Indicator		Action Required	
		Sources of	Methods of data	Who to collect,	Frequency of
Goal:					
1		.			
2					
3					

TOOL 4 – Timetable Template

General and Specific activity	March 2012	April 2012	May 2012	June 2012	July, 2012	August 2012	September 2012	October, 2012	November, 2012	December, 2012	Jan – June, 2013
MONITORING											
1.											
2.											
EVALUATION											
3.											
4.											
OTHER											
5.											

Back to "Step Eight: M&E Timetable"

USAID Indicator Reference Sheet Template

Indicator …..
Name of Programme Objective ……:
Name of Programme Area ……:
Name of Programme Element……:
Name of Indicator (1.1):
Is this an F-Indicator? No _ Yes _
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): .
Unit of Measure:
Disaggregated by:
Justification & Management Utility:
PLAN FOR DATA ACQUISITION BY USAID
Data Collection Method:
Data Source:
Method of Data Acquisition by USAID:
Frequency and Timing of Data Acquisition:
Individual Responsible:
Individual Responsible for Providing Data to USAID:
Location of Data Storage:
OTHER NOTES
Notes on Baselines/Targets:
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON:

F Program Hierarchy for Budgeting and Reporting

Illustrative Results Framework for Program Planning

Assistance Objective: Economic Competitiveness of Private Enterprises Improved

Functional Objectives

Program Areas

Program Elements

Program Sub-Elements

IR 1: Enabling Environment for Enterprises Improved

IR 2: Private Sector Capacity Strengthened

IR 1.1 Licensing and registration requirements for enterprises streamlined

IR 1.2 Commercial laws that support market-oriented transactions promoted

IR 1.3 Regulatory environment for micro and small enterprises improved

IR 2.1 Competitiveness of targeted enterprises improved

IR 2.2 Productivity of micro-enterprises in targeted geographic regions increased

IR 2.3 Information Exchange Improved

The Illustrative Results Framework links to the FAF Program Hierarchy as follows:

- Objective 4 Economic Growth
- Program Areas 4.6 (Private Sector Competitiveness) and 4.7 (Economic Opportunity)
- Program Elements 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.7
- Sub-Elements 4.6.12 and 4.7.2.1
- Sub-Element 4.6.1.3
- Sub-Element 4.7.2.2
- Sub-Element 4.6.2.1
- Sub-Element 4.7.3
- Sub-Element 4.6.2.4

Critical Assumptions:

- Key political leaders, including the President and the Minister of Trade and Labor, will continue to support policy reforms that advance private enterprise-led growth.
- Government will sign the Libonia Free Trade Agreement, which will open up opportunities for enterprises targeted under IR 2.1.

The following resources are particularly good for the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan

M&E Plan Samples, Templates, and Resources

M&E Plan Template by Creative Research and Evaluation Centre (Uganda)

USAID Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Tips

EU Project Management and Quality Plan Checklist

USAID Assessing and Learning Document

Following are various models that complement the **ABCDE** and **SMART** models in developing specific and measurable goals and objectives:

SPICED
(Roche, 2002, http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/topic_03DF8A69-0DAC-47D5-8A14-1E1833901BFE_BBA5D8DC-5C40-4F9C-A6A4-0268098134D7_1.htm [accessed 15 September 2010])

Subjective: using informants for their insights

Participatory: involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, involving local staff and other stakeholders

Interpreted and communicable: explaining locally defined indicators to other stakeholders

Cross-checked and compared: comparing different indicators and progress, and using different informants, methods, and researchers

Empowering: allowing groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation

Diverse and disaggregated: seeking out different indicators from a range of groups, especially both genders, multi-generational groups, to assess their differences over time

CREAM (Schiavo-Campo, "Performance in the Public Sector," p. 85, 1999)

Clear: precise and unambiguous

Relevant: appropriate to the subject at hand

Economic: available at reasonable cost

Adequate: able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance

Monitorable: amenable to independent validation

Conflict Assessment Module

This module will introduce the user to conflict assessment
and outline the basic processes for conducting an assessment.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable below)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Conflict Assessment?** ➢ **What is the use of a Conflict Assessment?** ➢ **Why do we conduct a Conflict Assessment?** ➢ **When should a Conflict Assessment be used?** ➢ **Who should be involved in conducting a Conflict Assessment?** ➢ **How do we use a Conflict Assessment?**	➢ **Practice conducting a Conflict Assessment)** ➢ **Use a practical sample indicator as an example for the worksheets** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct a Conflict Assessment, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Wehr Conflict Mapping Guide

TOOL 2: Hocker-Wilmot Conflict Mapping Guide

What is a Conflict Assessment?

A conflict assessment is a process of analysing the current situation in order to understand the causes and dynamics of the conflict, and to determine possible areas for intervention. This can be done at the country, regional or community level, as appropriate. The assessment process involves an intensive visit to the country/region/community and uses a variety of different methods to gather the necessary information.

> A **CONFLICT ASSESSMENT** is undertaken in order to understand and represent a conflict situation and its causes. The conflict assessment aims to identify programmatic needs, opportunities, as well as determine appropriate strategies.

> **Tip:** There is a difference between conflict analysis and conflict assessment. A conflict assessment is an exploration of the realities of the conflict and an analysis of its underlying causes. Assessments aim to identify needs and opportunities for programmes or projects as well as determine appropriate strategies.

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What is the use of a Conflict Assessment?

- ❑ Allows for deeper understanding of the dynamics inherent in the conflict
- ❑ Helps identify possible needs and opportunities to work in that context

Top of the document

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Why do we conduct a Conflict Assessment?

Ideally, conflict assessment is done prior to implementing a programme/project in the conflict area. This is because the assessment is often what provides the necessary information for deciding whether or not to move forward with the programme/project.

Conflict assessment should also be conducted at other times as a way of monitoring the changing nature of the conflict and whether SFCG should be considering additional or different approaches to programming in the country or region.

Who should be involved in conducting a Conflict Assessment?

The initial conflict assessment is usually conducted by a team consisting of SFCG headquarters staff or consultants. When SFCG has in-house staff capacity in the country/region, it is important to engage them as well as including local sources who have well-grounded knowledge of the conflict context.

How do we use a Conflict Assessment?

A conflict assessment should include the information below:
- ❑ Conflict context
- ❑ Parties
    - o Primary: Directly involved in the outcome of the conflict
    - o Secondary: Have an indirect interest in the conflict
    - o Third parties: May intervene to help resolve the conflict
- ❑ Causes and Consequences
    - o Interests
    - o Identity
    - o Rights

Tip: To facilitate conducting a conflict assessment in a country that is new to the organization, Search For Common Ground usually has some contact(s) in the country/region where it are invited to conduct an assessment. These connections often provide some guidance on groups/individuals with whom to speak.

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- Cultural differences
  - ❑ Divergent beliefs and values
  - ❑ Goals and Interests
  - ❑ Dynamics of a conflict
  - ❑ Functions of a conflict
  - ❑ Potential for management

With this information, recommendations regarding programming can be made.

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TOOL 1: Wehr Conflict Mapping Guide

Paul Wehr authored *Conflict Regulation* in 1979 and in it provided a "Conflict Mapping Guide." This resource aims to provide a clearer understanding of the origins, nature, dynamics, and possibilities for resolution of conflict for both the intervener and the parties in conflict. The map should include the following information:

1. *Summary Description* (one-page maximum)
2. *Conflict History.* The origins and major events in the evolution both of the conflict and its context. It is important to make this distinction between the interactive conflict relationship among the parties and the context within which it occurs.
3. *Conflict Context.* It is important to establish the scope and character of the context or setting within which the conflict takes place. Such dimensions are geographical boundaries; political structures, relations, and jurisdictions; communication networks and patterns; and decision-making methods. Most of these are applicable to the full range of conflict types, from interpersonal to international levels
4. *Conflict Parties.* Decisional units directly or indirectly involved in the conflict and having some significant stake in its outcome.
   1. *Primary:* parties whose goals are, or are perceived by them to be, incompatible and who interact directly in pursuit of those respective goals. Where the conflict parties are organizations or groups, each may be composed of smaller units differing in their involvement and investment in the conflict.
   2. *Secondary:* parties who have an indirect stake in the outcome of the dispute but who do not feel themselves to be directly involved. As the conflict progresses, secondary parties may become primary, however, and vice-versa.

3. *Interested third parties;* those who have an interest in the successful resolution of the conflict.

Pertinent information about the parties in addition to who they are would include the nature of the power relations between/among them (e.g., symmetrical or asymmetrical); their leadership; each party's main goals(s) in the conflict; and the potential for coalitions among parties.

Issues

Normally, a conflict will develop around one or more issues emerging from or leading to a decision. Each issue can be viewed as a point of disagreement that must be resolved. Issues can be identified and grouped according to the primary generating factor:

1. *Facts-based:* disagreement over what is because of how parties perceive what is. Judgment and perception are the primary conflict generators here.
2. *Values-based:* disagreement over what should be as a determinant of a policy decision, a relationship, or some other source of conflict.
3. *Interests-based:* disagreement over who will get what in the distribution of scarce resources (e.g., power, privilege, economic benefits, respect).
4. *Nonrealistic:* originating elsewhere than in disparate perceptions, interests, or values. Style of interaction the parties use, the quality of communication between them, or aspects of the immediate physical setting, such as physical discomfort, are examples.

With few exceptions, any one conflict will be influenced by some disagreement emerging from each of these sources, but normally one source is predominant. It is useful not only to identify each issue in this way but to identify as well the significant disparities in perception, values, and interests motivating each party. (Values are here defined as beliefs that determine a party's position on any one issue [e.g., economic growth is always desirable]. Interests are defined as any party's desired or expected share of scarce resources [e.g., power, money, prestige, survival, respect, level).

Dynamics

Social conflicts have common though not always predictable dynamics that if recognized can help an intervener find the way around a conflict. The intervener must seek to reverse some of these and make them dynamics of regulation and resolution. They include the following:

1. *Precipitating events* signaling the surfacing of a dispute.
2. *Issue emergence, transformation, proliferation.* Issues change as a conflict progresses--specific issues become generalized, single issues multiply, impersonal disagreements can become personal feuds.
3. *Polarization.* As parties seek internal consistency and coalitions with allies, and leaders consolidate positions, parties in conflict tend toward bipolarization that

can lead both to greater intensity and to simplification and resolution of the conflict.

4. *Spiraling.* Through a process of reciprocal causation, each party may try to increase the hostility or damage to opponents in each round, with a corresponding increase from the latter. Also possible are deescalatory spirals, in which opponents reciprocally and incrementally reduce the hostility and rigidity of their interaction.

5. *Stereotyping and mirror-imaging.* Opponents often come to perceive one another as impersonal representations of the mirror-opposite of their own exemplary and benign characteristics. This process encourages rigidity on position and miscommunication and misinterpretation between conflict parties.

Alternative Routes to Solution(s) of the Problem(s)

Each of the parties and often uninvolved observers will have suggestions for resolving the conflict. In conflicts within a formal policymaking framework, the options can be formal plans. In interpersonal conflicts, alternatives can be behavioral changes suggested to (or by) the parties. It is essential to identify as many "policies" as possible that have already surfaced in the conflict. They should be made visible for both the conflict parties and the intervener. The intervener may then suggest new alternatives or combinations of those already identified.

Conflict Regulation Potential

In and for each conflict situation are to be found resources for limiting and perhaps resolving the conflict. The mapping process notes these resources, albeit in a preliminary way. They may include the following:

1. *Internal limiting factors* like values and interests the conflicting parties have a common, or the intrinsic value of a relationship between them that neither wishes to destroy, or cross pressures of multiple commitments of parties that constrain the conflict.

2. *External limiting factors* like a higher authority who could intervene and force a settlement or an intermediary from outside the conflict.

3. *Interested or neutral third parties* trusted by the parties in conflict who could facilitate communication, mediate the dispute, or locate financial resources to alleviate a scarcity problem.

4. *Techniques of conflict management,* both those familiar to the different conflict parties and third parties and those known to have been useful elsewhere. Such methods range from the well-known mediation, conciliation, and rumor control to fractionating issues and extending the time range to encourage settlement.

Using the Map

The conflict map is most useful (and quite essential) as the initial step in conflict intervention. Mapping permits an informed judgment about whether the intervention should continue. The map is also helpful in assisting conflict parties to move back from

and make sense out of a process to which they are too close. If the mapper decides to further intervene, sharing the map can loosen up the conflict, making it easier to resolve. Finally, the map helps demystify the process of conflict that, for so many people, seems a confusing, unfathomable, inexplicable, and thoroughly frustrating phenomenon.

TOOL 1: Hocker-Wilmot Conflict Assessment Guide
(document available upon request)

The Hocker-Wilmot Conflict Assessment Guide is constructed quite creatively: using only questions as its approach to assessing a conflict. The guide focuses on the nature and styles of conflict as well as the components of power, goals, tactics, assessment, self-regulation and attempted solutions. In this way, the guide aids in drawing a focus to one aspect of conflict and can also serve as a check on gaps in information. The guide is best used over time so that the interplay of conflict elements can be clearly highlighted.

The Conflict Assessment Guide can be used in a variety of contexts. Students who are writing an analysis of a conflict can use the questions as a check on the components of conflict. Using extensive interviews with the conflict parties or constructing a questionnaire based on the guide enables one to discover the dynamics of a conflict. The guide can also be used for analyzing larger social or international conflicts, but without interviewing or assessing the conflict parties, one is restricted to highly selective information.

Nature of the Conflict

1. What are the "triggering events" that brought this conflict into mutual awareness?
2. What is the historical context of this conflict in terms of (1) the ongoing relationship between the parties and (2) other, external events within which this conflict is embedded?
3. Do the parties have assumptions about conflict that are discernable by their choices of conflict metaphors, patterns of behavior, or clear expressions of their attitudes about conflict?
4. Conflict elements:
    1. How is the struggle being expressed by each party?
    2. What are the perceived incompatible goals?
    3. What are the perceived scarce rewards?

4. In what ways are the parties interdependent? How are they interfering with one another? How are they cooperating to keep the conflict in motion?
5. Has the conflict vacillated between productive and destructive phases? If so, which elements were transformed during the productive cycles? Which elements might be transformed by creative solutions to the conflict?

Styles of Conflict

1. What individual styles did each party use?
2. How did the individual styles change during the course of the conflict?
3. How did the parties perceive the other's style?
4. In what way did a party's style reinforce the choices the other party made as the conflict progressed?
5. Were the style choices primarily symmetrical or complementary?
6. From an external perspective, what were the advantages and disadvantages of each style within this particular conflict?
7. Can the overall system be characterized as having a predominant style? What do the participants say about the relationship as a whole?
8. From an external perspective, where would this conflict system be placed in terms of cohesion and adaptability?
9. Would any of the other system descriptions aptly summarize the system dynamics?

Power

1. What attitudes about their own and the other's power does each party have? Do they talk openly about power, or is it not discussed?
2. What do the parties see as their own and the other's dependencies on one another? As an external observer, can you classify some dependencies that they do not list?
3. What power currencies do the parties see themselves and the other possessing?
4. From an external perspective, what power currencies of which the participants are not aware seem to be operating?
5. In what ways do the parties disagree on the balance of power between them? Do they underestimate their own or the other's influence?
6. What impact does each party's assessment of power have on subsequent choices in the conflict?
7. What evidence of destructive "power balancing" occurs?
8. In what ways do observers of the conflict agree and disagree with the parties' assessments of their power?
9. What are some unused sources of power that are present?

Goals

1. How do the parties clarify their goals? Do they phrase them in individualistic or system terms?
2. What does each party think the other's goals are? Are they similar or dissimilar to the perceptions of self-goals?
3. How have the goals been altered from the beginning of the conflict to the present? In what ways are the prospective, transactive, and retrospective goals similar or dissimilar?
4. What are the content goals?
5. What are the relational goals?
6. What is each party's translation of content goals into relationship terms? How do the two sets of translations correspond or differ?

Tactics

1. Do the participants appear to strategize about their conflict choices or remain spontaneous?
2. How does each party view the other's strategizing?
3. What are the tactical options used by both parties?
4. Do the tactical options classify primarily into avoidance, competition, or collaborative tactics?
5. How are the participants' tactics mutually impacting on the other's choices? How are the tactics interlocking to push the conflict through phases of escalation, maintenance, and reduction?

Assessment

1. What rules of repetitive patterns characterize this conflict?
2. Can quantitative instruments be used to give information about elements of the conflict?

Self-Regulation

1. What options for change do the parties perceive?
2. What philosophy of conflict characterizes the system?
3. What techniques for self-regulation or system-regulation have been used thus far? Which might be used productively by the system?

Attempted Solutions

1. What options have been explored for managing the conflict?
2. Have attempted solutions become part of the problem?
3. Have third parties been brought into the conflict? If so, what roles did they play and what was the impact of their involvement?
4. Is this conflict a repetitive one, with attempted solutions providing temporary change, but with the overall pattern remaining unchanged? If so, what is that overall pattern?

5. Can you identify categories of attempted solutions that have not been tried?

Overall, this module can be used by a variety of actors. A consultant to organizations can use the guide by modifying it for direct use. Similarly, an intervener in private conflicts such as those of a family can solicit information about the components of a conflict in an informal, conversational way by referring to the guide as an outline of relevant topics. In either case, care should be taken to modify the guide for the particular task, for the conflict parties, and for your intervention goals.

If one is a participant in a conflict, the guide can be used as a form of self-intervention. If both parties respond to the guide, you can use it to highlight what you and the other party perceive about your conflict. Usually, we recommend that a questionnaire be constructed for both persons to answer, and once the data are collected, the parties can discuss the similarities and differences in their perceptions of the conflict.

Whatever your preferred assessment technique, or combination of approaches, the assessment devices in this chapter can enable you to see some order and regularity in conflicts that at first appear confusing and overwhelming. With careful assessment, the dynamics of conflict can come into focus so you can fashion creative, productive options for management.

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

FEWER. "*Conflict Analysis*", Chapter 2 of the *Resource Pack* from FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld programme on conflict-sensitive approaches. http://conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html

USAID*. Conducting a Conflict Assessment*, USAID Conflict Management and Mitigation Office, April 2005. http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/crosscutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM_ConflAssessFrmwrk_May_05.pdf

Wehr, Paul. *Conflict Mapping,* Beyond Intractability, September 2006. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict_mapping/?nid=6793. May 1, 2007.

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Children and Youth Ethics Module

This module will guide you through ethical principles and processes in data collection.

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents
(Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)

➢ **What is it?**

➢ **What is it for?**

➢ **When should it be used?**

➢ **Who should be involved?**

➢ **How to use them?**

➢ **Additional Resources**

What is it?

Applying ethical principles and processes to ensure ethical treatment of all participants in data collection is critical.

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What is it for?

Within conflict resolution we haven't always been aware of the negative effects that are possible and the dangers that we could bring to participants in our work and research. If the researchers are "outsiders", they must be aware that their presence may affect the social dynamics within the community by potentially bringing in unfamiliar practices, attitudes and resources. Furthermore, the visibility of their presence can draw attention to those children who engage in research activities, thereby arousing suspicion and potentially creating risk.

Following an ethical procedure will ensure we predict and plan for possible negative outcomes and reduce the danger for participants in our work.

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When should it be used?

Each occasion that we undertake data collection (for research, assessment, monitoring or evaluation activities) we should undertake an ethical review.

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Who should be involved?

Within Search, the Children and Youth Specialist should be involved, in addition to the DME Specialist and the relevant programme staff. The individuals who will undertake the data collection <u>must</u> be informed about the ethical review process and develop the required tools prior to data collection.

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How to use it?

Summary of the key steps to follow in an ethical review for researching with Children and Youth:

1. ***Make sure the information-gathering activity is necessary and justified.***
   - Before starting the activity, clearly define its intended purpose and audience, and make sure that there is sufficient staff and money to conduct it in an ethical manner.
   - Only use direct methods with children if the required information is not otherwise available.
   - If the information-gathering activity will not directly benefit the children and adolescents involved or their community, do not proceed.

2. ***Design the activity to get valid information.***
   - Develop a protocol to clarify aims and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and using the information to which all partners agree.
   - Apply community definitions to set clear criteria for inclusion. Use existing records when possible, and recognize social and cultural barriers to participation. For surveys, use the minimum number of respondents to achieve demonstrable results.
   - All tools, such as questionnaires, should be developed through discussions with experts. These tools should then be translated locally, back-translated, and field-tested.

3. ***Consult with community groups.***
   - Consult locally to determine who must give permission for the activity to proceed.
   - Consider what concerns are likely to exist amongst the immediate community about bringing children together for research activities? How might such concerns relate to the specific composition of groups of children – for example, in relation to mixing males and females, or children from different class/caste or ethnic groupings?
   - In the event that the research creates upset for individual children, division amongst participants or adverse reaction from others what resources – individuals or organisations – exist to provide back-up and support in addressing such problems?

- Interviewers must be sensitive that they may be highly visible and a source of local interest. Clarify roles and expectations through community meetings and honor commitments.

Tips: **Dealing with Power Dynamics**

While imbalances of power that commonly exist between adults and children are widely understood, there is less appreciation for the fact that such difference is also inevitable amongst children themselves. Factors of age, gender, educational attainment, caste/class, ethnicity, (dis)ability, as well as individual personality and physical stature, all play a role in shaping power relations in childhood.

Researchers should be cautious that their work does not contribute to the creation or strengthening of hierarchies amongst children:

- Consider which children are involved in research activities and on what basis? Who is excluded from such activities and is exclusion systematic (e.g. on basis of geography, gender, or class)?

- What are the benefits of participation and how might the enjoyment of such benefits (whether material or symbolic) contribute to differences of status and intra-group tensions?

- What can be done to ensure that those not participating directly are not marginalised, disempowered or stigmatised?

4. *Anticipate adverse consequences.*
   - In partnership with the community, anticipate all possible consequences for the children and adolescents involved. Do not proceed unless appropriate responses to potentially harmful consequences can be provided.
   - Are the local political-military actors likely to take an interest in these activities? If so, what relationships may be needed to be built and assurances given?
   - Does the schedule of issues to explore through research contain anything that participating children, their families/communities, and political-military actors might consider inappropriate?
   - If the safety and security of children and adolescents cannot be assured, do not proceed.

- Interviewers should have experience working with children. They should be trained to respond to children's needs, and require ongoing supervision and support. If appropriately skilled interviewers are unavailable, do not proceed.
- In partnership with the community, determine what kind of follow-up is appropriate to respond to children's needs, recognizing age, gender, ethnicity, and so on. If appropriate support cannot be assured to meet the children's needs, do not proceed.
- Prepare a reaction plan to anticipate serious needs. If support for the child cannot be assured, do not proceed.

5. *Conduct consent and interviewing procedures with sensitivity to children's specific needs.*
- Children must give their agreement to participate, but consent is required from appropriate adults.
- Interviewers should make sure that children know they can stop or withdraw at any time.
- Investigators must provide children and adolescents and their parent or guardian with information about the activity in a manner appropriate to their culture and education.
- Consent forms and informational tools should be developed with community members and field-tested.
- Use an independent advocate to represent the views of children if there is any doubt about the protection provided by their guardian.
- Avoid efforts to unduly influence participation by the use of incentives. If incentives are used, they should be in line with local living standards.

6. *Ensure confidentiality*
- Particularly in an unstable social and political environment sensitive information must be handled with extreme caution. As well as the potential distress it may cause to recollect experiences of abuse and violation, sharing such information may not only lead to stigma and suspicion but also put at risk the safety of children, their families and communities. For example, in situations where the recruitment of children is officially denied, revelation by individual children of their own recruitment or that of peers could place themselves and their families in great danger. Confidentiality and anonymity are thus crucial.
- All documentation (including data collection notes and reports) should not name individuals but give a generic and unidentifiable description (girl age 10 or male age 15 etc).
- Feedback to communities should present findings that are general and not provide individuals stories or experiences if they can be identifiable.

Tool 1: Consent Form

The key tool for the Ethical Review is the Consent Form.

An example of a consent form developed to support a semi-structured questionnaire to be used with young people aged 10-14 is provided below.
The following form was used only after the child's parent or guardian had agreed to their involvement.

> **Each Study should develop a specific consent form that contains all the sections from the one below.**

Example of A Consent Form

BASELINE SURVEY:
Questions for youth aged 10-14
INTRODUCTION:
Hello! My name is …. I'm here for a study on behalf of XXXX, who are providing services here in [*insert name of community*] like [*insert name of local services*].
PURPOSE:

We're talking with adults and children here to get information about their lives and how XXXX can provide them with support, especially in difficult times. The information we obtain will be used to assess how the services are going, and how XXXX can improve them.

IDENTITY AND INVOLVEMENT:
I have already been talking to your parent/guardian about these things, and
now we would like to try to understand what you think. So, I would like to know if you are [*insert selected child's name*]? Have you been interviewed in the past two weeks for this study?
Proceed only if identity is correct and no previous involvement.
FUNDING SOURCE:
Consider if it's appropriate to mention: These services are being provided by XXXX, whose local partners are [*insert name of local partners*].
PROCEDURES INVOLVED:

We would like to ask you some questions, in an interview which will take about 15-30 minutes. I would like to talk to you alone, but if you like, you can ask for a parent or guardian to be present at any time.

RISKS:

Some of these questions might talk about things that some people find quite personal, or may be difficult to answer. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to answer them, you do not have to.

ABILITY TO SAY NO:

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you don't want to. This will not affect your ability to receive services now or in future. However, I would really appreciate it if you would answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can find out what young people here in [*insert name of community*] really think. Your answers will be very important to us. We would really appreciate any help you can give us in finding out about children here. Do you have any questions about any of the things I have just said?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE INFORMATION:

We'll be asking children from different places all over the country the same questions. When the survey is finished, we will collect all the responses we have received here in [*insert name of community*] and keep them safe. Someone in the office will add them together. You will be able to find out about the results by contacting our partners here, like [*name local partners, and make sure individual knows how to contact them if they want to*].

CONFIDENTIALITY:

If you agree to take part in this interview, the things you tell me will be confidential. That means they will be private between you and me. I am not going to write down your name. If you agree, you can indicate your agreement by making a mark here. Alternatively, I can sign here to say that I have witnessed your agreement.

SEEKING COMPREHENSION:

Do you have any questions about any of the things I have just said?

SEEKING VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT:

Are you willing to participate in this interview? Do you want a parent or guardian to stay with us while we are talking?

_____ _____ _____
Youth/child agreement   /   Adult present?
                                                            (Specify who)

Witness Date

_____ _____
District Name Area Name

Additional Resources

Ethical Approaches to Gathering Information from Children and Adolescents in International Settings: Guidelines and Resources': Horizons, Population Council IMPACT, Family Health International

'*Research with Children Living in Situations of Armed Conflict: Concepts, Ethics & Methods'* Jason Hart and Bex Tyrer

Risk Assessment

This module will introduce the user to risk assessment and provide specific steps and tools with which to implement risk assessment.

Search for
Common Ground

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Risk Assessment?** ➢ **What is the use of a Risk Assessment?** ➢ **Why do we conduct a Risk Assessment?** ➢ **When should a Risk Assessment be conducted?** ➢ **Who should be involved in conducting a Risk Assessment?** ➢ **How do we use a Risk Assessment?** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Practice conducting a Risk Assessment** ➢ **Use a practical sample indicator as an example for the worksheets** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct a Risk Assessment Study, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

What is it?

Risk is defined as the "effect of uncertainty on objectives."[1] It is a natural consequence of setting objectives in an uncertain and dynamic environment. Risk is therefore neither positive nor negative, but simply the experience of uncertainty. This module, however, is primarily concerned with potential negative risks, which might affect the achievement of programme goals and objectives.

Risk assessment is the first step in the risk management process.[2] It highlights areas of uncertainty in the programme and subsequently guides the development of a forward-looking strategy which addresses that uncertainty and its potential consequences through three steps: risk identification, analysis and evaluation.

What is it for?

Risk assessment is an integral part of programme development and is particularly relevant in areas of conflict and fragility where uncertainty and its accompanying risks are exponentially higher. It identifies areas of potential uncertainty and guides the development of prevention-oriented strategies to address that uncertainty and its potential consequences.

Why do it?

Any programme has the potential to create unwanted consequences and to be negatively affected by internal and external factors. Identifying those risk factors and consequences before the programme starts and allowing time to make deliberate decisions about the best way to move forward is critical.

> **Tip:** Many donors request that risk analyses be included in project proposals. Thorough analysis combined with a well-planned and forward-looking strategy to address those risks will strengthen your proposal.

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[1] International Organisation for Standardisation, Risk management—Principles and guidelines on implementation, Draft, ISO 31000:2009, accessed 2 February 2011, http://www.scribd.com/doc/23591510/ISO-31000-Risk-Management-Manual-Eng-Fra quoted in Grant Purdy, "ISO 31000:2009—Setting a New Standard for Risk Management," Risk Analysis, Vol. 30, No. 6, 2010, p. 882, accessed 02 February 2011, http://www.theiia.org/download.cfm?file=42883.

[2] Risk management is not covered in-depth here; for more information on risk management processes, see ISO, "Risk Management Draft"; DFID, "Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations," Briefing Paper H: Risk Management, UK Department for International Development, March 2010, accessed 1 February 2011, http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/governance/building-peaceful-states-H.pdf.

Sound analysis of the context is crucial to effective risk management. As interveners in a conflict it is our obligation to ensure that we first Do No Harm in our intervention, directly or indirectly.[3] Understanding the potential risks involved in a programme is therefore critical to developing a programme that does not exacerbate local conditions, and hopefully contributes to the betterment of the context.

When to do it?

Risk assessment is a continuous process throughout the lifespan of a programme. It is an integral part of the design phase (see **Assumptions** and **Risks module**), and is also related to programme monitoring as a means of keeping track of what is happening within the socio-political and economic context of the programme.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by programme, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator, staff and relevant stakeholders should all agree on the identified risks and their mitigating strategies.

The DME Specialist in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of your risk assessment.

How to use it?

There are four key steps in risk assessment: identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment. As the below diagram illustrates, there are two continuous processes throughout the risk assessment and management processes: communication and consultation, and monitoring and review.

*Please note that this module does not deal with establishing the context; for detailed information on how to do so, see the **Context Assessment** module.*

Communication and consultation should be continuous with internal and external stakeholders, where appropriate, to not only gain their input but also create greater ownership of the process and outputs. "It is also important to understand stakeholders'

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[3] CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Do No Harm, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, accessed 23 September 2010, http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=DNH&pname=Do%20No%20Harm.

objectives, so that their involvement can be planned and their views can be taken into account in setting [the] risk criteria."[4]

It is similarly important to continuously monitor and review risks so that appropriate action can be taken as new risks emerge and existing risks change throughout the lifetime of the intervention. "This involves environmental scanning by risk owners, control assurance, taking on board new information that becomes available, and learning lessons about risks and controls from the analysis of success and failures."[5] (For more information on monitoring, see **Monitoring Modules**).

Step 1: Risk Identification
Step 2: Risk Analysis
Step 3: Risk Evaluation
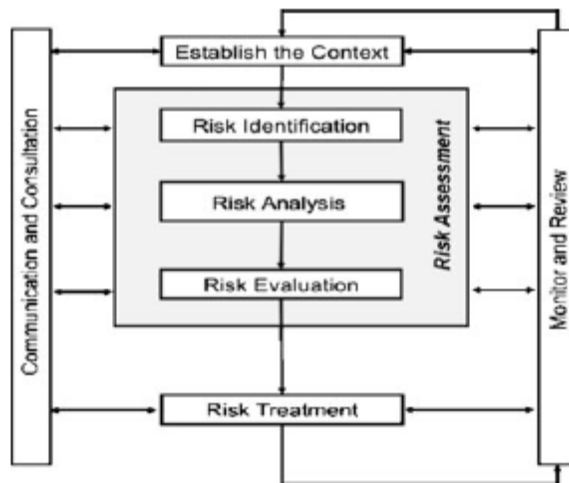Step 4: Risk Treatment

Figure 1: The Risk Management process from ISO 31000:2009.

Step 1: Risk Identification

There are three main types of risk: country, partner and programme risks.

Country risks affect the broader context in which SFCG is operating, such as internal and external political contexts, levels of security and violence, and events and processes (such as peace talks or elections) that may impact SFCG's operations at both strategic and operational levels. Country risks are often identified through country-level conflict and context assessments (see **Conflict Assessment** and **Context Assessment modules**).

Partner risks most commonly refer to capacity and political will, as well as financial and corruption risks, with all partners involved in the programme including local (e.g. civil society organisations, government, etc.) and international (e.g. donors, international non-government organisations, etc.) partners.

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[4] Purdy, "Setting a New Standard for Risk Management," pp. 883.

[5] Ibid, "Setting a New Standard for Risk Management," pp. 884.

Programme risks affect the implementation of individual programmes and projects, but may not have wider significance. These might include local socio-political and economic dynamics or site accessibility, etc., which affect the intervention.

Programme risks affect the implementation of individual programmes and projects, but may not have wider significance. These might include local socio-political and economic dynamics or site accessibility, etc., which affect the intervention.[6]

Step 2: Risk Analysis

"Risk analysis is about developing an understanding of the risk." It provides the inputs for risk evaluation and helps guide decisions on whether the risks need to be treated and the most appropriate risk treatment strategy or strategies.

Your analysis may have varying degrees of detail, depending on the context, the potential impact(s) and likelihood the risk will occur. Methods may include qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both.[7]

The following questions may be used as a guide to your analysis; keep in mind however, that each analysis will vary.
- What would be the consequence of X occurring?
- What is the probability that X will occur?
- How will X impact the programme?
  - Can I redesign the programme to mitigate X through the 4Ts? (<u>Step 4: Risk Treatment</u>; also see **Assumptions and Risk** module)
- Do the probability and consequence of X outweigh the potential benefits?

You may also consider the Do No Harm framework[8] to guide your analysis. The concepts of dividers and tensions, connecters, and the programme's potential impact on the dividers, tensions and connecters may be of particular use.
- Could X exacerbate dividers and tensions in society/impact area?
- Could X negatively impact connecters?

What is the probability that X will do so?

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[6] DFID, "Risk Management," pp. 2-3.

[7] ISO, "Managing Risk Draft," pp. 11-12.

[8] CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *The "Do No Harm" Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict: A Handbook*, Do No Harm Project, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, accessed 03 February 2011, http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/manual/dnh_handbook_Pdf.pdf. For short video tutorials on the DNH Frameworks, see: Relationship Framework (Introduction) - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YQNycNU3UI&feature=player_embedded; Action Framework - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGnh1fd4yBA&feature=player_embedded.

Step 3: Risk Evaluation

A direct output from your risk analysis is an understanding of which risks require treatment (see next section, Step 4: Risk Treatment). In Risk Evaluation you should develop a treatment plan, as well as treatment priorities for the identified risks.

SFCG does not have established risk guidelines, and as such relies heavily on field analyses and individual staff instincts to guide the risk assessment and management processes.

Step 4: Risk Treatment

One of the most common risk response strategies is the 4Ts: tolerate, transfer, terminate or treat.

SFCG and donors are often willing to tolerate high levels of risk—a dynamic in many of the countries in which we operate—where there are substantial potential benefits. It is important that you are able to clearly demonstrate the possibility of achieving those substantial potential benefits, and that the achievement of those benefits do indeed outweigh the potential risks or negative impacts.

The transfer of risk is a common response in situations of insecurity, and may involve, for example, channelling efforts through local partners or UN agencies for which the risk might be lower.

Should the risks outweigh the potential benefits, it may be prudent to terminate the risk by ending or not proceeding with the planned intervention. This option should be of last resort when alternatives have been exhausted and the potential benefits do not justify continuing or proceeding with the intervention.

The most common response, however, is to treat the risk by seeking to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of the identified risk.[9] See **Assumptions and Risks** module for risk treatment strategies in the design phase.

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[9] DFID, "Risk Management."

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *Do No Harm Project*. Accessed 02 February 2011, http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=DNH&pname=Do%20No%20Harm.

Department of International Development. "Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations" Briefing Paper H: Risk Management. UK Department for International Development, March 2010. Accessed 1 February 2011, http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/governance/building-peaceful-states-H.pdf.

International Organisation for Standardisation. *Risk management—Principles and guidelines on implementation*, Draft, ISO 31000:2009. Accessed 02 February 2011, http://www.scribd.com/doc/23591510/ISO-31000-Risk-Management-Manual-Eng-Fra.

Baseline Study Module

This module will help the user understand what a baseline study is, how it can best be used, and provide practice activities on how to complete one.

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable below)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Baseline Study?** ➢ **What is the use of a Baseline Study?** ➢ **Who should be involved?** ➢ **How to use them?** ➢ **Practice Exercise** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Project Planning Diagram (Tool 3)** ➢ **Practice Exercises** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to select measurable goals and objectives, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: ABCDE Components

TOOL 2: SMART Components

TOOL 3: Project Planning Diagram

TOOL 4: Pitfalls to Avoid

What are they?

First, let us take a step back and take a brief glimpse at the overall design process. "Imagine that your analysis has identified a need for something located on a very high shelf, seemingly far out of reach. Below the shelf is a series of small platforms, which are also out of reach. If we could find a way to get onto the platforms, we might be able to reach the item we need. We look around to see what is available to enable us to climb up to a platform. We could build scaffolding or a ladder. We could try ropes or hire a helicopter to lower us onto the platforms. We choose to build a ladder both because we want to be able to go up and down repeatedly and because we can get the materials quickly and inexpensively. We then get busy ordering supplies, taking measurements, learning ladder safety, cutting wood, etc."
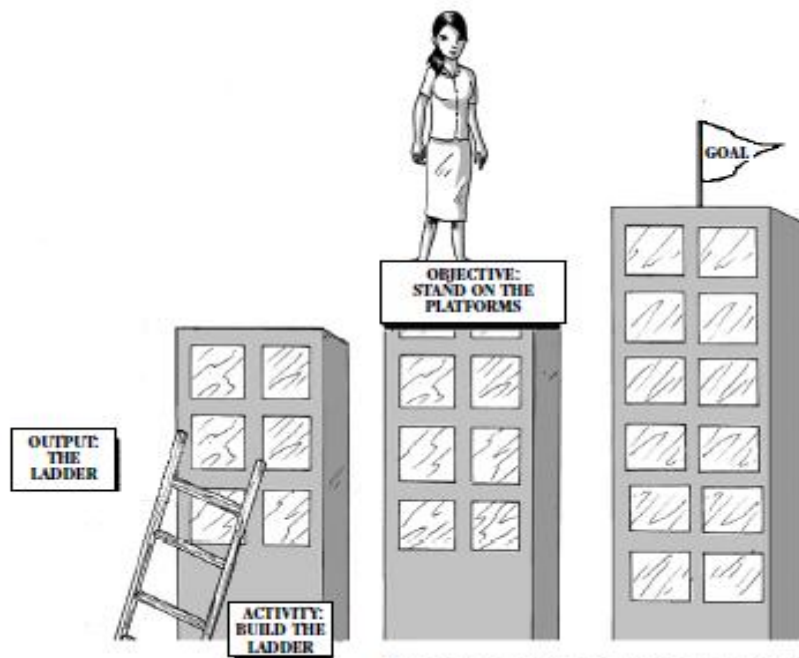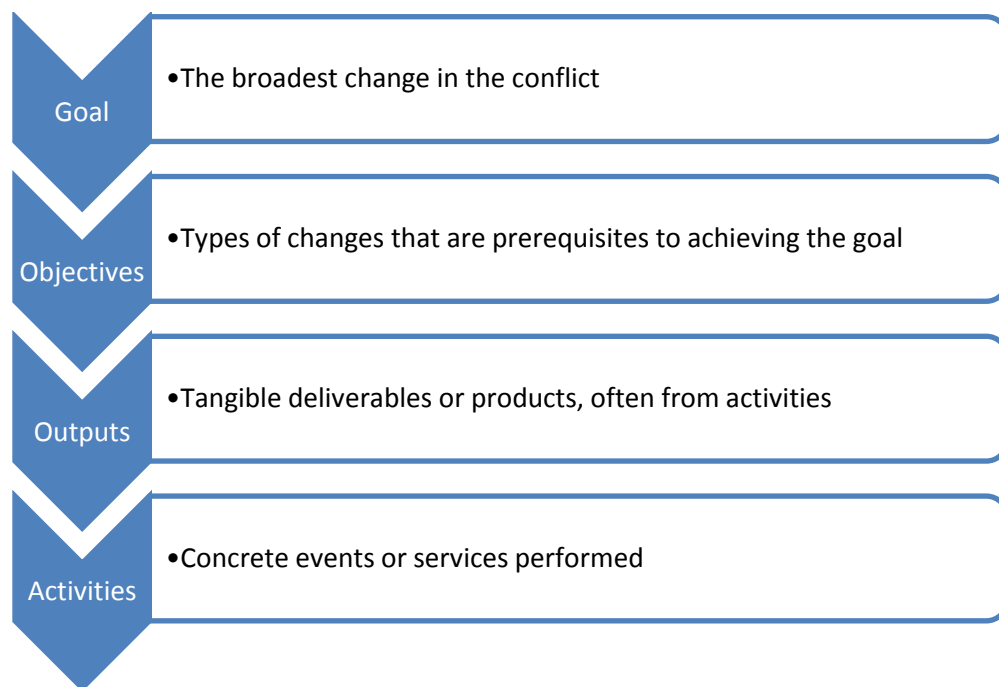

Illustration Representing the Design Hierarchy

"Program design requires our thinking to go through a similar series of challenges in getting from one place to another, or from one result to another, in order to achieve our goal. In this case, the activities involve building a ladder.

The output from those activities is the ladder. Our output—the ladder—will provide access to the platforms. The objective is to stand on the platforms. By standing on two or more platforms, we should be able to accomplish our goal of reaching the item on the shelf." This is called design hierarchy: each step—activities, outputs, and objectives—brings us closer to our stated goal.

"It is important to keep in mind how the different levels [of the design hierarchy] interact with each other. From the top looking down, the level immediately below explains how the level above it will be achieved. We will reach the goal by achieving the

objectives. We will reach the objectives through the outputs. Finally we obtain the outputs by implementing activities. From the bottom looking up, each higher level explains why we are doing what preceded it on the lower level. We are implementing the activities to produce the outputs. We need the outputs to achieve the objectives. We want to achieve the objectives because they contribute to the realization of the goal."[1]

Goal
- The broadest change in the conflict

Objectives
- Types of changes that are prerequisites to achieving the goal

Outputs
- Tangible deliverables or products, often from activities

Activities
- Concrete events or services performed

The goal is the **broadest change in the conflict** to which the project hopes to **contribute**. The goal is based on the conflict or the people in conflict rather than on the service or project that might be offered. It is usually a long-term and high-level change (peace *writ large*).

Tip: Goals and objectives are not essentially different—rather, they differ in the *level* of result each addresses Where goals operationalize *impacts*, objectives operationalize *outcomes (results)*.

Example

Timor-Leste has struggled to put in place a judicial system that is understood and accessible by all segments of the population. Corruption is also a growing problem, and some believe that justice must be purchased because even if laws and rights are constitutionally enshrined, their enforcement has not been guaranteed in practice. A goal stemming from this analysis, then, would be **to achieve equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste**.

The goal should be directly related to SFCG's overall mission and to the organization's purpose for working in the country/region/issue.

Objectives describe **the behavioural (skill), attitudinal and knowledge changes** at the individual, communal or national level that are prerequisites to achieving the goal. For example, behavioural changes at the communal or national level may manifest as policy or social norms. There are often several objectives under a well-defined goal. Well-formulated objectives reflect the more immediate or direct results a project is intended to achieve.
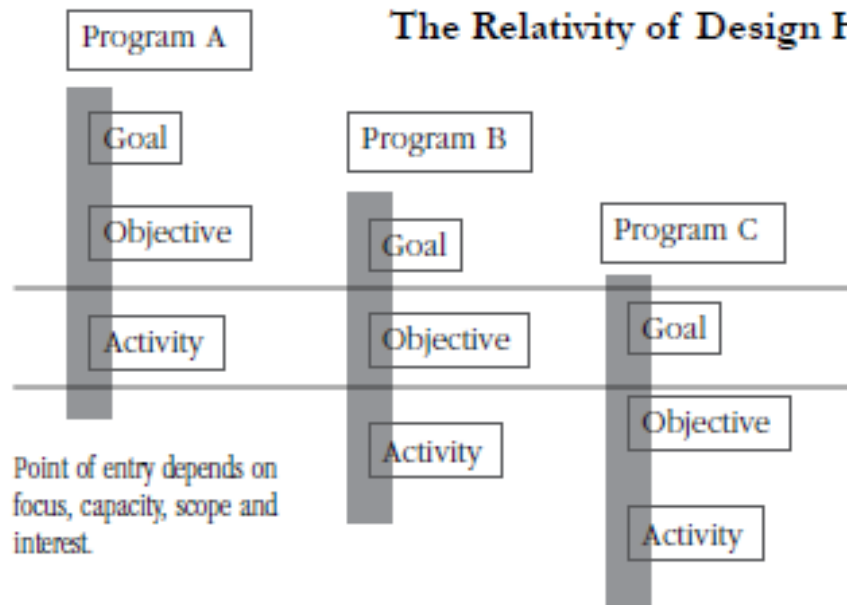
Objectives ensure a logical link between activities and goals, which is why they can be difficult. As peace builders we want peace. As practitioners we have creative and exciting ideas about activities and events. Determining and demonstrating the connection between peace and our proposed activities is critical.

Example

If our goal is to achieve equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste, then one objective might be **to increase public knowledge regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system**. Another objective might be **to change public perceptions and attitudes of the Timorese judicial system**.

Keep in mind that goals and objectives are relative. For example, each SFCG country program has its own goals and objectives, which are supported by individual projects which also have goals and objectives: an objective for the country program may be a goal for a project within that country program.

The Relativity of Design Hierarchies

Program A			
Goal	Program B		
Objective	Goal	Program C	
		Goal	
Activity	Objective		
		Objective	
	Activity		
		Activity	

Point of entry depends on focus, capacity, scope and interest.

What are they for?

A clearly stated goal provides a focus and a purpose to the work the project is doing. It is a reference point that guides the project's decisions about shorter-term objectives and activities. It also connects the project to the larger picture of what is happening in the country or region.

Objectives help the proposal writer further narrow the scope of the project: they are a means to achieving the goal. Well-formulated objectives reflect the more immediate or direct effects a project is intended to achieve. Objectives typically address changes in participant behaviour (skills), attitude or knowledge that occur as a result of specific project activities.

> **Tip:** *Why* are we trying to achieve these objectives? In order to achieve the project goal. *How* will we achieve these objectives? By producing the project outputs (see **Activities** module).

Following the aforementioned example, increasing public knowledge and changing public perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese justice system is an objective because it does not involve a change in the conflict: it addresses an attitudinal and/or knowledge change in the targeted audience. It is one means to achieving equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children to the justice sector in Timor-Leste.

The key differences between goals and objectives are provided below:

Goals	Objectives
Broad and visionary in nature	Narrow and time bound
General intentions	Precise
Not resource dependent	Resource dependent
Intangible	Tangible
Abstract	Concrete
Can't be validated	Can be validated

When should they be done?

The project design process is highly fluid and therefore the goals and objectives may be conceived of at nearly any point in the design process. Generally, however, goals and objectives are conceived of after conducting relevant assessments (see **Conflict Assessment** module and **Risk Assessment** module). Goals can also be suggested by the donor based on their focus on the big picture change or impact they wish to address. Remember, objectives provide a logical link between the goal and activities; the order of conception makes little difference.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the goal and objectives for the project.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of the goal and chosen objectives.

How to use them?

There are a variety of methods to arrive at your goal and measurable objectives; three are provided below as examples. The **ABCDE** and **SMART** components will help you narrow down your goal or objectives so that they are measurable and appropriate, while the **Project Planning Diagram** is a guide to determining goals, objectives and activities regardless of your starting point in project conceptualization.

> **Tip:** The relationships between goals, objectives and program activities (see **Activities** module) are *highly interactive*. Activities are designed and implemented to achieve objectives that support goals. The link between goals, objectives and activities should be clearly evident in the program's "logic model" (see **Logframe** module).

It is important for goals and objectives to be **measurable** according to predetermined performance indicators. By including these ABCDE components, you will state the who, what, to what degree, by when, and evidence source for your project objectives (alternatives to the ABCDE model are provided under "**Additional Resources**"):

Audience

- The population/target audience for whom the desired outcome is intended. This may be a large population, but is usually a smaller component of the audience identified in the goal, e.g., journalists, youth, civil society leaders who are the immediate beneficiaries of the SFCG project.

Behaviour – what?

- What is to happen? A clear statement of the behaviour change/result expected.
- At the goal level this is stated in numbers that represent **changes in large target populations** (incidence and prevalence figures, in research terms), not in specific individuals.
- At the objective level this identifies **knowledge, skills, attitudes, or new behaviours** among participants.

Condition – by when? Under what circumstances?

- The conditions under which measurements will be made. This should include the timeframe and may include "upon implementation of" a specific intervention.
- Goals are long-term, e.g., two to three years.
- Objectives are short-term. They fit within the goal length, e.g., 6 months, one year.
- Projects may be named here (e.g., "after completion of the X training") because they are always conditions, never goals or objectives.

Degree – **by how much?**

- The quantification of, or the level of, results expected. This often involves measuring change in comparison to an identified baseline. Previous evaluations of the project may also provide the degree of change the project has been demonstrated to achieve, and new projects can build on that change.

Evidence – **as measured by?**

- Defines the means of verification (MOV). The degree of change will be measured using a specified instrument or criterion. For a goal, this may be responses on selected items on, for example, a survey or change over time in performance indicators such as incidence or prevalence of ethnic, religious, class tension or conflict, crime and poverty rates, etc. For an objective, it is important to develop indicators and determine the best method of verification, e.g., surveys, interviews, review of records kept, etc., to assess shorter-term, direct change in participants (see **Indicators** module).

ABCDE Example

Example Goal:
Equal and timely access to justice will be achieved for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste

Example Objective:
Public knowledge will be increased and public perceptions and attitudes will change positively regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system [knowledge and attitude] in 13 districts.

➢ **Audience:**
    Timorese men, women and children in all 13 districts

➢ **Behaviour:**
    There will be increased public knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system

➢ **Condition:**
    Upon the completion of the activities under this objective by the program end date

➢ **Degree:**
    Percentage or number of interviewed citizens who report listening to the radio drama; percentage or number of interviewed citizens who can name three messages from the radio drama and explain why they are key.

➢ **Evidence:**
    A survey with qualifying open questions and a log of listeners' letters will be analysed to provide monitoring data.

If you would like to focus more on the development of measurable indicators and outputs, the SMART model is recommended.[2]

Specific – who, what, when, why and how

- Specifies the desired measurable results
- Who will you engage with? What are you going to do? When will you do it? Why is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish? How are you going to do it?

Measurable – describes how each result will be measured

- Choose a goal or objective with measurable progress. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal or objective (see Indicators module). You should be able to answer the following questions: How will I *know* the result has been achieved and how will I *show* the result has been achieved?
- Is it quantitative or qualitative?
- There should be little or no ambiguity on what is being measured

Achievable/Attainable – is it technically possible to achieve the desired results?

- Do the context and conflict assessments demonstrate a need for your project? Do the context and conflict assessments suggest certain activities are infeasible?

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[2] The SMART model for Goals and Objectives and Indicators are similar, but with a key variation: SMART indicators concern the measurement, as closely as possible, of the results the indicators are intended to measure; SMART goals and objectives, however, define the desired results in measurable terms—which are then used for the development of SMART indicators. As a result, some variation may occur between the definitions of each acronym.

Result-oriented – describes the desired results

- Have your desired results been clearly articulated in actionable language (for example, future tense – will)?
- Do your methods and activities have proven records of success?
- Are your goals and objectives stated clearly so there is little or no ambiguity on whether you have achieved them?

Time-bound – beginning and end dates

- What is the specific time frame to achieve this result? Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic. Have other factors, such as delivery by others and coordination, been considered in the time frame? Time frame may also include a plan to monitor progress towards the attainment of the stated goal or objective.

The chart below suggests ways to help you get to objectives if you are starting from the point of having identified activities that you think will address a conflict situation.

Project Planning Diagram

The project design process is highly fluid. Use the following table to help you arrive at goals, objectives or activities. If you are moving down the design hierarchy (from goals to objectives or activities), ask the questions in the left column. If you are moving up the design hierarchy (from activities to objectives or goals), ask the questions in the right column.

What is our *theory of change*?

If we do _____, then we will achieve _____.

How are you going to contribute toward this goal? What objectives will help us reach this goal?	Goal – the major change you want to achieve or contribute to –usually one goal is enough	
How are you going to achieve these objectives? What activities are needed to achieve them?	Objective – short-term changes in knowledge, skills or attitudes that, if reached, will achieve or contribute to the goal – usually two to four	What goal do the objectives suggest? Why will these objectives contribute to this goal?
	Activities – work to be done to achieve the changes we seek, both process and program	Why will the selected activities achieve the objectives? What does experience or research tell us about why they work for this problem?

1. **Defining goals so narrowly they are objectives, or so broadly that they are immeasurable; defining objectives so narrowly that they are activities, or so broadly that they are a goal**

   - Examples:
       Goal: To increase access to justice in Timor-Leste. (Too broad.)
       Objective: To provide funds for local organizations to attend capacity building initiatives. (An activity aimed at obtaining resources.)

   - ❖ Remedy:
       Think in terms of what the activities are designed to achieve—what changes are intended. Shift thinking away from describing activities and toward describing the changes those activities are intended to achieve in the project participants/context. This will result in a stronger orientation toward **results** rather than activities. Remember, activities are NOT the same things as objectives or goals. Activities are the means by which goals and objectives are accomplished (see **Activities** module). Remember, also, that objectives are realistic, achievable pieces of a larger goal. They must fit SFCG's capacity to produce results.

2. **Stating implementation or operational benchmarks as goals or objectives**

   - Examples:
       "To offer local justice organizations 50% more training opportunities." (This is a measure of an output resulting from an activity.);
       "Develop and print 400 manuals on how to access the justice system.

   - ❖ Remedy:
       Write the goal or objective in terms of changes that will occur in the knowledge, behaviour or attitude of participants. The focus is thereby shifted to the **result** rather than the activity conducted to achieve it.
       "To increase the capacity of local justice organizations to provide access to judicial services."
       "To increase awareness amongst the population regarding how to access the justice system."

3. **Writing compound goals or objectives**

- Example:

    "The Timorese public will have increased knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system <u>and</u> Timorese CSOs will have built their capacity and sustainability in order to play a more active role in justice, coordination, and peacebuilding processes."

- ❖ Remedy:

    Focus on one target audience and/or one change per objective. Develop an objective which focuses on, for example, reducing the incidence of election-related violence. Develop a second objective (and third if necessary). Structure the objectives statements so that the target audience for the project is the *subject* and the change in knowledge, behaviour or attitude is the *verb*.

    1. "The Timorese public will have increased knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system."
    2. "Timorese CSOs will have enhanced capacity and sustainability in order to play a more active role in justice, coordination, and peacebuilding processes."

4. **Passive voice**

- Example:

    To increase knowledge and change perceptions and attitudes [action] amongst the public [subject] regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system.

- ❖ Remedy[3]:

    The public [subject] will increase knowledge and positively change perceptions and attitudes [action] regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system.

5. **Listing goals or objectives that are not clearly linked to the overall goals of the program, organization or donor**

- Example:

    To achieve greater public access to the Timorese judicial system by improving road infrastructure.

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[3] Two excellent online guides to the passive and active voice: Purdue University, "OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab: Active and Passive Voice," accessed 27 September 2010, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/539/1/; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Handouts and Links: Passive Voice," accessed 27 September 2010, http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html.

❖ Remedy:

Project goals and objectives should be appropriate to the organization: does SFCG (as an organization or at the country-program level) have the necessary skills capacities and resources to accomplish the goal(s) and/or objective(s)? Similarly, it is important to be aware of your donor's project preferences. For example, you can examine donor mandates, project proposal guidelines and past projects funded.

6. Listing goals or objectives that are not appropriate for the target population

❖ Remedy:

Assessments (see **Conflict Assessment** and **Risk Assessment** modules) should inform the process of project goal and objective selection. Goals and objectives should be firmly grounded in demonstrable context and conflict dynamics and realities. Relevant **local stakeholders** who are familiar with the local context and dynamics should be involved in this process, and if necessary a DME Specialist in the DC office may be consulted.

7. Listing only knowledge-based outcomes

• Example:

Participants will demonstrate thorough understanding of DDR processes.

❖ Remedy:

Albert Einstein said, "The only source of knowledge is experience." Whether this is so is debatable, but it does provide insight to this pitfall: ground knowledge in practical experience—*experiential learning*—and include practical application of that knowledge: participant generated action plans which apply skills associated with knowledge gained in a workshop, for example.

8. Describing goals or objectives in terms that are not measurable

• Example:

"To understand why Timorese citizens view the justice system as inaccessible and corruption prone."

❖ Remedy:

Break the statement down into observable and/or measurable changes in behaviour, attitude or knowledge. One of the biggest problems with

poorly written objectives is the choice of words used to indicate the change expected. Proper wording is therefore critical.[4] Continuing with the above example, a remedy may be: "To *identify* the key dynamics which affect the Timorese perspective that the justice system is inaccessible and corruption prone."
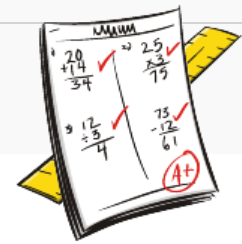
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[4] Further information on how to better utilize vocabulary in formulating measurable objectives see, Virginia Tech, "Modules: Spring 2003, Lesson 6," accessed 27 September 2010, http://www.itma.vt.edu/modules/spring03/instrdes/lesson6.htm and/or International Planned Parenthood

Federation, *Guide for Designing Results-Oriented Projects and Writing Successful Proposals* (New York: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, https://galaxy.sfcg.org/sfcg/library/attach/IPPF%20-%20Guide%20for%20Designing%20Results-Oriented%20Projects%20.pdf pg. 14.

Practice Exercises

Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!

Exercise 1:
Developing Objectives and Activities from Goal/Context Assessment

Use the following context analysis and goal to determine what the project's objectives and activities might be.

Nepal is in the midst of implementing a complex comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) plagued with slow progress and many setbacks. Numerous challenges still await the country: the adoption of the new constitution, the establishment of federal states, the shifting of the balance of power to the local level, security sector reform, and the integration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the national army.

Keys to a successful transition will be increasing the participation of a range of key stakeholders, particularly youth from the local to the national level, and finding ways to solve differences that are likely to arise in non-adversarial manners. In addition, the communication and information gaps that currently exist between central and district levels will need to be bridged. It is likely that key players in the peace process will show differences of opinion on so many issues. They will need to improve their ability to build consensus and to communicate more effectively with their constituents.

Goal
To build a peace process that is inclusive of civil society and youth, in particular, in Nepal.

Objectives *[fill in at least two]*

_____
_____
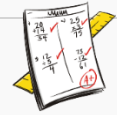_____

Activities *[fill in at least two]*

- _____
- _____
- _____

Keep in mind that a variety objectives and activities can be derived from the assessment and goal provided. Listed below are some examples. Can you think of others?

Objectives

- Key stakeholder groups will develop greater capacity to engage constructively in the peace process in non-adversarial ways.
- Key stakeholder groups will engage in solution-oriented dialogue on key elements of the CPA and peace process at the district, regional and national levels; and,
- Youth and local decision makers will constructively engage each other in the peace process at the local level.

Activities

- Leadership and Consensus Building Initiative for Leaders and Decision Makers
- Dialogue and Consensus Building Forum
- Youth and Peace building Trainings

Practice Exercises

Exercise 2:
Developing Goals and Objectives from Activities

Use the following context analysis and activities to determine what the project's goal and objectives might be.

Sri Lanka has endured more than three decades of inter-ethnic strife. Despite numerous efforts to address the ethnic conflict of the island nation, no mutual and lasting solution has been found. Since the majority Sinhalese government declared a military victory over the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) in May of 2009, there is no violence to distract from the root causes of the conflict and from the underlying issues to be addressed. This creates opportunities for addressing several key issues: vast social and economic growth, the restoration of stability throughout the country, and reconciliation without violence. Fundamental to pursuing these goals is ensuring that the peace dividend is equitable, inclusive, just, and democratic, and does not lay cause to exacerbate rather than bridge the present political and ethnic divides.

For many, especially minorities, there is a loss in the sense of identity as Sri Lankan. Core cultural, social, and traditional values previously manipulated to cause divisions, if collectively embraced, can provide a foundation on which to build a more tolerant and inclusive Sri Lanka. Tamils and Muslims need to find constructive solutions to difficult challenges, such as land issues, as well as lingering post-conflict resentment. Moreover, reconciliation and political power-sharing will only be possible if the political parties are able to convince voters that there is a more constructive way forward, and the Sri Lanka public pushes for change.

Many of Sri Lanka's youth, previously active in civil society – are now finding paths to socioeconomic growth do not exist, and there is little room to pursue aspiration through fair and democratic practices. Widespread cynicism, frustration and apathy have led either to a lack of motivation to participate actively in the democratization process, or the adoption of corrupt practices in an effort to succeed. Despite these obstacles, young people have demonstrated remarkable resilience, and space is available to engage youth leadership in bridging social, political, and ethnic gaps and in calling for greater equality, inclusiveness, transparency and justice.

Goal *[fill in]*

_____

Objectives *[fill in at least two]*

- _____

- _____

    _____

Activities

1. Organize two annual Future Leaders Conferences for Hope and Reconciliation, bringing together more than 600 youth leaders from across the country with a focus on including students from the conflict-affected North and East. Will specifically target emerging youth leaders in schools and include conflict resolution workshops with a variety of reconciliation tools including sports, arts and drama.

2. Organize residential conflict transformation and leadership training for youth leaders in sports. Identified young cricketers, particularly team captains as well as young women leaders, will represent the diversity of Sri Lanka and have the ability to influence other youth, on their teams, in their schools and in their communities.

3. Support in partnership the development and implementation of 20 youth cricket competitions that will specifically target the most conflict-affected or prone districts, bringing together both diverse and homogenous teams and communities for people-to-people interaction.

Keep in mind that a variety of goals and objectives can be derived from the aforementioned activities and goal. Listed below are some examples. Can you think of others?

Goals

- Youth from across dividing lines will play a substantial and positive role in supporting peace and stability in Sri Lanka.
- Youth will play a substantial role in the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.
- Ethnic minorities will play a substantial role in the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

- Create a cadre of youth leaders trained in leadership, community mobilization, and sustainable reconciliation skills to act as catalysts in Sri Lanka's conflict transformation and democratization processes.
- Create a platform for dialogue between youth, civil society and government leadership where youth are accepted as partners in decision making.
- Build a sustainable culture of peace among Sri Lankan youth from all sectors through engagement in sports, dialogue and new media platforms that focus on reconciliation, tolerance and inclusiveness.

Back to Top

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

Anne J. Atkinson and Carolyne Ashton, Planning for Results: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Program Planning and Evaluation Handbook (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.safeanddrugfreeva.org/planningforresults.pdf

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Department for International Development, *Log Frame Guidelines* (London: DFID, 2005)

European Commission, *Aid Delivery Methods Vol. 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, Part 2 Chapter 5 (Brussells: EuropeAid Cooperation Office, 2004).

Following are various models that complement the **ABCDE** and **SMART** models in developing specific and measurable goals and objectives:

SPICED
(Roche, 2002, http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/topic_03DF8A69-0DAC-47D5-8A14-1E1833901BFE_BBA5D8DC-5C40-4F9C-A6A4-0268098134D7_1.htm [accessed 15 September 2010])

Subjective: using informants for their insights

Participatory: involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, involving local staff and other stakeholders

Interpreted and communicable: explaining locally defined indicators to other stakeholders

Cross-checked and compared: comparing different indicators and progress, and using different informants, methods, and researchers

Empowering: allowing groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation

Diverse and disaggregated: seeking out different indicators from a range of groups, especially both genders, multi-generational groups, to assess their differences over time

CREAM (Schiavo-Campo, "Performance in the Public Sector," p. 85, 1999)

Clear: precise and unambiguous

Relevant: appropriate to the subject at hand

Economic: available at reasonable cost

Adequate: able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance

Monitorable: amenable to independent validation

Logframe Module

This module will help you understand and use the logical framework in project design and proposal writing.

Search for Common Ground

SFCG
30 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➤ **What is a Logframe?** ➤ **Why do we use the Logframe?** ➤ **When should a Logframe be used?** ➤ **Who should be involved in completing a Logframe?** ➤ **How do we use the Logframe?**	➤ **Practice completing a Logframe using a practical project sample** ➤ **Practice using Tool 2: "The Problem Tree"** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to create a logframe, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Logframe

TOOL 2: The Problem Tree

TOOL 3: Logframe Tables with Questions

What is a Logframe?

The logframe (logical framework) is a tool to assist in ALL phases of a project - planning, managing/monitoring, and evaluating. It helps pull together the various pieces of the project design or plan, and formats them in one place in a logical sequence. Particularly in contexts where change can occur frequently, such as conflict or post-conflict areas, this tool can be very useful in helping the project team be deliberate about what changes to make to the project and how those changes will affect the work being done.

The logframe is generally in the form of a matrix or table (see bottom of page):

This progressive hierarchy (goals – objectives – outputs – activities) is an important conceptual part of the logframe. Reading from top to bottom, the table should answer the question "How?"

> A **Framework** describes a basic conceptual structure; it is used to solve a complex issue. A framework outlines possible courses of action or presents a preferred approach to an idea.

- How will the Goal be achieved? Through the Objectives.
- How will the Objectives be achieved? Through the Outputs.
- How will the Outputs be achieved? Through the Activities.

Reading from bottom to top, the table should answer the question "Why?"
- Why are these Activities relevant? To help reach the Outputs.
- Why are these Outputs relevant? To help reach the Objectives.
- Why are these Objectives important? To help reach the Goal.

Logframe

–	INDICATORS	MEANS / SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS / RISKS
GOAL *How?*			
OBJECTIVES *How?*			*Why?*
OUTPUTS *How?*			*Why?*
ACTIVITIES			*Why?*

Tips: Logframe and the different Design Frameworks

While this module focuses specifically on the logical framework, various organizations and donors also use other frameworks. The Results Framework (USAID, UNDP), the Design and Monitoring Framework (Asian Dev Bank), and the Project Design Matrix (JICA-Japan) are a few that are in use. These frameworks, while different in appearance or in areas of emphasis, are all based on similar kinds of questions and issues to be considered. This module should help the reader work through these questions and issues and therefore be able to adapt easily to a different framework if that is required.
(See Designing for Results, p. 55,
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilt/ilt_manualpage.html)

Why do we use the Logframe?

The logframe captures the connections between the day-to-day work of the project and the broader changes we hope to contribute to in the conflict. It makes the overall logic of the project easily available.

- The logframe should be concise. It should not normally take up more than two pages.
- The logframe should be treated as a free-standing document and should be comprehensible to those viewing it without benefit of the proposal narrative. Acronyms should be avoided where possible.
- If beneficiaries of a project should also take part in the design of the logframe.
- The logframe will provide a basis for subsequent monitoring and evaluation. It must therefore be kept under regular review and amended whenever the project changes course.

Tip: If used correctly the Logframe approach can help us to:
• Achieve stakeholder consensus
• Organize thinking
• Relate activities and investment to expected results
• Set performance indicators
• Allocate responsibilities
• Communicate concisely and unambiguously with all key stakeholders.

Logframes and other design models are a basic requirement for developing new projects and grant proposals. They help identify gaps within the project by focusing on questions such as "**What the project plans are to do, why and how?**" It also helps in identifying realistic short term and intermediate objectives before the larger goal can be achieved.

When should a Logframe be used?

The logframe is used before (design) and during (monitoring) a project, and referred to during the evaluation phase.

Design phase: Since it helps to capture, in one place, the plans and expectations of the overall project, it is a key piece of the design process. All of the stakeholders involved in the design process can see how the different parts of the project fit together and then have an opportunity to discuss any gaps or concerns. Another very practical reason to create the logframe is that many donors require one as a part of the proposal.

Monitoring phase: While the project is being implemented, the logframe is used as a tool that helps track the progress of the planned activities, achievement of outputs, and changes in plans or focus that occur during the project.

Evaluation phase: The logframe contains important information for the evaluator(s) about the original plans of the project and, if updated during the course of the project, information about what happened and what changed. Equipping evaluators with this foundational information allows them to concentrate on higher level changes or issues that need to be addressed.

Who should be involved in completing the Logframe?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

The **project manager and staff**, along with relevant **stakeholders**, will make decisions about the goals, objectives, and activities of the project. Their discussions should also bring out the assumptions they have about the project and the risks they see associated with the project.

The **proposal writer** will need to include the logframe in the proposal and so will need to have the relevant information to complete the table.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions.

How do we use the Logframe?

You can complete the logframe by answering a series of questions on various aspects of your project. A sequence of steps (described below) will take you through the process of filling out the table. However, there can be a number of different entry points to working on the logframe, depending upon where you are in the project design process. No matter where you start, eventually all of the questions should be answered.

The most important thing is to be as specific and clear as possible in your answers. Specificity and clarity at the beginning guide changes you may need to make as the project is implemented.

Tip: Working from Activities to Goals
If the project was inspired by activities and you are having difficulty defining the goal, ask yourself what direct change in behaviour (skill), knowledge or attitude the activities will make and why these changes are desirable in the context you are working in. Identifying these changes gives you your objectives. Looking at these objectives, ask how will these changes affect the larger conflict? The answer to this question will suggest your goal. This exercise can be done repeatedly until you feel you have a clear set of activities, objectives, and a goal that have a logical connection between them. (See **Goals and Objectives module and Activities module**)

Steps for completing the logframe:

Step 1: Define the goal for your project.

Step 2: Identify three or four objectives that, if reached, will contribute to your goal.

Step 3: Select relevant activities and decide what outputs those activities should have if you are to achieve your objectives.

Program design requires us to go through a series of challenges in order to achieve our goal. In the example below, the **Activities** involve building a ladder. The **Output** from those activities is a ladder. Our output – the ladder – will provide access to the platforms. The **Objective** is to stand on the platforms. By standing on two or more platforms, we should be able to accomplish our **Goal** of reaching the item on the shelf.
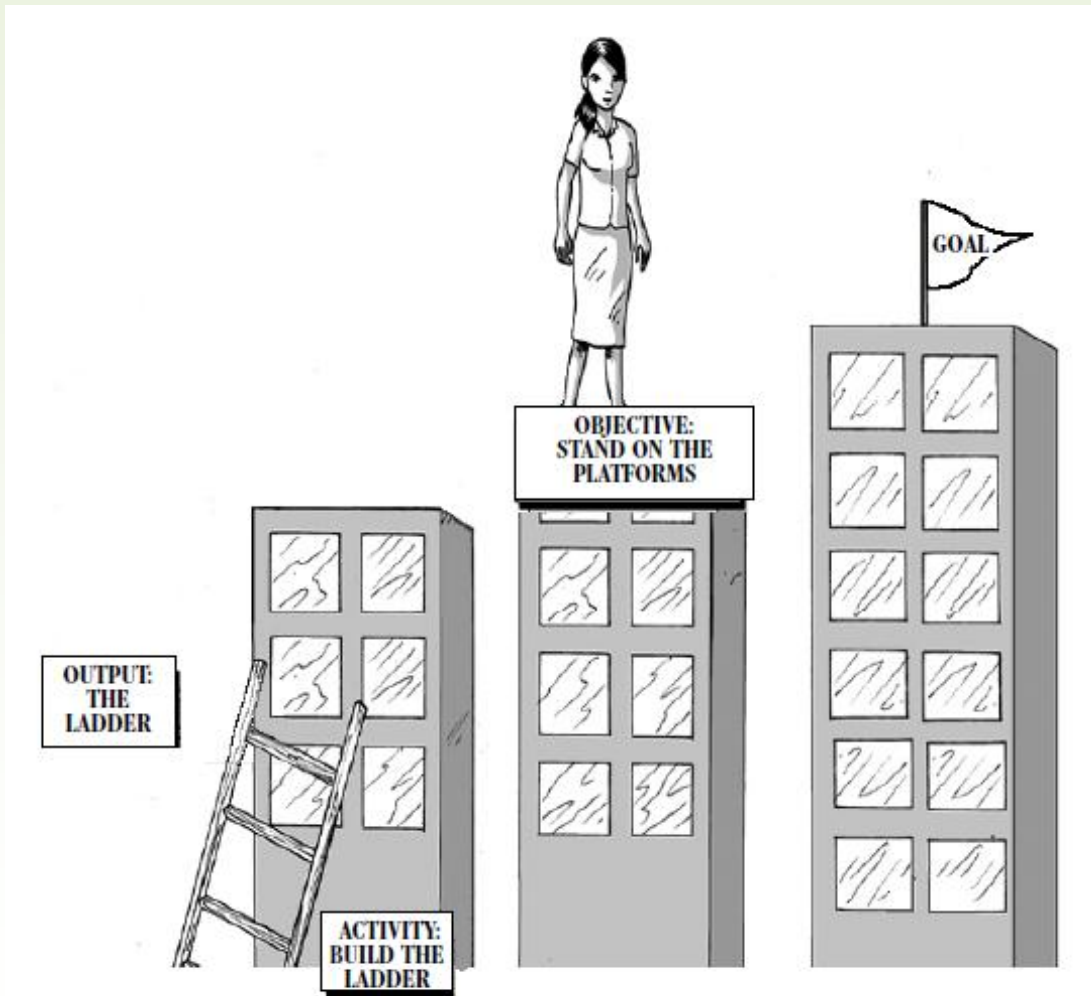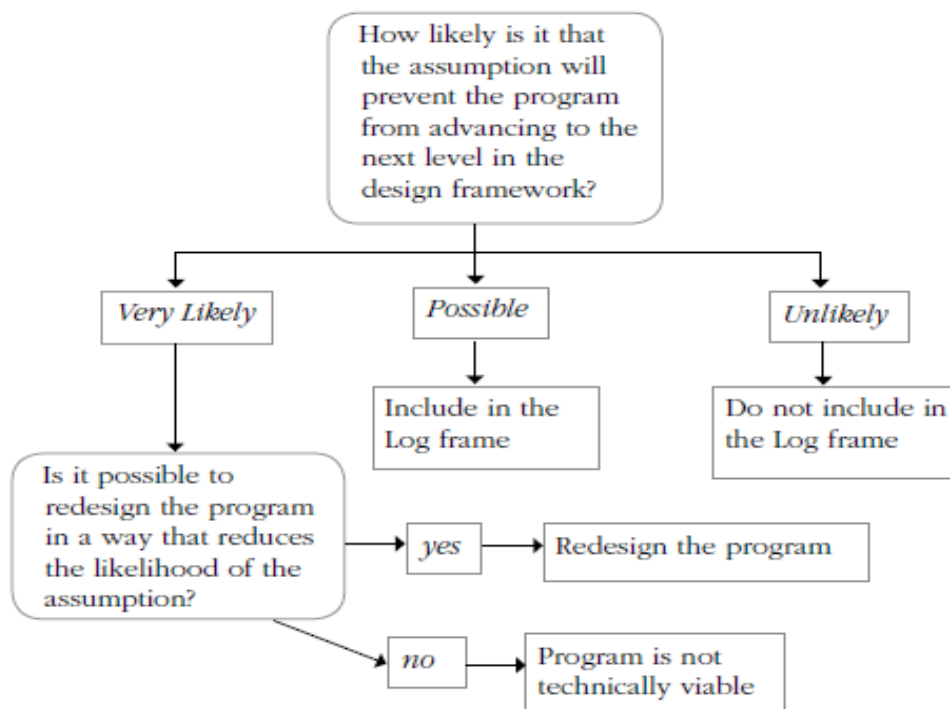

Illustration Representing the Design Hierarchy

Once you have those core pieces – goal, objectives, activities, and outputs – clearly identified, the next steps involve identifying the assumptions and risks relevant to this project.

Step 4: Articulate the assumptions you hold about each level. Think about what assumptions you have about the context, the approach you are taking, the people with whom you will be working, etc. (See Assumptions and Risks module)

Determining Assumptions

How likely is it that the assumption will prevent the program from advancing to the next level in the design framework?

- **Very Likely**
  - Is it possible to redesign the program in a way that reduces the likelihood of the assumption?
    - *yes* → Redesign the program
    - *no* → Program is not technically viable
- **Possible**
  - Include in the Log frame
- **Unlikely**
  - Do not include in the Log frame

Step 5: Identify the risks that might be present at each level. Consider risks both to the project and as a result of the project and how those might affect the participants, the community, your staff, Search, and the larger context. (See **Risk Assessment Module**)

Step 6: Adjust the goal, objectives, outputs, and activities as necessary to ensure that they are reasonable and feasible in light of the assumptions and risks that have been identified (See **Assumptions and Risks module and Risk Assessment module)**

Use assumptions and risks to help determine any facilitators or challenges you may face in implementing a project with the selected goals and objectives. Donors often require identification of assumptions and risks being used in planning.

Narrative	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions/Risks
Goal			
Objectives			
Outputs			
Activities			

Now you can shift your attention to the Indicators.

Step 7: An indicator is used to answer the question: 'how do we know whether or how much we have achieved our objective?" **It refers to a measure used to demonstrate change in a situation, or the progress in, or results of, an activity, project, or program.** It is a sign showing where we are (current situation/actual results), the progress made so far (from baseline), and the remaining distance towards achieving our objective (expected results). (See **Indicators module**)

> **Tip:** Make sure indicators are appropriate to the level in the Design Hierarchy that you want to measure, e.g., number of outputs produced measures activities, a behaviour, knowledge or skill change measures an objective.

Here are four steps to improve your **indicators** and to help make them **SMART**:

- **Basic Indicator** – **More** and better-trained students graduate.
- **Add Quantity (how much?)** – The number of graduates increased from 5,000 to 14,000.
- **Add Quality (what kind of change?)** – The number of graduates passing standard exams (40% female / 60% male) from lower income families in northwest districts increased from 5,000 to 14,000.
- **Time (by when?)** – The numbers of graduates (40% female / 60%

> **SMART**
> S = Specific
> M = Measurable
> A = Achievable
> R = Relevant
> T = Time-Bound

male) from lower income families in northwest districts increased from 5,000 to 14,000 per annum starting in year three of project.

Step 8: What sources will you use to find that information?

Finally, you need to identify the means of verification by which you will document progress on your indicators, e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, monitoring media, etc.

The logframe below provides links to various parts of the table and offers some guidance to filling it out. The numbers in the top row correspond to the steps above.

TOOL 1: Logframe

The numbers below correlate with the steps to complete a Logframe. Click on a Start Here link to go to the questions for that section. The questions assume that you have a good understanding of the concepts.

①-③, ⑥ Start Here ⇓ NARRATIVE	⑦ Start Here ⇓ INDICATORS	⑧ Start Here ⇓ MEANS/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	④-⑤ Start Here ⇓ ASSUMPTIONS/ RISKS
GOAL Start Here ⇒			
OBJECTIVES Start Here ⇒			
OUTPUTS Start Here ⇒			
ACTIVITIES Start Here ⇒			

Practice Exercises
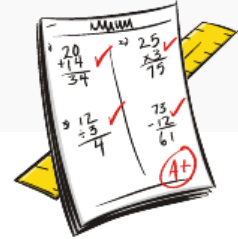
In these interaction pages, you will get a chance to practice the step in creating a Logframe. This work will be most successful if you use a practical example, one that relates to your country office. Please choose a new idea for a project that you hope to start soon. If there is not enough space provided, please use the back of the paper to finish each step.

Step 1, 2, 3:

Complete these steps by filling out the Narrative column portion of the Logframe. (Each Output and Activity is labelled to correlate with its objective.)

NARRATIVE
GOAL – what is the overall purpose of the project? *How?*
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal? *How?*
A.
B.
OUTPUTS – what tangible results (training events, printed materials, radio programs, etc.) need to come from the activities in order to reach the objectives? *How?*
A.1
A.2
B.1
ACTIVITIES – what will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?
A.1.1
A.2.1
A.2.2

Step 4:

Using the Narrative portion of your Logframe that you completed above, choose 2 assumptions that fit. Run your initial assumptions through the following exercise to determine if the assumption is valid or needs to be altered in order to be included in Logframe.

Determining Assumptions
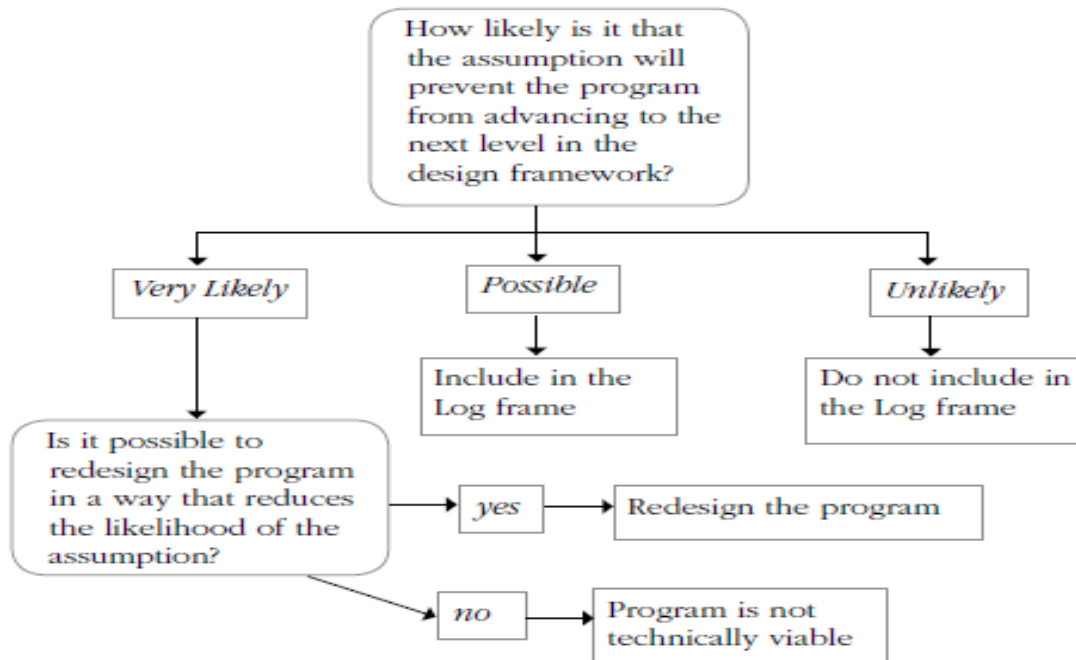
Step 5:

In order to identify the risks that are relevant to this logframe, complete a Problem Tree based on your main goal of the project. The directions in **Tool 5** will help guide you in this process. (Be sure that you have read through this tool first!) Create your problem Tree on the back of this sheet.

- **The "Why?" Exercise** – After identifying a possible risk to the project, create four "Why?" questions to help get to the root of the problem.

- With the answers to these questions, create the **roots** of the Problem Tree.

- After examining the roots of the Problem Tree, add on to it the **effects** of the problem, which fill in the top portion of the tree. This exercise will allow you to think in terms of cause and effect about the various risks to your project. It will be easier to fill in the Risks/Assumptions portion of the Logframe matrix after having completed this exercise.

Step 6:

In order to complete a logical logframe, you need to make sure your narrative column (goals, objectives, outputs, and activities) is feasible considering your risks and assumptions. Use your completed Narrative column of the Logframe, and add in your assumptions/risks (that were created from the Problem Tree). Then ask yourself the If/then questions. If anything does not match, rewrite that portion of the Logframe.

NARRATIVE	IND.	M/SOV	RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS
GOAL – what is the overall purpose of the project?			Why is this goal important? How does it fit in to the context? How does it fit with Search's mission?
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal?			How do these objectives contribute to the goal? How are they consistent with the Common Ground Approach?
A.			
B.			
OUTPUTS – what tangible results need to come from the activities in order to reach the objectives?			How will these outputs achieve the objectives?
A.1			
A.2			
B.1			
ACTIVITIES – what will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?			How will these activities lead to the outputs?
A.1.1			
A.2.1			
A.2.2			
B.1.1			

Step 7:

Now it is time to add in that describe outputs (activity level) or incremental changes (objective level) that you expect and what specific information you need to gather (MOV) to track those changes. Continue using your sample logframe to practice creating effective and SMART indicators.

Basic Indicator for your Goal:

_____

Add Quantity to this indicator by asking yourself "how much?"

_____

Add Quality by asking "what kind of change?"

_____

Add a **Time element**, by asking yourself "by when?"

_____

Repeat this process for each level in the Design Hierarchy to complete the Logframe. Creating your own indicators to fit your project by asking these four questions will allow for a fluid logframe. Be sure to fill out the Indicator column of your logframe after you have completed this exercise.

NARR.	INDICATORS	M/SOV	RISKS
GOAL	**What changes do you expect to see that will let you know you have contributed to your overall goal?**		
OBJECTIVES	**What specific signs or information will let you know that your objectives have been reached?**		
A.			
B.			
OUTPUTS	**What specific information or data will you gather that will show what your outputs have been?**		
A.1			
A.2			
B.1			
ACTIVITIES	**What specific information or data will you gather that will show you have completed your proposed activities?**		
A.1.1			
A.2.1			
A.2.2			
B.1.1			

Search for Common Ground

UKaid
from the Department for International Development

Step 8:

The final step in completing a Logframe is to decide on what sources you will use to find information. It may be helpful to think of all the possible means that your team may be using to collect data and to verify your narrative. Begin by brainstorming a **list** of sources and methods that can be used for verification. (See modules on **Focus Groups, Interviews, Surveys, Case Studies and Observation.)** Then, use that information to **answer the following questions** within the Logframe.

Means/Sources of Verification

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____

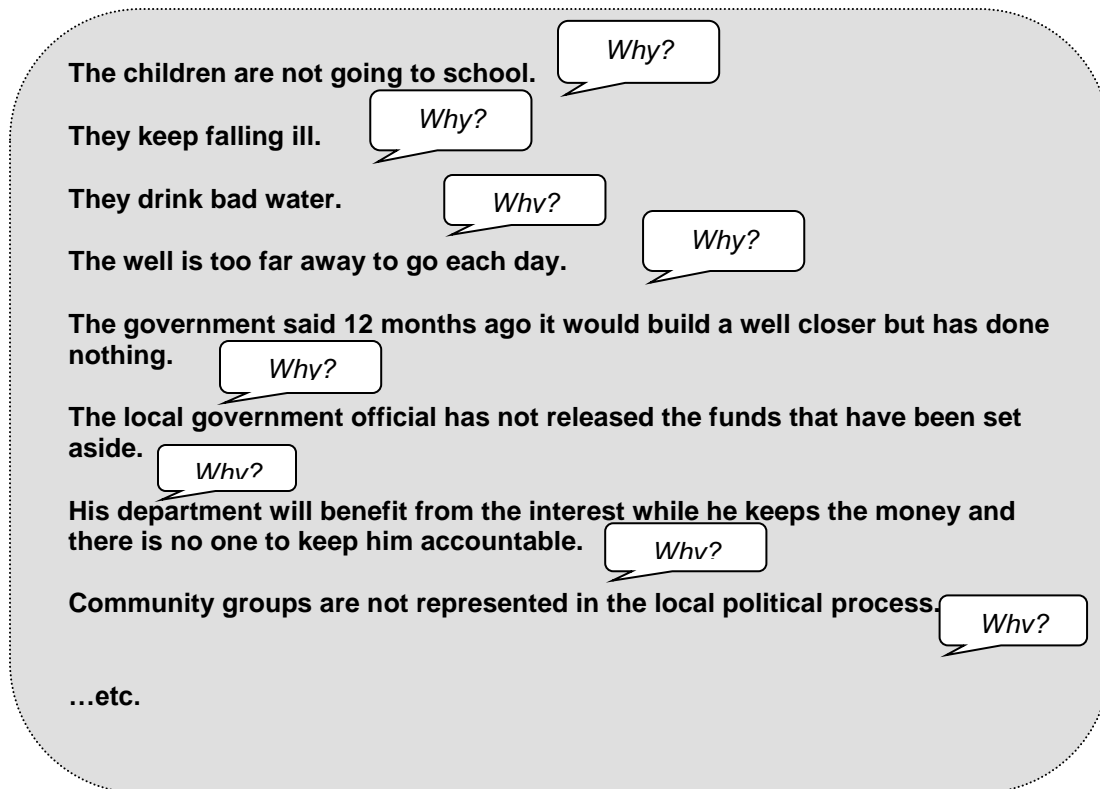| NARRATIVE	IND.	MEANS / SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	RISKS
GOAL – what is your overall purpose of the project?		**What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your goal?**	
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal?		**What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your objectives?**	
A.			
B.			
OUTPUTS – what tangible results need to come from the activities in order to reach the objectives?		**What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your outputs?**	
A.1			
A.2			
B.1			
ACTIVITIES – what will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?		**What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your activities?**	
A.1.1			
A.2.1			
A.2.2			
B.1.1			

TOOL 2: The Problem Tree

STEP 1 – The "Why?" Exercise

State a common problem that people have identified as something to address. Keep asking 'why?' until the group can go no further with their explanations of the causes behind it.

Finding the root cause of the problem

The children are not going to school. *Why?*

They keep falling ill. *Why?*

They drink bad water. *Why?*

The well is too far away to go each day. *Why?*

The government said 12 months ago it would build a well closer but has done nothing. *Why?*

The local government official has not released the funds that have been set aside. *Why?*

His department will benefit from the interest while he keeps the money and there is no one to keep him accountable. *Why?*

Community groups are not represented in the local political process. *Why?*

…etc.

STEP 2 – The Problem Tree

At each 'Why?' there are a variety of answers that can be given and if the 'why?' exercise is repeated for the same problem a number of times, you will be able to identify many of the roots of the problem. A simple example is given below, although problem trees can sometimes become much larger!

Examples of root causes in a problem tree
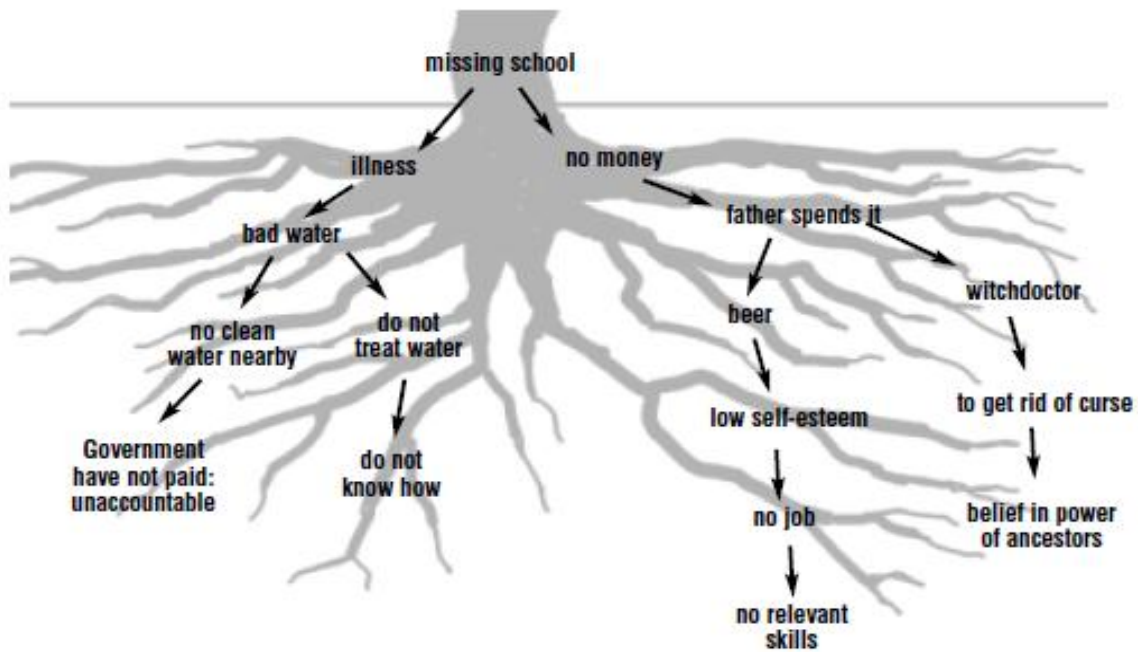
The challenge is to decide which of the many causes you can address and the type of intervention to take. These can then be turned into objectives for your work. A development project intervention might be providing a water supply for a school. An advocacy intervention might be to hold the local government accountable for its use of finances. Another intervention might be health education that counteracts the use of witchcraft for resolving health problems.

STEP 3 - Adding the 'Effects' of the Problem to the Problem Tree

The problem tree can be extended to include the effects of the problem, which become the branches growing out of the tree. This highlights areas for intervention to lessen the effects of the problem. This addresses the immediate needs until a lasting solution can be found. In the example given below, this might include:
- treating illness
- helping the unemployed to find temporary work
- finding ways to help slum dwellers to improve their environment.

Example of effects in a problem tree
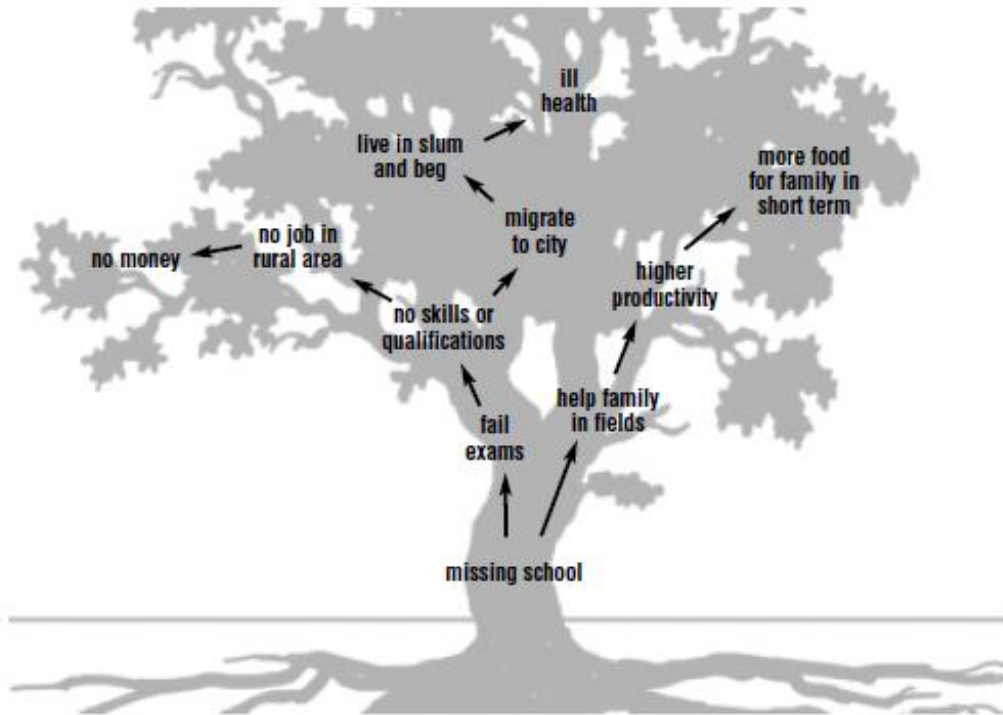
The exercise of the problem tree (causes and effects) is best done on a long piece of paper on the wall – so that people can see the all the causes and effects and possible interventions at the same time. The paper can be written on directly or people can stick post-it notes onto it and move them around as necessary.

Goal

Questions to answer about the overall goal of your project:

Narrative	INDICATORS	MEANS/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS/ RISKS
GOAL – what is your overall purpose of the project?	What changes do you expect to see that will let you know you have contributed to your overall goal?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your goal?	Why is this goal important? How does it fit in to the context? How does it fit with Search's mission?
OBJECTIVES			
OUTPUTS			
ACTIVITIES			

Objectives

Questions to answer about the objectives you want to reach that will contribute to your overall goal:

Narrative	INDICATORS	MEANS/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS/ RISKS
GOAL – what is your overall purpose of the project?	What changes do you expect to see that will let you know you have contributed to your overall goal?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your goal?	Why is this goal important? How does it fit in to the context? How does it fit with Search's mission?
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal?	What specific signs or information will let you know that your objectives have been reached?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your objectives?	How do these objectives contribute to the goal? How are they consistent with the Common Ground Approach?
OUTPUTS			
ACTIVITIES			

Outputs

Questions to answer about the outputs that will help you reach your objectives:

Narrative	INDICATORS	MEANS/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS/ RISKS
GOAL – what is your overall purpose of the project?	What changes do you expect to see that will let you know you have contributed to your overall goal?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your goal?	Why is this goal important? How does it fit in to the context? How does it fit with Search's mission?
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal?	What specific signs or information will let you know that your objectives have been reached?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your objectives?	How do these objectives contribute to the goal? How are they consistent with the Common Ground Approach?
OUTPUTS – what tangible results need to come from the activities in order to reach the objectives?	What specific information or data will you gather that will show what your outputs have been?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your outputs?	How will these outputs achieve the objectives?
ACTIVITIES			

Activities

Questions to answer about the activities that will help you achieve your outputs:

Narrative	INDICATORS	MEANS/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS/ RISKS
GOAL – what is your overall purpose of the project?	What changes do you expect to see that will let you know you have contributed to your overall goal?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your goal?	Why is this goal important? How does it fit in to the context? How does it fit with Search's mission?
OBJECTIVES – what short-term changes will need to occur in order to contribute to your goal?	What specific signs or information will let you know that your objectives have been reached?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your objectives?	How do these objectives contribute to the goal? How are they consistent with the Common Ground Approach?
OUTPUTS – what tangible results need to come from the activities in order to reach the objectives?	What specific information or data will you gather that will show what your outputs have been?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your outputs?	How will these outputs achieve the objectives?
ACTIVITIES – what will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?	What specific information or data will you gather that will show you have completed your proposed activities?	What sources will you use/where will you look to find the specific information you need for the indicators for your activities?	How will these activities lead to the outputs?

Additional Resources

Church, Cheyanne & Rogers, Mark. Designing for Results. Search for
Common Ground. Chapter 3.
http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources_publications.html

MandE News. Working with the Logical Framework (under duress or by desire), UK
http://www.mande.co.uk/logframe.htm

Logic Model, University of Wisconsin Extension
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html

The Logical Framework for Project Design, Inter-American Development Bank
http://www.iadb.org/int/rtc/ecourses/

Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models, University of Wisconsin Extension
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/

Goals & Objectives Module

This module will guide you through the process of choosing goals and objectives for your project.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What are they?** ➢ **What are they for?** ➢ **When should they be done?** ➢ **Who should be involved?** ➢ **How to use them?** ➢ **Practice Exercise** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Project Planning Diagram (Tool 3)** ➢ **Practice Exercises** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to select measurable goals and objectives, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: ABCDE Components

TOOL 2: SMART Components

TOOL 3: Project Planning Diagram

TOOL 4: Pitfalls to Avoid

What are they?

First, let us take a step back and take a brief glimpse at the overall design process. "Imagine that your analysis has identified a need for something located on a very high shelf, seemingly far out of reach. Below the shelf is a series of small platforms, which are also out of reach. If we could find a way to get onto the platforms, we might be able to reach the item we need. We look around to see what is available to enable us to climb up to a platform. We could build scaffolding or a ladder. We could try ropes or hire a helicopter to lower us onto the platforms. We choose to build a ladder both because we want to be able to go up and down repeatedly and because we can get the materials quickly and inexpensively. We then get busy ordering supplies, taking measurements, learning ladder safety, cutting wood, etc."
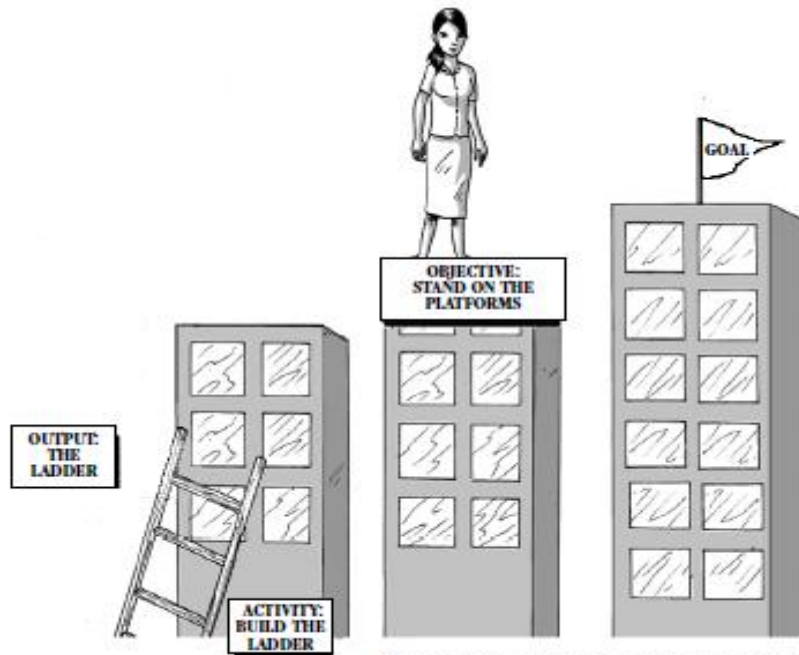

Illustration Representing the Design Hierarchy

"Program design requires our thinking to go through a similar series of challenges in getting from one place to another, or from one result to another, in order to achieve our goal. In this case, the activities involve building a ladder.

The output from those activities is the ladder. Our output—the ladder—will provide access to the platforms. The objective is to stand on the platforms. By standing on two or more platforms, we should be able to accomplish our goal of reaching the item on the shelf." This is called design hierarchy: each step—activities, outputs, and objectives—brings us closer to our stated goal.

"It is important to keep in mind how the different levels [of the design hierarchy] interact with each other. From the top looking down, the level immediately below explains how the level above it will be achieved. We will reach the goal by achieving the objectives. We will reach the objectives through the outputs. Finally we obtain the outputs by implementing activities. From the bottom looking up, each higher level explains why we are doing what preceded it on the lower level. We are implementing the activities to produce the outputs. We need the outputs to achieve the objectives. We want to achieve the objectives because they contribute to the realization of the goal."[1]

Goal
- The broadest change in the conflict

Objectives
- Types of changes that are prerequisites to achieving the goal

Outputs
- Tangible deliverables or products, often from activities

Activities
- Concrete events or services performed

The goal is the **broadest change in the conflict** to which the project hopes to **contribute**. The goal is based on the conflict or the people in conflict rather than on the service or project that might be offered. It is usually a long-term and high-level change (peace *writ large*).

Tip: Goals and objectives are not essentially different—rather, they differ in the *level* of result each addresses. Where goals operationalize *impacts*, objectives operationalize *outcomes (results)*.

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[1] Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers, Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground), p. 29-30.

The goal should be directly related to SFCG's overall mission and to the organization's purpose for working in the country/region/issue.

Objectives describe **the behavioural (skill), attitudinal and knowledge changes** at the individual, communal or national level that are prerequisites to achieving the goal. For example, behavioural changes at the communal or national level may manifest as policy or social norms. There are often several objectives under a well-defined goal. Well-formulated objectives reflect the more immediate or direct results a project is intended to achieve.

Objectives ensure a logical link between activities and goals, which is why they can be difficult. As peace builders we want peace. As practitioners we have creative and exciting ideas about activities and events. Determining and demonstrating the connection between peace and our proposed activities is critical.

Keep in mind that goals and objectives are relative. For example, each SFCG country program has its own goals and objectives, which are supported by individual projects which also have goals and objectives: an objective for the country program may be a goal for a project within that country program.

The Relativity of Design Hierarchies

Program A

- Goal
- Objective
- Activity

Point of entry depends on focus, capacity, scope and interest.

Program B

- Goal
- Objective
- Activity

Program C

- Goal
- Objective
- Activity

What are they for?

A clearly stated goal provides a focus and a purpose to the work the project is doing. It is a reference point that guides the project's decisions about shorter-term objectives and activities. It also connects the project to the larger picture of what is happening in the country or region.

Objectives help the proposal writer further narrow the scope of the project: they are a means to achieving the goal. Well-formulated objectives reflect the more immediate or direct effects a project is intended to achieve. Objectives typically address changes in participant behaviour (skills), attitude or knowledge that occur as a result of specific project activities.

> **Tip:** *Why* are we trying to achieve these objectives? In order to achieve the project goal. *How* will we achieve these objectives? By producing the project outputs (see **Activities** module).

Following the aforementioned example, increasing public knowledge and changing public perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese justice system is an objective because it does not involve a change in the conflict: it addresses an attitudinal and/or knowledge change in the targeted audience. It is one means to achieving equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children to the justice sector in Timor-Leste.

The key differences between goals and objectives are provided below:

Goals	Objectives
Broad and visionary in nature	Narrow and time bound
General intentions	Precise
Not resource dependent	Resource dependent
Intangible	Tangible
Abstract	Concrete
Can't be validated	Can be validated

When should they be done?

The project design process is highly fluid and therefore the goals and objectives may be conceived of at nearly any point in the design process. Generally, however, goals and objectives are conceived of after conducting relevant assessments (see **Conflict Assessment** module and **Risk Assessment** module). Goals can also be suggested by the donor based on their focus on the big picture change or impact they wish to address. Remember, objectives provide a logical link between the goal and activities; the order of conception makes little difference.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the goal and objectives for the project.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of the goal and chosen objectives.

How to use them?

There are a variety of methods to arrive at your goal and measurable objectives; three are provided below as examples. The **ABCDE** and **SMART** components will help you narrow down your goal or objectives so that they are measurable and appropriate, while the **Project Planning Diagram** is a guide to determining goals, objectives and activities regardless of your starting point in project conceptualization.

> **Tip:** The relationships between goals, objectives and program activities (see **Activities** module) are *highly interactive*. Activities are designed and implemented to achieve objectives that support goals. The link between goals, objectives and activities should be clearly evident in the program's "logic model" (see **Logframe** module).

It is important for goals and objectives to be **measurable** according to predetermined performance indicators. By including these ABCDE components, you will state the who, what, to what degree, by when, and evidence source for your project objectives (alternatives to the ABCDE model are provided under "**Additional Resources**"):

Audience

- The population/target audience for whom the desired outcome is intended. This may be a large population, but is usually a smaller component of the audience identified in the goal, e.g., journalists, youth, civil society leaders who are the immediate beneficiaries of the SFCG project.

Behaviour – what?

- What is to happen? A clear statement of the behaviour change/result expected.
- At the goal level this is stated in numbers that represent **changes in large target populations** (incidence and prevalence figures, in research terms), not in specific individuals.
- At the objective level this identifies **knowledge, skills, attitudes, or new behaviours** among participants.

Condition – by when? Under what circumstances?

- The conditions under which measurements will be made. This should include the timeframe and may include "upon implementation of" a specific intervention.
- Goals are long-term, e.g., two to three years.
- Objectives are short-term. They fit within the goal length, e.g., 6 months, one year.
- Projects may be named here (e.g., "after completion of the X training") because they are <u>always</u> conditions, never goals or objectives.

Degree – by how much?

- The quantification of, or the level of, results expected. This often involves measuring change in comparison to an identified baseline. Previous evaluations of the project may also provide the degree of change the project has been demonstrated to achieve, and new projects can build on that change.

Evidence – as measured by?

- Defines the means of verification (MOV). The degree of change will be measured using a specified instrument or criterion. For a goal, this may be responses on selected items on, for example, a survey or change over time in performance indicators such as incidence or prevalence of ethnic, religious, class tension or conflict, crime and poverty rates, etc. For an objective, it is important to develop indicators and determine the best method of verification, e.g., surveys, interviews, review of records kept, etc., to assess shorter-term, direct change in participants (see **Indicators** module).

ABCDE Example

Example Goal:
Equal and timely access to justice will be achieved for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste

Example Objective:
Public knowledge will be increased and public perceptions and attitudes will change positively regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system [knowledge and attitude] in 13 districts.

> **Audience:**
> Timorese men, women and children in all 13 districts

> **Behaviour:**
> There will be increased public knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system

> **Condition:**
> Upon the completion of the activities under this objective by the program end date

> **Degree:**
> Percentage or number of interviewed citizens who report listening to the radio drama; percentage or number of interviewed citizens who can name three messages from the radio drama and explain why they are key.

> **Evidence:**
> A survey with qualifying open questions and a log of listeners' letters will be analysed to provide monitoring data.

TOOL 2

If you would like to focus more on the development of measurable indicators and outputs, the SMART model is recommended.[2]

Specific – who, what, when, why and how

- Specifies the desired measurable results
- Who will you engage with? What are you going to do? When will you do it? Why is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish? How are you going to do it?

Measurable – describes how each result will be measured

- Choose a goal or objective with measurable progress. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal or objective (see Indicators module). You should be able to answer the following questions: How will I *know* the result has been achieved and how will I *show* the result has been achieved?
- Is it quantitative or qualitative?
- There should be little or no ambiguity on what is being measured

Achievable/Attainable – is it technically possible to achieve the desired results?

- Do the context and conflict assessments demonstrate a need for your project? Do the context and conflict assessments suggest certain activities are infeasible?

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[2] The SMART model for Goals and Objectives and Indicators are similar, but with a key variation: SMART indicators concern the measurement, as closely as possible, of the results the indicators are intended to measure; SMART goals and objectives, however, define the desired results in measurable terms—which are then used for the development of SMART indicators. As a result, some variation may occur between the definitions of each acronym.

Result-oriented – describes the desired results

- Have your desired results been clearly articulated in actionable language (for example, future tense – will)?
- Do your methods and activities have proven records of success?
- Are your goals and objectives stated clearly so there is little or no ambiguity on whether you have achieved them?

Time-bound – beginning and end dates

- What is the specific time frame to achieve this result? Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic. Have other factors, such as delivery by others and coordination, been considered in the time frame? Time frame may also include a plan to monitor progress towards the attainment of the stated goal or objective.

The chart below suggests ways to help you get to objectives if you are starting from the point of having identified activities that you think will address a conflict situation.

Project Planning Diagram

The project design process is highly fluid. Use the following table to help you arrive at goals, objectives or activities. If you are moving down the design hierarchy (from goals to objectives or activities), ask the questions in the left column. If you are moving up the design hierarchy (from activities to objectives or goals), ask the questions in the right column.

What is our *theory of change*?

If we do _____, then we will achieve _____.

How are you going to contribute toward this goal? What objectives will help us reach this goal?	Goal – the major change you want to achieve or contribute to –usually one goal is enough	
How are you going to achieve these objectives? What activities are needed to achieve them?	Objective – short-term changes in knowledge, skills or attitudes that, if reached, will achieve or contribute to the goal – usually two to four	What goal do the objectives suggest? Why will these objectives contribute to this goal?
	Activities – work to be done to achieve the changes we seek, both process and program	Why will the selected activities achieve the objectives? What does experience or research tell

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		us about why they work for this problem?

TOOL 4 – Pitfalls To Avoid

1. **Defining goals so narrowly they are objectives, or so broadly that they are immeasurable; defining objectives so narrowly that they are activities, or so broadly that they are a goal**

   - Examples:
     Goal: To increase access to justice in Timor-Leste. (Too broad.)
     Objective: To provide funds for local organizations to attend capacity building initiatives. (An activity aimed at obtaining resources.)

   - ❖ Remedy:
     Think in terms of what the activities are designed to achieve—what changes are intended. Shift thinking away from describing activities and toward describing the changes those activities are intended to achieve in the project participants/context. This will result in a stronger orientation toward **results** rather than activities. Remember, activities are NOT the same things as objectives or goals. Activities are the means by which goals and objectives are accomplished (see **Activities** module). Remember, also, that objectives are realistic, achievable pieces of a larger goal. They must fit SFCG's capacity to produce results.

2. **Stating implementation or operational benchmarks as goals or objectives**

   - Examples:
     "To offer local justice organizations 50% more training opportunities." (This is a measure of an output resulting from an activity.);
     "Develop and print 400 manuals on how to access the justice system.

   - ❖ Remedy:
     Write the goal or objective in terms of changes that will occur in the knowledge, behaviour or attitude of participants. The focus is thereby shifted to the **result** rather than the activity conducted to achieve it.
     "To increase the capacity of local justice organizations to provide access to judicial services."

"To increase awareness amongst the population regarding how to access the justice system."

3. Writing compound goals or objectives

- Example:

  "The Timorese public will have increased knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system <u>and</u> Timorese CSOs will have built their capacity and sustainability in order to play a more active role in justice, coordination, and peacebuilding processes."

- ❖ Remedy:

  Focus on one target audience and/or one change per objective. Develop an objective which focuses on, for example, reducing the incidence of election-related violence. Develop a second objective (and third if necessary). Structure the objectives statements so that the target audience for the project is the *subject* and the change in knowledge, behaviour or attitude is the *verb*.

  1. "The Timorese public will have increased knowledge and changed perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system."
  2. "Timorese CSOs will have enhanced capacity and sustainability in order to play a more active role in justice, coordination, and peacebuilding processes."

4. Passive voice

- Example:

  To increase knowledge and change perceptions and attitudes [action] amongst the public [subject] regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system.

- ❖ Remedy[3]:

  The public [subject] will increase knowledge and positively change perceptions and attitudes [action] regarding the workings of the

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[3] Two excellent online guides to the passive and active voice: Purdue University, "OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab: Active and Passive Voice," accessed 27 September 2010, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/539/1/; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Handouts and Links: Passive Voice," accessed 27 September 2010, http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html.

Timorese judicial system.

5. Listing goals or objectives that are not clearly linked to the overall goals of the program, organization or donor

- Example:
  To achieve greater public access to the Timorese judicial system by improving road infrastructure.

- ❖ Remedy:
  Project goals and objectives should be appropriate to the organization: does SFCG (as an organization or at the country-program level) have the necessary skills capacities and resources to accomplish the goal(s) and/or objective(s)? Similarly, it is important to be aware of your donor's project preferences. For example, you can examine donor mandates, project proposal guidelines and past projects funded.

6. Listing goals or objectives that are not appropriate for the target population

- ❖ Remedy:
  Assessments (see **Conflict Assessment** and **Risk Assessment** modules) should inform the process of project goal and objective selection. Goals and objectives should be firmly grounded in demonstrable context and conflict dynamics and realities. Relevant **local stakeholders** who are familiar with the local context and dynamics should be involved in this process, and if necessary a DME Specialist in the DC office may be consulted.

7. Listing only knowledge-based outcomes

- Example:
  Participants will demonstrate thorough understanding of DDR processes.

- ❖ Remedy:
  Albert Einstein said, "The only source of knowledge is experience." Whether this is so is debatable, but it does provide insight to this pitfall: ground knowledge in practical experience—*experiential learning*—and include practical application of that knowledge: participant generated action plans which apply skills associated with knowledge gained in a workshop, for example.

8. Describing goals or objectives in terms that are not measurable

- Example:

  "To understand why Timorese citizens view the justice system as inaccessible and corruption prone."

- ❖ Remedy:

  Break the statement down into observable and/or measurable changes in behaviour, attitude or knowledge. One of the biggest problems with poorly written objectives is the choice of words used to indicate the change expected. Proper wording is therefore critical.[4] Continuing with the above example, a remedy may be: "To *identify* the key dynamics which affect the Timorese perspective that the justice system is inaccessible and corruption prone."

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[4] Further information on how to better utilize vocabulary in formulating measurable objectives see, Virginia Tech, "Modules: Spring 2003, Lesson 6," accessed 27 September 2010, http://www.itma.vt.edu/modules/spring03/instrdes/lesson6.htm and/or International Planned Parenthood

Federation, *Guide for Designing Results-Oriented Projects and Writing Successful Proposals* (New York: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, https://galaxy.sfcg.org/sfcg/library/attach/IPPF%20-%20Guide%20for%20Designing%20Results-Oriented%20Projects%20.pdf pg. 14.

Practice Exercises

Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!

Exercise 1:
Developing Objectives and Activities from Goal/Context Assessment

Use the following context analysis and goal to determine what the project's objectives and activities might be.

Nepal is in the midst of implementing a complex comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) plagued with slow progress and many setbacks. Numerous challenges still await the country: the adoption of the new constitution, the establishment of federal states, the shifting of the balance of power to the local level, security sector reform, and the integration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the national army.

Keys to a successful transition will be increasing the participation of a range of key stakeholders, particularly youth from the local to the national level, and finding ways to solve differences that are likely to arise in non-adversarial manners. In addition, the communication and information gaps that currently exist between central and district levels will need to be bridged. It is likely that key players in the peace process will show differences of opinion on so many issues. They will need to improve their ability to build consensus and to communicate more effectively with their constituents.

Goal
To build a peace process that is inclusive of civil society and youth, in particular, in Nepal.

Objectives *[fill in at least two]*

_____
_____
_____

Activities *[fill in at least two]*

* _____
* _____
* _____

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Keep in mind that a variety objectives and activities can be derived from the assessment and goal provided. Listed below are some examples. Can you think of others?

Objectives

- Key stakeholder groups will develop greater capacity to engage constructively in the peace process in non-adversarial ways.
- Key stakeholder groups will engage in solution-oriented dialogue on key elements of the CPA and peace process at the district, regional and national levels; and,
- Youth and local decision makers will constructively engage each other in the peace process at the local level.

Activities

- Leadership and Consensus Building Initiative for Leaders and Decision Makers
- Dialogue and Consensus Building Forum
- Youth and Peace building Trainings

Practice Exercises

Exercise 2:
Developing Goals and Objectives from Activities

Use the following context analysis and activities to determine what the project's goal and objectives might be.

Sri Lanka has endured more than three decades of inter-ethnic strife. Despite numerous efforts to address the ethnic conflict of the island nation, no mutual and lasting solution has been found. Since the majority Sinhalese government declared a military victory over the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) in May of 2009, there is no violence to distract from the root causes of the conflict and from the underlying issues to be addressed. This creates opportunities for addressing several key issues: vast social and economic growth, the restoration of stability throughout the country, and reconciliation without violence. Fundamental to pursuing these goals is ensuring that the peace dividend is equitable, inclusive, just, and democratic, and does not lay cause to exacerbate rather than bridge the present political and ethnic divides.

For many, especially minorities, there is a loss in the sense of identity as Sri Lankan. Core cultural, social, and traditional values previously manipulated to cause divisions, if collectively embraced, can provide a foundation on which to build a more tolerant and inclusive Sri Lanka. Tamils and Muslims need to find constructive solutions to difficult challenges, such as land issues, as well as lingering post-conflict resentment. Moreover, reconciliation and political power-sharing will only be possible if the political parties are able to convince voters that there is a more constructive way forward, and the Sri Lanka public pushes for change.

Many of Sri Lanka's youth, previously active in civil society – are now finding paths to socioeconomic growth do not exist, and there is little room to pursue aspiration through fair and democratic practices. Widespread cynicism, frustration and apathy have led either to a lack of motivation to participate actively in the democratization process, or the adoption of corrupt practices in an effort to succeed. Despite these obstacles, young people have demonstrated remarkable resilience, and space is available to engage youth leadership in bridging social, political, and ethnic gaps and in calling for greater equality, inclusiveness, transparency and justice.

Goal *[fill in]*

_____

Objectives *[fill in at least two]*

- _____

- _____

  _____

Activities

1. Organize two annual Future Leaders Conferences for Hope and Reconciliation, bringing together more than 600 youth leaders from across the country with a focus on including students from the conflict-affected North and East. Will specifically target emerging youth leaders in schools and include conflict resolution workshops with a variety of reconciliation tools including sports, arts and drama.

2. Organize residential conflict transformation and leadership training for youth leaders in sports. Identified young cricketers, particularly team captains as well as young women leaders, will represent the diversity of Sri Lanka and have the ability to influence other youth, on their teams, in their schools and in their communities.

3. Support in partnership the development and implementation of 20 youth cricket competitions that will specifically target the most conflict-affected or prone districts, bringing together both diverse and homogenous teams and communities for people-to-people interaction.

Keep in mind that a variety of goals and objectives can be derived from the aforementioned activities and goal. Listed below are some examples. Can you think of others?

Goals

- Youth from across dividing lines will play a substantial and positive role in supporting peace and stability in Sri Lanka.
- Youth will play a substantial role in the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.
- Ethnic minorities will play a substantial role in the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

- Create a cadre of youth leaders trained in leadership, community mobilization, and sustainable reconciliation skills to act as catalysts in Sri Lanka's conflict transformation and democratization processes.
- Create a platform for dialogue between youth, civil society and government leadership where youth are accepted as partners in decision making.
- Build a sustainable culture of peace among Sri Lankan youth from all sectors through engagement in sports, dialogue and new media platforms that focus on reconciliation, tolerance and inclusiveness.

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Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

Anne J. Atkinson and Carolyne Ashton, Planning for Results: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Program Planning and Evaluation Handbook (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.safeanddrugfreeva.org/planningforresults.pdf

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Department for International Development, *Log Frame Guidelines* (London: DFID, 2005)

European Commission, *Aid Delivery Methods Vol. 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, Part 2 Chapter 5 (Brussells: EuropeAid Cooperation Office, 2004).

Following are various models that complement the **ABCDE** and **SMART** models in developing specific and measurable goals and objectives:

SPICED
(Roche, 2002, http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/topic_03DF8A69-0DAC-47D5-8A14-1E1833901BFE_BBA5D8DC-5C40-4F9C-A6A4-0268098134D7_1.htm [accessed 15 September 2010])

Subjective: using informants for their insights

Participatory: involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, involving local staff and other stakeholders

Interpreted and communicable: explaining locally defined indicators to other stakeholders

Cross-checked and compared: comparing different indicators and progress, and using different informants, methods, and researchers

Empowering: allowing groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation

Diverse and disaggregated: seeking out different indicators from a range of groups, especially both genders, multi-generational groups, to assess their differences over time

CREAM (Schiavo-Campo, "Performance in the Public Sector," p. 85, 1999)

Clear: precise and unambiguous

Relevant: appropriate to the subject at hand

Economic: available at reasonable cost

Adequate: able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance

Monitorable: amenable to independent validation

Activities Module

This module will help you understand how to link activities to goals and objectives, theories of change, and assumptions in the logic framework.

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable below)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What Are Activities?** ➢ **What Are They For?** ➢ **When Should They Be Selected?** ➢ **Who Should Be Involved?** ➢ **How Are They Selected?** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Project Planning Diagram** ➢ **Practice Exercises** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct a Focus Group, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: USAID Theories of Change Matrix

TOOL 2: Peacebuilding Theories of Change

TOOL 3: Types of Change

TOOL 4: Theories of Change Outcomes

TOOL 5: Approaches to Building Peace: the Lederach Triangle

TOOL 6: Key People-More People Approaches

TOOL 7: Individual/Personal-Socio/Political Approaches

TOOL 8: Project Planning Diagram

What are Activities?

Activities are the **concrete events or services that program staff and participants implement** such as dialogue sessions, mediations, exchange visits, curriculum development, soap-opera production, community organizing, sporting events, training, negotiations, etc. **The immediate or expected deliverables or products from activities, which are often tangible, are called "outputs."** They often include estimate numbers and descriptions of trainings held, participants served, materials developed or distributed, networks formed, etc. If project activity outputs are sustained beyond the activity, they may turn into project outcomes. Also keep in mind that in some cases, and depending on the donor, outputs may be understood as "intermediate results" or outcomes and not just the products of activities. (See **Goals and Objectives module**)

> **Tip:** Outputs and activities are so closely linked that they are best conceived together, rather than separately. **Well-produced outputs contribute to the achievement of the objectives.** Outputs are like the rungs on the ladder, each one should get us closer to the corresponding objective.

Activities should be defined in accordance with the type of change and the subsequent results that are desired. **The project's Theory of Change (see Theory of Change module) goals and objectives (see Goals and Objectives module) should inform the chosen activities**. The challenge is selecting a few **strategic and effective** activities from a large menu of possibilities. Criteria established prior to assessing the many possible activities will help to eliminate options that may be interesting or familiar activities, but not the right ones for your chosen goal and objectives. Consider the outputs that each activity will generate. Will they address the identified need? Will they lead to the change anticipated in the objective? Contribution toward the objectives has to be among the top criteria in choosing among multiple activities. Available resources also need to be high on the list.

> **Tip:** In program design, theories of change guide the intervention design by suggesting what sorts of interventions in the conflict context are likely to lead to the desired changes.

> ### Example
> If one of our objectives is to increase public knowledge and change public perceptions and attitudes in a positive direction regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system, then one activity might be to produce and distribute interactive television talk shows. If, however, television is not a widely viewed medium of communication in Timor-Leste, then radio might be more appropriate. An output from this activity would be X interactive radio talk shows produced and distributed.

What are they for?

Activities help define the project: they are the concrete services or events that will be implemented to achieve the project objectives and therefore the goal. Project activities should also define the length of the project, as well as the project staff and/or stakeholders who will be involved in project implementation.

> **Tip:** *Why* do we need these outputs? To achieve the project objectives. *How* will we achieve these outputs? By implementing the project activities.

When should they be done?

Ideally, activities should flow from the development of the theory of change, goal, and objectives that identify the knowledge, attitude and behaviour changes desired. Often, though, program designers start with activities because they are what we know how to do, and we often do them well, which can be a strength. The weakness is that we often choose activities we are comfortable with as practitioners, but that may not be related to the short-term (objectives) and long-term visions (goal; peace *writ large*) chosen to address the actual conflict situation.

For help in either developing a project from activities or from the goal and objectives, see the **Project Planning diagram**.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the activities for the project, as well as who and which level(s) the project should target (audience; see ABCDE chart in the **Goals and Objectives** module).

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office, or program support staff, can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of chosen activities.

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How are they selected?

Activities should be selected **based on the type of change the project is trying to affect**. A clearly identified and logical theory of change is critical. At the same time, activities define the approach and/or strategy employed for that project. Activities should be **strategic** for both the context and the organization: will the activities bring about the desired outcome, and does the organization have the required skill sets and resources to accomplish the activities in an effective way? Remember, it is important to demonstrate a link between the project goals, objectives and activities, and to be able to demonstrate that link.

TOOL 1: USAID's Theories of Change Matrix

There are many ways to conceive which activities follow best with certain theories of change. USAID has made perhaps the most comprehensive effort to establish this, but alternative conceptualizations are also available. The table created by USAID's Conflict Management and Mitigation department, can help identify the types of activities which may accompany specific theories of change. Below is an example of just one of the ToC areas, Inside-out Peacebuilding. There are seven more, which include the complete list

with accompanying documentation and can be found at
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS460.pdf . They include:

Attitudes toward Peace

- The three theories in this family all target attitudes about a situation. They focus on altering perceptions, attitudes, and social norms concerning the costs of violent conflict and the benefits of tolerance, coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Healthy Relationships

- The theories in this family target attitudes, as do those in the previous family. They differ in expecting that attitudinal change comes from the interaction of belligerent groups and the increased mutual understanding and appreciation that results. The two Healthy Relationships theories differ with respect to whether the setting for interactions is a shared community, or a separate, safe location.

Peace Process

- The theories in this family all focus on establishing a process of peaceful negotiations and agreement implementation. The primary target is process because attitudinal change and substantive solutions will develop within good processes.

Functioning Institutions

- The theories in this family focus on liberal democratic approach to formal and informal institutional performance within government, civil society, and the private sector. They differ in terms of which formal and informal institutional have the most impact on perceived grievances or are the most likely to tap into social and institutional resilience.

Reform the Elite

- The theories in this family focus on the elite as a singular key actor. These theories target, respectively, the motivations and means of key actors rather than their attitudes.

Coming to Terms with the Past

- The theories in this family all focus on acknowledging and accepting the violent past as part of creating healthy selves, relationships, and overall social/institutional resiliency to future violence. [1]

The USAID ToCs may not exactly fit your design, but you can tailor them, or you can use the model presented following the USAID model. The matrix is found on the next two pages.

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[1] USAID CMM, "Theories of Change and Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation," Final Draft, June 2010, accessed 15 November 2010, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS460.pdf.

	1. Inside-Out Peacebuilding

The two theories in this family focus on the construction of inclusive identity at the level of individuals. When this inner transformation takes place among key actors and/or enough individuals, they can influence societal patterns, identity groups, institutional performance, and other key actors toward constructive conflict engagement.

Theory	Statement	Description	Target	Illustrative Action
Shifts in consciousness	If key actors and/or enough individuals undergo constructive shifts in their consciousness, such as developing more universal identities or awareness of identity formation, then their commitment and capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and for resisting mobilization of conflictual identities, will increase and can influence social change in that area.	This theory focuses on how a transformative experience such as a regular reflection process, personal epiphany, deep cognitive dissonance, or psychological development can alter an individual's deep consciousness structures—understanding of him/herself and relations to others and dynamics of conflict—resulting in a greater individual capacity and commitment to peacebuilding. Enough individuals experiencing this shift can generate social change toward resolving constructive conflict management.	Key actors; individuals	Personal transformation/consciousness-raising workshops; meditative activities; educational programs; identity-based training; nonviolent direct action and related acts that challenge assumptions or raise awareness.

| Common complex identities | If key actors and/or enough individuals on all sides of the conflict discover shared values and multifaceted complex identities, including constructive in-group self-esteem, then inclusive broader "value identities" that unite groups will form and multiple aspects of identity that provide cross-cutting ties will become salient, providing a basis for constructive conflict engagement together with reducing intergroup conflict. | The theory focuses on the role of inclusive and complex identities across a conflict divide. It suggests groups of individuals celebrate self-esteem and discover values (e.g., peace, justice, ethics) they share, which can generate an inclusive, deep, often spiritual connection and overarching inclusive group identity; and that people revive multifaceted cross-cutting identities that bridge across the conflict divide. These transformations support social change toward constructive conflict engagement and address unconstructive actions by one's own group. | Key actors; Individuals; Identity | Inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue and encounter groups; intra-group dialogues on values; faith-based initiatives; cultural preservation and celebration; single-identity work; inter-group gatherings; work together on super ordinate goals; women's groups, youth groups, sports groups, professional organizations; direct personal experience with "the enemy"; media content showing individuals and groups experiencing positive shifts from exclusive to more inclusive identities. |

TOOL 2: Peacebuilding Theories of Change

Church and Rogers take a different approach than USAID to theories of change and activities. Rather than comprehensively collecting existing theories of change, Church and Rogers sought to identify the most significant theories of change and accompanying types of changes.[2] *As this relates to activities, focus on the "Methods" column*. Below are some examples of the theories identified by Church and Rogers. You can find the complete list at http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Theory of Change	Description	Methods
Individual Change Theory	Peace comes through transformative change of a critical mass of individuals, their consciousness, attitudes, behaviours and skills.	Investment in individual change through training; personal transformation/consciousness-raising workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups; trauma healing.
Healthy Relationships and Connections Theory	Peace emerges out of a process of breaking down isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups. Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for peacebuilding.	Processes of inter-group dialogue; networking; relationship building processes; joint efforts and practical programs on substantive problems.
Withdrawal of Resources for War Theory	Wars require vast amounts of material (weapons, supplies, transport, etc) and human capital. If we can interrupt the supply of people and goods to the war-making system, it will collapse and peace will break out.	Anti-war campaigns to cut off funds/national budgets; conscientious objection and/or resistance to military service; international arms control; arms (and other) embargoes and boycotts.
Add Your Own	This list is in no way comprehensive. Many initiatives have their own theory of change. What is important is to be able to articulate the thinking about how change happens. It need not fit into any of the above theories.	

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[2] Church and Rogers, "Designing for Results."

TOOL 3 – Types of Change

Church and Rogers further "bring down" the theories of change by identifying the specific types of change(s) to be brought about as a result of the intervention. This resource is particularly useful in wording measurable activities during the project design phase. Again, you can find the complete list at:
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Types of Change[3]	
Type of Change	**Examples of Specific Changes**
Relationship	From adversaries to partners in problem solving From suspicion to solidarity From different ethnicities to a common nationality Former neighbours reconciled
Status	Soldier to veteran From rebel leader to parliamentarian From entrepreneur to criminal
Behaviour	From violent behaviour to assertiveness From disrespecting women to respecting women From ignoring youth to taking their interests into consideration

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[3] Church and Rogers, "Designing for Results," pp. 18-19, modified from *Outcome Examples*, Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 3rd Edition (California: Sage Publications, 1997).

Church and Rogers then integrate the two tables so as to provide an overview of activities within each theory of change for specific changes. The table is meant to be read starting at the top and going down each theory of change before moving to the next column. "For example, consider the unrest in France in the autumn of 2005. If the assessment indicated that the conflict was primarily driven by exclusion and discrimination, and the theory of change was healthy relationship, what type of change might be strategic? The table offers only a few examples of literally thousands of possibilities. The intent is not to provide you with definitive answers, but to stimulate your thinking and your consideration of a vast array of possibilities. The wide range of alternatives is part of the reason peacebuilding initiatives are so difficult to design and evaluate."[4]

Activities which have a pre-established record of successful implementation are generally preferred by donors. Locally developed or context specific project activities which are untested create a greater burden on the project staff for monitoring, evaluation and demonstrating effectiveness (both in the project proposal and upon completion). For this reason it is often a good idea to look at similar projects conducted by SFCG or other NGOs that might suggest appropriate, tested activities. While untested activities should not necessarily be shied away from, it is important for relevant stakeholders in the project design process to plan for the extra monitoring and evaluation work in the project timeline, budget and staff required.

The matrix is provided on the following two pages.

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[4]Church and Rogers, "Designing for Results," pp. 20-22.

Examples of Potential Outcomes within each Peacebuilding Theory of Change

Type of Change	Reduce Resources for War	Work with Elites	Mobilize Grassroots	Healthy Relationships	Address Root Causes	Reduce Violence	Individual Change	Institutional Change
Change in Attitude	Status is accorded to people with wisdom rather than weapons	Increase elite's appreciation of accountability	Authorities increasingly validate grievances	Reduction in fear of the other	Recognition that the past and the present are different	Belief that respect is derived from appreciation rather than fear	Recognition of own responsibility in the matter	Security forces perceive civilians as people needing their protection
Change in Skills	Registration and tracking of small arms and light weapons improved	Improved communications with constituents	Improved advocacy skills	Improve management of rumors	Increased use of non-judgmental language	Able to satisfy own interests through negotiation	Increase in depth of analysis of the conflict	Collaborative, community policing
No Change; Maintain Status Quo	Limits on arms manufacturers will be preserved	Decentralization will not be rescinded	Lead activists continue to be able to travel freely	Continue to respect cultural differences	Continue to keep the issues alive in the media	Contain violence to current areas	Persist in advancing own interests	Continue to engage civil society
Prevention	Confiscated weapons will be destroyed and not re-enter the market	Will not make decisions in isolation or without consultation	Intimidation by authorities increasingly less effective	Will avoid using stereotypes	Prevent a new cycle of violence from erupting	Prevent additional incidents from escalating into violence	Ensure there are no repercussions	Bureaucrats will not misuse resources
Change in Relationship	Collusion in illicit behaviors to legal and transparent relationship	Elites more accessible to those they claim to represent	Increase in intra-group unity	From suspicion to trust	Change in relations between principle, such as opposition party leaders	Police/ community relations shift from control-based to service-based	Individual relationships based on dignity and respect	Introduction of citizen consultative processes in key ministries

Examples of Potential Outcomes within each Peacebuilding Theory of Change

Type of Change	Reduce Resources For War	Work with Elites	Mobilize Grassroots	Healthy Relationships	Address Root Causes	Reduce Violence	Individual Change	Institutional Change
Change in Circumstance	Fewer small arms and light weapons enter country	Increased opportunity for popular participation in local governance	Oppressed groups able to voice interests in media	Segregation barriers removed	All groups able to put issues on public policy agenda	Increase security to allow greater mobility	Able to circulate in previously restricted areas	Reduced allocation of national budget to the military and defense
Change in Status	Illegal arms importers recognized as criminals	From inherited status to merit-based status	Oppressed groups shift from objects to subjects of change	Relations built on interests rather than status	Elimination of the criteria for exclusion	Increase opportunities to become a part of a non-violent social group	Able to access previously restricted services	Civilian truth & reconciliation commissioners serve in Ministry of Justice
Change in Behavior	Customs officials seize illegal arms imports	Elites allow greater participation of subordinates	Increase in non-compliance with oppressive controls	Increase in joint social activities	Increase focus on the issues and less criticism of individuals	Increase use of third party neutrals to resolve potentially violent disputes	Will comply with laws and regulations	Promotions based on merit
Change in Functioning	Improvement in regulations affecting small arms and light weapons	Increase in transparency	Agenda-setting open to all	Routinely exchange information	Increased independence of the judiciary	Increasing employment of youth vulnerable to violence	Able to act as a neighbor rather than an opponent	Political appointments no longer the exclusive domein of the executives
Change in Structure	Customs bureau separated from taxation bureau	Admissions to higher education no longer exclusively for elites	Free primary education for all	Equitable, affordable access to health care	Separation of judiciary and executive branches	Reduce structural violence stemming from food insecurity	Understand dynamics of structural violence	Truth & reconciliation commission able to grant amnesty

Search for Common Ground

UKaid from the Department for International Development

Some questions to think about when determining project activities:

- Which level of society does this project seek to address (top/elite, middle, grassroots)?[5]
- What linkages exist, or can be created, to reinforce the links between the activity and approach with the theory of change?

Types of Actors

Approaches to Building Peace

Level 1: Top Leadership

Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility

Focus on high-level negotiations
Emphasizes cease-fire
Led by highly visible,
single mediator

Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership

Leaders respected in sectors
Ethnic/religious leaders
Academics/intellectuals
Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Problem-solving workshops
Training in conflict resolution
Peace commissions
Insider-partial teams

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership

Local leaders
Leaders of indigenous NGOs
Community developers
Local health officials
Refugee camp leaders

Local peace commissions
Grassroots training
Prejudice reduction
Psychosocial work
in postwar trauma

Affected Population

Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

You should construct your activities based on the type of change desired amongst the targeted level of society. Keep in mind that the activity itself may not change from level

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[5] See Michelle Maiese summarizing John Paul Lederach, "Levels of Action Beyond Intractability: beyondintractability.org, accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.beyondintractability.org/action/essay.jsp?id=26869&nid=1338

to level, but the target, and thus the content, will change. Below are some examples of SFCG's work at each societal level:

Level 1– Top/Leadership
- Since 2009 SFCG has led an effort to establish a unity government in Zanzibar by providing leadership training to support top-level political dialogue and negotiation between the primary opposing political parties. This effort has also included trainings for top-level/elite political figures. The SFCG on Race project has also worked with the top/leadership level through their dialogue-based project, "Congressional Conversations on Race."

Level 2– Middle-range leadership
- SFCG's Jerusalem programme targets a variety of sectoral middle-level leaders in the media, health, religion and inter-faith sectors. Specific activities have included a variety of trainings, dialogue processes and media initiatives.

Level 3– Grassroots Leadership
This includes:
- Trainings for local community leadership as well as community-based organisations and some local non-governmental organisations (depending on their size, prominence in society).
- Dialogue processes, capacity building for local/community radio stations, participatory theatre, etc.
    - For example, in the DRC, SFCG is working to facilitate informed refugee repatriation and reintegration by working with local community leaders in coordination with various middle-range leaders. This effort involves dialogue processes, trainings and media-based projects.

TOOL 6 – Key People-More People Approaches

More people approaches aim to engage large numbers of people in actions to promote peace. **Key people** approaches focus on involving particular people, or groups of people, deemed critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict because of their leverage or roles. Who is "key" will depend on the context, but may include political leaders, civil society leaders, etc. They may be people with leverage on broad constituencies or important entry points for work.[6] Effective projects are able to create or utilize pre-existing links between more people and key people, but this is not always necessary within each individual project: future projects may build on past successes to create and/or strengthen the links between key people and more people.

> **Tip:** Socio-political level approaches that focus on more people but do nothing to link to or affect key people, as well as strategies that focus on key people but do not include or affect more people, do not "add up" to effective peace work. Over the long-term, activities to engage more people must link, strategically, to activities to engage key people, and vice versa, if they are to be effective in moving toward peace writ large. (CDA, RPP Training Manual, p. 12.)

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[6] For more on the common assumptions associated with this duality, see CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *Reflecting on Peace Practice: Participant Training Manual* (Cambridge: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2009) page 9, accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/manual/rpp_training_participant_manual_rev_20090104_Pdf.pdf.

TOOL 7 – Individual/personal-Socio-Political Approaches

Tip: The Reflective Peace Practices (RPP) project found that projects that focus on change at the individual/personal level but that never link or translate into action at the socio-political level have *no discernible effect on peace*. (CDA, "RPP Manual," p. 11).

Projects that work at the **individual/personal level** seek to change the attitudes, values, skills, perceptions or circumstances of individuals. Most dialogue and training programs operate at this level. Projects that concentrate at the **socio-political level** often support the creation or reform of institutions that address grievances that fuel conflict, or promote non-violent modes for handling conflict. Examples of projects at this level include alterations in government policies, legislation, ceasefire agreements, but also incorporate changes in social norms, group behaviour and inter-group relations.[7]

Relevant questions in this approach include:
- Are there linkages (pre-existing or as a result of activities) between more people-key people and/or individual/personal-socio-political changes? How can these linkages be reinforced? Are there gaps?
- Do the activities add up to the desired change (goal and objectives)?
- Is the change fast enough given contextual conditions?

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[7] CDA, "RPP Manual," p. 10.

TOOL 8 – Project Planning Diagram

The project design process is highly fluid. Use the following table to help you arrive at goals, objectives or activities. If you are moving down the design hierarchy (from goals to objectives or activities), ask the questions in the left column. If you are moving up the design hierarchy (from activities to objectives or goals), ask the questions in the right column.

What is our *theory of change*? If we do _____, then we will achieve _____.		
How are you going to contribute toward this goal? What objectives will help us reach this goal?	**Goal – the major change you want to achieve or contribute to –usually one goal is enough**	
How are you going to achieve these objectives? What activities are needed to change knowledge, attitudes and/or behavior/skills?	**Objective – short-term changes in knowledge, skills or attitudes that, if reached, will achieve or contribute to the goal – usually two to four**	**What goal do the objectives suggest?** **Why will these objectives contribute to this goal?**
	Activities – work to be done to achieve the changes we seek, both process and project	**Why will the selected activities achieve the objectives? What does experience or research tell us about why they work for this problem?**

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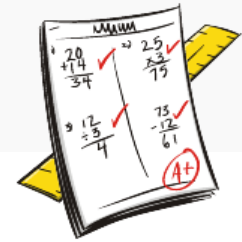
Exercises

Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!

Exercise 1:
Goals to Activities

Use the following information to construct measurable objectives and activities.

A theory of change is: "<u>If</u> indigenous populations are empowered to assert their human rights and participate in democratic processes, <u>then</u> the target population will be able to protect their fundamental social, economic and cultural interests."

A goal developed from this theory of change, then, could be: "Indigenous populations will effectively exercise their human rights, including those rights related to their land, and to participate in democratic processes in order to preserve and protect their fundamental social, economic, and cultural interests."

One objective to support the aforementioned goal could be: (1) the target population will report an increase in knowledge about their human rights and how to address violations.
Can you think of another objective?

    (2)   _____

List three activities that will achieve the objectives <u>and</u> fit the theory of change and goal. What are their corresponding outputs and outcomes?

Activity	Output	Outcomes
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Practice Exercise 1 - Answer 1

Keep in mind that a variety objectives and activities can be derived from the assessment and goal provided. Listed below are some examples. Can you think of others?

Objectives

- Indigenous groups will increase their participation with other stakeholders engaged in political, economic and social development.
- Indigenous communities will have more balanced, impartial and credible information about their rights and reforms affecting their life through media partners.

Tip: is important to list the expected outputs in terms of numbers for measurability: number of people trained, radio shows produced, etc.

Activities and Outputs

- Leadership and Consensus Building Initiative for Leaders and Decision Makers
- Dialogue and Consensus Building Forum
- Youth and Peace building Trainings

Objective	Activity	Output
Indigenous groups will increase their participation with other stakeholders engaged in political, economic and social development.	1. Training and coaching for conflict resolution and consensus building for: -X indigenous leaders, including youth and women at both the grassroots and national levels; -X government officials who work on indigenous issues at local and national levels; -X journalists from grassroots and national levels.	1. A pool of X from three populations trained in conflict resolution and consensus building: -X indigenous leaders, including youth and women; -X government officials who work on indigenous issues at local and national levels; -X journalists.
Indigenous communities will have more balanced, impartial and credible information about their rights and reforms affecting their life through media partners.	2. Produce a radio talk-show series centring on: -human rights as concerns indigenous social, economic and cultural interests; -consensus building amongst indigenous population concerning aforementioned issues; -indigenous population-government dialogue;	3. X talk-shows produced

Exercises

Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!

Exercise 2:
Activities to Goal

Use the following information to construct measurable objectives and activities.

Nearly ten years after the US-led invasion and the demise of the Taliban regime, Afghanistan still faces serious challenges, having yet to achieve national reconciliation, the protection and respect of even the most basic human rights and the establishment of the rule of law. As socio-economic conditions have failed to improve, ethnic divisions within the country are resurfacing. The history of violence between the different ethnic communities is once again threatening the country's fragile peace. The absence of rule of law has allowed long-held grievances to remain unaddressed, if not fuelled by new acts of political violence. Overall, conflict, the hallmark of Afghan society in the past quarter century, continues to remain unmitigated by the state and communities alike, undermining all present and future efforts towards sustainable development, democracy and the full respect of human rights. If nothing happens to bring the people of Afghanistan closer, there is a real risk of a return to civil war, with factions divided along regional and ethnic lines.

The growth of the media sector has been a significant feature of the post-Taliban era. Today, there are five large private TV networks and more than 40 radio stations. This progress, however, is currently being threatened by two main trends. First, the increased instability and violence across the country is creating more and more risks for journalists, media professionals and NGO workers. Political intimidation in these and other parts of Afghanistan is also limiting communities' access to reliable and objective information. Secondly, the Afghan government is increasingly limiting the freedom of the media, demonstrating a worrisome "tendency to restrict information and journalism". The combination of these two trends is creating problems in terms of access to and the quality of information. The poor quality of information fosters misunderstanding about people's basic human rights and their responsibilities in Afghanistan's new political system. In addition, it creates unrealistic expectations, which, when unmet, feed existing grievances and increase the likelihood of violence. More importantly, it exposes communities to politicized information that fuel anti-government sentiments and interethnic tensions as exemplified by the recent return to air of "Voice of Shariat", a Taliban radio station.

Target Audience: Media professionals, radio audiences

Activities and Outputs

Activity	Output
1. Scriptwriting, production and broadcast of radio soap opera on human rights issues.	3. 96 fifteen minute episodes produced and broadcast, targeting some 10 million people.
2. Train 20 media professionals in Common Ground Journalism, conflict resolution and media for peacebuilding.	2. 20 media professionals trained in Common Ground Journalism, conflict resolution and media for peacebuilding.
3. To create and/or provide facilitation support to 60 local Listeners' Clubs for the duration of the program	3. 60 Listeners' Clubs organized, supported and/or led by SFCG and/or local partners.

Objectives [fill in at least two]
- _____
- _____

Goal [fill in]
- _____

When finished look at all three components from both directions to make sure you can see the links between them.

Keep in mind the objectives and goal provided below are examples: they are among the many potential options stemming from the stated activities.

Goal
- To improve national reconciliation and conflict mitigation in Afghanistan through the media; or
- To increase awareness of and respect for the social, economic and cultural rights within the Afghan population;

Objectives (Some examples, but two or three objectives are all you usually need.)
- To increase the level of knowledge and understanding of human rights, democratic principles and conflict issues among the target group;
- To increase the number of human-rights focused and conflict-sensitive programming and activities developed by media organizations, including journalists trained by SFCG;
- To increase opportunities for and practice of dialogue on human rights, democratic principles and national reconciliation between decision-makers at local and national levels and grassroots youth;
- To increase the Afghan population's access to reliable news information and current events;
- Etc.

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Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

Anne J. Atkinson and Carolyne Ashton, Planning for Results: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Program Planning and Evaluation Handbook (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.safeanddrugfreeva.org/planningforresults.pdf

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Reflecting on Peace Practice: Participant Training Manual (Cambridge: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2009) pages 9-17, accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/manual/rpp_training_participant_manual _rev_20090104_Pdf.pdf

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Department for International Development, *Log Frame Guidelines* (London: DFID, 2005)

United States Agency for International Development, "Theories of Change and Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation," Final Draft, June 2010, accessed 15 November 2010, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS460.pdf

Theory of Change Module

This module will help the user understand and use theories of change in project planning and proposal writing, implementation, and evaluation.

Search for
Common Ground

SFCG
30 YEARS OF
BUILDING PEACE

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable below)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Theory of Change?** ➢ **Qualities of a Theory of Change?** ➢ **Why Use a Theory of Change?** ➢ **Theory of Change and the Program Cycle?** ➢ **Who Should Be Involved in Developing a Theory of Change?** ➢ **How Do We Construct a Theory of Change?**	➢ **Practice extracting existing theories of change using real project examples** ➢ **Practice using theories of change from different "families" for project proposals** ➢ **Practice using theories of change to optimize project activities**

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Theory of Change Families

TOOL 2: Theory of Change Table with Questions

TOOL 3: Theory of Change Step Diagram

Pre-test – Check your Knowledge

Please answer the following questions. Read each statement below. If you agree with a statement, write A = YES. If you disagree with a statement, write B = NO. Also, explain why you believe that statement is wrong.

_____   1. Explicitly describing a theory of change is an optional step in the proposal development process.

_____   2. A theory of change is relevant for all parts of a project– planning, monitoring/implementation, and evaluation.

_____   3. Every project has a single, clear theory of change on which activities are based.

_____   4. It is important for the project manager and staff, stakeholders, proposal writer, and the DME specialist to be involved in developing theories of change.

_____   5. Donors are not interested in a project's theory of change, but rather its activities.

Answers: 1 B; 2 A; 3 B; 4 A; 5 B

If you answered 3 or more incorrect, you must complete this module!

What is a Theory of Change?

Approaches and tactics used during aid work in the field of conflict and peace are based on one or more theories of change. A theory of change describes the relationship between a project and its expected outcomes. Most projects are based on the assumption that certain activities will have certain effects on a conflict situation. A theory of change describes how and why this change occurs. A simplified example is: "If we pour water on a plant, then it will grow." Theories are often implicit in proposals and activities, and may remain on a subconscious level.

Tip: Change is any measured difference from the beginning of the project. It may or may not be attributed to the intervention, and can be intended or unintended, positive or negative.

Theory of Change and Logframes

Theories of change are compatible with many other project planning and design tools. For example, logframes are based on the idea that the activities of a project should be connected to its broader objectives. (See "Design Framework- Logframes" Module). When used in conjunction with other tools, a theory of change expresses the underlying premise of a project. It must be described clearly and accurately to ensure that all activities work coherently towards the same overarching goal. This is also required to convince donors of the feasibility of a project.

Project

Theory of Change

Expected Change
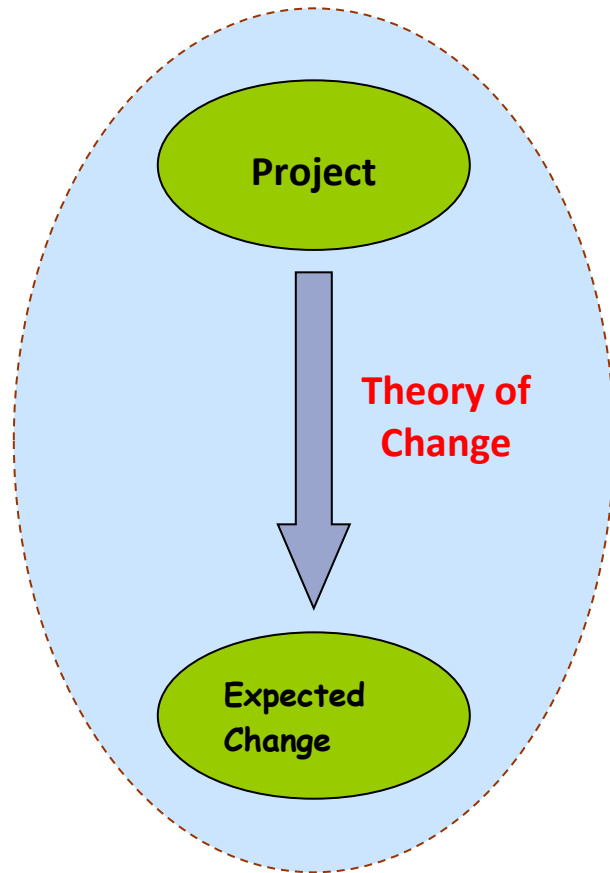
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Qualities of a Theory of Change

A theory of change highlights assumptions about the effect of certain interventions in a particular context. It captures the connections between the day-to-day work of the project and the broader changes it hopes to create in the conflict. It makes the overall logic of the project transparent.

Tip: It is important to remember that a theory of change is only a theory! It can and should be adapted to different situations and circumstances before and during the implementation of a project. Previously successful theories may not be appropriate under different conditions and vice versa.

- A theory of change statement is explicit, clear, and based on evidence. It is usually simple and avoids acronyms and "insider" language.
- The theory of change is an integral part of a proposal and can be easily understood by members, stakeholders, and donors. It focuses them on a common goal.
- The theory of change provides a basis for subsequent evaluation of the project. It must therefore be discussed and reflected upon on a regular basis. It should be amended whenever the project changes course.

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Why use a Theory of Change?

- Making a theory of change explicit allows us to reveal and understand assumptions. All projects have inherent assumptions about how change works and why the chosen project framework works better than others.
- Clearly expressed theories of change are the common thread that aligns activities, objectives, and goals. They help identify gaps and unmet needs of the project, including additional activities or actors that need to be included.

A Theory of Change can help us to:
- Organize thinking
- Relate activities and investments to expected results
- Set performance indicators
- Convince donors of the viability of a project
- Brief donors on project developments and changes

- Everyone involved in the design and implementation of the program must know how activities help create peace. A theory of change provides a platform for common understanding of what we hope to accomplish and contributes to more informed decision-making.
- Many donors require an explicit description and discussion of theories of change in the project proposal (for example USAID).

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Theory of Change and the Program Cycle

A theory of change gives a project greater coherence and informs or is informed by the program cycle. This includes the design phase and selection of activities, risk assessments, and the evaluation phase of a project.

Design phase: A theory of change is a key piece of the design process. It allows all of the stakeholders involved in the design process to see the rationale underlying different parts of the project. This also gives them the opportunity to discuss any gaps. Theories of change should be integrated into the design process to clarify and test the assumptions behind achieving the objectives of a project.

Risk Assessments: Risk assessments are continually carried out before and during the implementation phase of a project (see **Risk Assessment Module**). An example is the determination of assumptions and risks in a logframe. Risk assessments conducted before design inform discussions of theories of change and guide their development. If risks change during implementation we may have to adapt our theory of change as we revise the program to address the new risks. The risks could also be so high as to require that we abandon a program altogether, including the theory of change.

Evaluation phase: A theory of change is the basis for the evaluation framework. **We measure its validity by testing it against reality**. The theory of change allows the evaluation team to develop effective indicators to analyze the relevance of activities in relation to the wider objectives and goals of the project. It also enables us to test whether an intervention was ineffective because of poor implementation or a flawed theory of change.

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Who should be involved in developing a Theory of Change?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

It is beneficial if the **project manager, DME coordinator and other staff**, along with relevant **stakeholders**, are involved in the specification of the theory of change. Indeed, consultation with project staff may be necessary to uncover or confirm a theory of change. Often, this process can help reveal differences in assumptions of varying members of staff. Everyone should be on the same page regarding how the program will contribute to peace and development.

In the context of proposal development, the **proposal writer** will need to clearly state the theory or theories of change and should therefore be familiar with the underlying premises of the project.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource to help the team express theories of change clearly.

> A Theory of Change can help us to:
> • Organize thinking
> • Relate activities and investments to expected results
> • Set performance indicators
> • Convince donors of the viability of a project
> • Brief donors on project developments and changes

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How do we construct a Theory of Change?

While ideally you will construct a theory of change near the beginning of the planning process, it can be developed at any point in the project cycle:

The graph shows the iterative nature of the project cycle in relation to the theory of change. The theory of change is put to optimal use if constructed at the beginning of the planning process. It informs the goals, objectives, and activities throughout the cycle. However, a theory
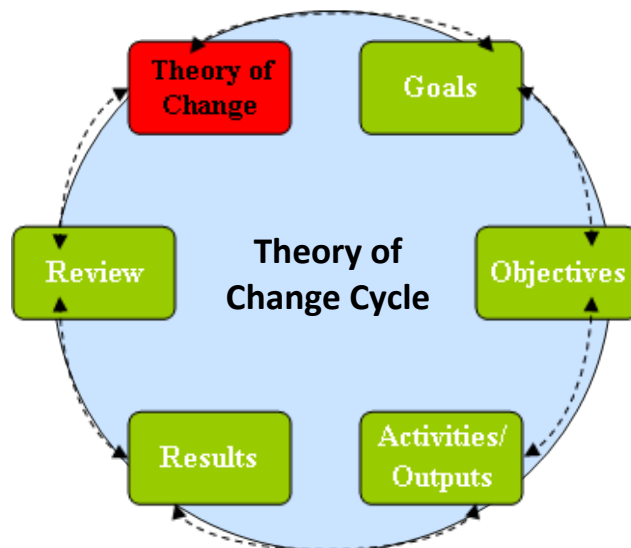
of change can be developed or amended at a later stage. Conflict situations tend to be volatile and dynamic in nature. A project must sometimes shift its focus to remain relevant to the situation on the ground. Programmers must follow the project cycle backwards so that shifts are reflected in the theory of change. If a program changes goals, objectives, or activities without adapting its theory of change, subsequent evaluations, which are based on the theory of change, will lose their relevance to reality. Unfortunately, this ideal is not always reflected in practice. Many projects fail to develop theories of change at the beginning of the project cycle, if at all.

It is never too late to develop a theory of change. They are useful during all stages of the program. For example, if a theory of change is made explicit after activities have been developed, it will cause a review of the activities (and possibly earlier stages of the process, too).

Similarly, a theory of change may be amended following a review of the results of a project. After all, a project is the ultimate test of a theory of change. After the theory has been amended, objectives and activities will change accordingly.

A theory of change usually takes the form of an **"If …, then …"** or **"By doing …, we will …"** expression:
"**If** we pour water on a plant, **then** it will grow."
"**By** pouring water on a plant, **we will** cause it to grow."

> *Example*
> One Activity – Several Theories of Change
> Some projects use a limited number of activities to serve multiple purposes. For example, a project involving the construction of a water well in a village in Burundi could be linked to the following theories of change:
> - By providing access to a closer water source, we will improve safety (less danger of assault or rape, as is the case in many refugee camps) and health (improved sanitation, no contamination in drinking water, ability to cook with water).
> - If there is closer access to water, then children can attend school instead of having to travel for hours to provide water for the family.
> - If we teach locals how to build water wells, then they can repeat the process in neighboring villages, thus spreading access to water throughout the region.

You can begin constructing or improving a theory of change by answering a number of questions on various aspects of your project.

- What is the change we seek (behaviour, attitude, knowledge)?
- Who will experience this change (people, institutions)?
- How does change need to happen (methodology, approach)?

Using answers to these questions, you can begin to deduce assumptions inherent in the project. More than one theory can be connected to a single activity. A single theory can also have multiple steps, which are all necessary for the success of the project. However, the total number of theories of change depends on the scope and available resources of the project. In SFCG's projects, the maximum workable number is probably three.

Theories of change have been organized using a number of different frameworks. Themes can address individual change, healthy relationships, peace agreements, functioning institutions, etc. The table below provides links to documents from several organizations that provide examples of different ways to organize theories of change. There is no "right" way to do this.

While many theories of change are variations of those outlined by these organizations, every theory should be adapted to reflect the particular context of the individual project.

Source	Relevant Pages
OECD	82-84
SFCG	14-15
USAID	(annex below)

As you are constructing or refining your project's theory of change, think about the different levels of society affected by the project. How does it affect communities' attitudes towards each other or towards conflict? How will it contribute to peace processes or development of good governance practices? Does it target individuals? **Remember**: Theories of change are often interconnected and involve several themes, levels, and/or steps!

It is essential to be as **specific** as possible in your description. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to understand what needs to happen with your project and to make changes if/when they are needed.

Furthermore, donors must get the sense that your project has a transparent purpose and that staff are aware of this purpose and actively working towards its accomplishment. A project with vague direction and purpose is less likely to be funded than a project with a strong statement of theories of change.

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Theories of Change for Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation

Individual Enlightenment –Family 1

Theory		Statement	Description
1	Inner transformation	If enough people undergo inner transformation then commitments to peaceful resolution of conflicts will rise.	A transformative experience, such as a personal epiphany or a religious conversion, can fundamentally alter an individual's understanding of him/herself (identity), his/her relations to others, and the value of peace. Peace is built as more individuals undergo this inner transformation.

Attitudes toward Peace – Family 2

The three theories in this family all target attitudes about or perceptions of, a situation. They do not attempt to change the underlying situation.

	Theory	Statement	Description
2	Key actor attitudes	If key actor attitudes change, then they will seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.	This theory focuses on the crucial role that key actors play in articulating and mobilizing grievances. The aim is to alter the way key actors evaluate the benefits and costs of violence; either persuading them that costs of inciting violence outweigh the benefits or, alternatively, that peaceful means exist to address grievances.
3	Mass attitudes	If enough people's attitudes change, then they will prefer that key actors seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and will resist mobilization to adopt violence.	This theory focuses on the perceptions of the mass of people embroiled in a conflict about the relative costs and benefits of violence as a solution. Those judgments are influenced by a number of factors, including perceived depth/seriousness of grievances or perceived power of resilience factors. Changing these perceptions/attitudes is expected to affect support for violence.
4	Culture of peace	If enough people's attitudes change, then they will prefer that key actors seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and will resist mobilization to adopt violence.	This theory focuses on attitudes of both key actors and mass publics in the same ways as the two proceeding theories. Where it differs is on timeframe. The previous two theories presume--and leverage--the ability to change attitudes quickly. This theory instead focuses on inculcating new attitudes over the long-term. As with the other theories in this family, this one works on altering attitudes about the costs of violent conflict and the benefits of tolerance.

Healthy Relationships – Family 3

The theories in this family also target attitudes, as do those in the previous family. They differ in that the change is expected to come from the interaction of belligerent groups and the increased mutual understanding and appreciation that is expected to create. The two theories within this family differ with respect to whether the setting for these interactions is a shared community or a separate, safe location.

	Theory	Statement	Description
5	Community-based reconciliation	If belligerent groups within a community are given the opportunity to interact, then they will better understand and appreciate one another and will prefer to resolve conflicts peacefully.	This theory addresses divisions within a community; divisions that may be rooted in such things as ethnicity, religion, or status as a returning ex-combatant, displaced persons, or refugee. The aim is to create opportunities for a series of interactions between belligerent groups to promote mutual understanding. As the health of the relationship between these groups improves, the likelihood of violence between them declines.
6	Building bridges,	If key actors from among belligerent groups are given the opportunity to interact, then they will better understand and appreciate one another, be better able to work with one another, and prefer to resolve conflicts peacefully.	This theory addresses the prejudice and demonizing that reinforces the perceived differences between groups by creating opportunities for key groups from the belligerent parties to interact in a safe, neutral location. These interactions, usually limited to a few days or weeks, are expected to begin building bridges between the groups.

Peace Processes – Family 4

	Theory	Statement	Description
7	Negotiated settlement	If we can establish space and mechanisms for negotiation between the leaders of the belligerent parties, then they can be led gradually through a series of steps to cease violence and negotiate peace.	This theory, unlike any of the others, focuses on establishing and sustaining a process of peace negotiations. While the process may result in changing attitudes or building bridges, the primary target is the process; attitudinal change will follow.

Functioning Institutions – Family 5

The theories in this family all focus on improving institutional performance. They differ in terms of which institutions have the most impact on perceived grievances or the most likely to tap into social and institutional resilience.

	Theory	Statement	Description
8	Economic	If economic institutions produced reasonable livelihoods/quality of life for all, then the extent of core grievance would decline.	Like the other theories in this family, this one focuses on improving institutional performance, either by improving effectiveness, legitimacy or both. This theory prioritizes economic institutions because of their link to livelihoods.
9	Political	If political institutions operated efficiently, impartially and in the interests of all, then the extent of core grievance would decline.	Like the other theories in this family, this one focuses on improving institutional performance, either by improving effectiveness, legitimacy or both. This theory prioritizes political institutions because of the importance of being able to affect public decision-making.

| 10 | Security/ Judicial | If security and justice institutions protected everyone and enforced laws equitably, then he extent of core grievance would decline. | Like the other theories in this family, this one focuses on improving institutional performance, either by improving effectiveness, legitimacy or both. This theory prioritizes security and justice institutions because of their link to basic survival, rule of law and fairness. |
| 11 | Social service delivery | If social services, such a health care and education, are delivered in an effective and responsive way for all, then the extent of core grievance would decline. | Like the other theories in this family, this one focuses on improving institutional performance, either by improving effectiveness, legitimacy or both. This theory prioritizes social service delivery because the failure of these basic services feed perceptions of grievance. |

Reform the Elite – Family 6

The theories in this family focus on the elite as a singular key actor. These theories target, respectively, the motivations and means of key actors rather than their attitudes.

	Theory	Statement	Description
12	Elite motivations	If the incentives facing elites can be changed so that peace becomes more acceptable and violence less so, then the elite will accept peace.	Peace comes when it is in the interest of political (and other) leaders to take the necessary steps. Peacebuilding efforts must change the political calculus of key leaders and groups.
13	Elite means	If the resources elites have to engage in organized violence are degraded or removed, then they will be me more likely to accept peace.	Wars require vast amounts of material (weapons, supplies, transport, etc.) and human capital. If we can interrupt the supply of people and goods to the war-making system, it will collapse and peace will break out.

Coming to Terms with the Past- Family 7

	Theory	Statement	Description
14	Transitional justice	If we create opportunities for members of war-torn societies to come to terms with the conflict and their role in it and to heal the trauma they sustained, then the level of conflict-related grievance will decline as will the likelihood of a return to war.	Societies that have experienced deep trauma and social dislocation need a process for handling grievances, identifying what happened, and holding perpetrators accountable. Addressing these issues will enable people to move on to reconstruct a peaceful and prosperous society.

(Duplicated from original CMM/USAID Annual Program Statement)

TOOL 2: Theory of Change Table With Questions

The following exercises are designed to help you construct a theory of change for particular conflict situations. In the table below, columns are organized to separate the different parts of a project. Questions are provided in the second column to help you describe each aspect. The third column provides space for the answers to these questions. The first row describes the circumstances surrounding a conflict. The second row states the project's intended goals. The third row describes the proposed activities of the project to improve the situation. The fourth row sets out the questions you need to answer.

PROJECT ASPECT	QUESTIONS	DESCRIPTIONS
SITUATION/PROBLEMS	A description of the situation. Who/what is the cause of the problems? This should be addressed by a thorough conflict analysis.	
GOALS	What is your overall purpose of the project? What change do you hope to create?	
ACTIVITIES	What will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?	
THEORIES OF CHANGE	How/Why will the activities achieve the goals? Who needs to change? How/why? What needs to change? How/why? Theories of change are usually written as "if…then" statements	

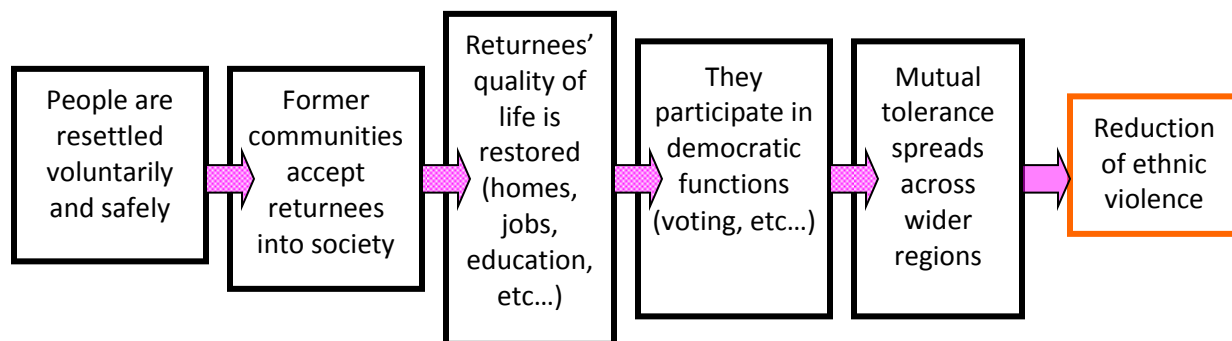**Click here for the first exercise**   **Click here for the second exercise**

Search for Common Ground

Real-life scenarios are a little more complicated than "if we pour water on a plant, it will grow". Sometimes, a project's theory of change involves multiple steps and assumptions to get from activities to goals. In this case, it may be useful to create a diagram showing each step along the way. This can highlight potential obstacles and weak points in the theory of change. If detected during the planning stage, the theory or activities can be refined to improve a project's chances of success. The following example describes an early draft theory of change of a project involving the resettlement and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP's) to reduce ethnic violence in Burundi:

This project attempts to reduce the incidence of ethnic violence in Burundi by resettling and reintegrating refugees and IDP's into their former home communities. The diagram represents only an early draft of the theory of change. Thus, it could contain some missing steps or weak links.

People are resettled voluntarily and safely → Former communities accept returnees into society → Returnees' quality of life is restored (homes, jobs, education, etc…) → They participate in democratic functions (voting, etc…) → Mutual tolerance spreads across wider regions → Reduction of ethnic violence

For example, the fact that most of the population in the former communities support reintegration may not be enough. Acts of violence by extremist individuals have been known to destabilize a situation and derail the entire peace process. The project must engage with local officials and the court system to ensure that acts of ethnic violence are not tolerated. Similarly, the project must ensure that pre-existing conditions promoting ethnic segregation are eliminated to allow effective transformation into a tolerant, multiethnic society.
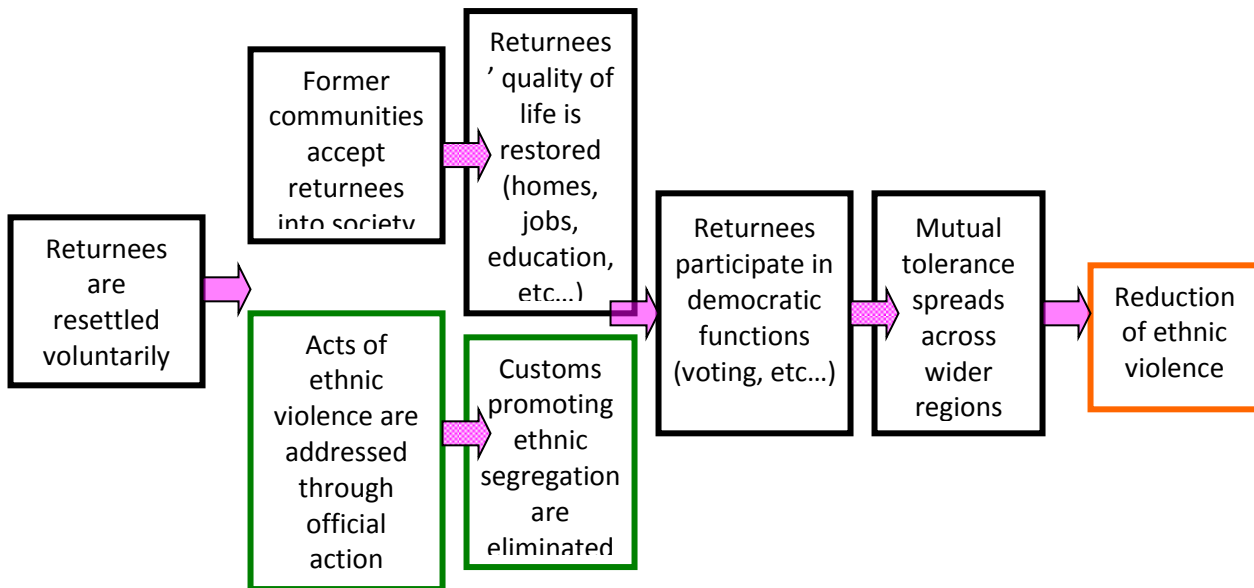
Layout from Lederach, et al, 2007, pp. 27-28

The example on the <u>next page</u> about Community Peace Councils in Liberia illustrates how overlooking a few of these steps can have major effects on the outcomes of a project:

Example of Theory of Change in Liberia

In the wake of the 14-year civil war in Liberia, a large international NGO received donor funding to develop Community Peace Councils (CPCs), a community-based mechanism for resolving a range of disputes, with an explicitly inter-ethnic approach. The CPCs were designed to promote greater democratic participation through leadership development. The evaluation team first identified underlying theories of change and program assumptions (derived mainly from discussions with local and international staff members):

➢ **Theory #1**: By establishing a new community-level mechanism for handling a range of dispute types, we will contribute to keeping the peace and avoiding incidents that have the potential for escalating into serious violence.
➢ **Theory #2**: By creating inclusive structures for community problem solving, we can improve communication, respect, and productive interactions among subgroups in the community, and improve the access of disenfranchised groups to decision making.
➢ **Theory #3**: By creating a new leadership group infused with democratic concepts and provided with critical skills, we can foster more effective and responsive leadership.

The evaluation team used these theories of change to assess how appropriate they were for the situation in Liberia and how they were working out in practice. For example, the team examined what kinds of conflicts the CPCs handled, and whether those conflicts had the potential for escalating and inciting widespread violence. What the evaluation team found was that the CPCs were, for the most part, **not** handling the most serious and volatile disputes, which concerned land issues. The main conclusion was that, while the CPCs were set up and trained well, they were mostly excluded from handling land issues due to lack of official authority. As communities were repopulated, traditional leaders re-established their power and refused to submit to the CPC's, instead using them to address issues they had a personal interest in. The theory regarding alternative leadership models proved unfounded, as traditional leaders gained control over the CPCs.

Similar to the step diagram above, several links crucial to the success of the project were missing. The evaluation recommended that the agency work to expand the mandate and capability of the CPCs for handling land disputes by connecting them to land commissions and other emerging government structures. It should also be said that the CPCs did represent a useful developmental advance, even if they were unable to provide, in their original structure, a major contribution to Peace Writ Large. Source: OECD DAC *Guidelines on Evaluation for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*

This illustration shows how a step-by-step process allows you to determine weaknesses and omissions in your project. Once these are identified, you can add new activities, change existing ones, and engage other important actors or institutions.

Practice Exercises
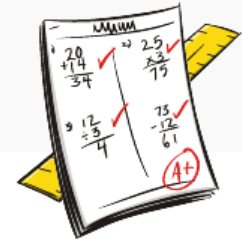
Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!

Exercise 1:
Côte d'Ivoire USAID project

This exercise is based on a recent proposal written by Search For Common Ground (SFCG) to USAID for a project in Côte d'Ivoire (some details have been altered for the purpose of this exercise). The intended goals and activities of the program are provided for you.

*The exercise is particularly useful for **proposal-writing**, since it simulates a common situation where the goals and activities of the project are developed first, but the theory of change, a necessary component to secure funding from donors, is not yet explicit.*

***Your task** is to construct one or two theories of change connected to this project. Use the questions in the table to guide you in your development of the theories. When you are finished, click here or scroll down to the next page to see the answers from SFCG's project proposal.*

PROJECT ASPECT	QUESTIONS	DESCRIPTIONS
SITUATION/PROBLEMS	A description of the situation. Who/what is the cause of the problems? This should be addressed by a thorough conflict analysis.	Since 2002, inter-group clashes have occurred in Côte d'Ivoire, involving different ethnic groups. Recurring problems include ethnic/religious divisions and violent land disputes.
GOALS	What is your overall purpose of the project? What change do you hope to create?	-Facilitate reconciliation between divided ethnic/religious groups -Reduce community and regional tensions over territorial conflicts

ACTIVITIES	What will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?	-Technical support/coaching for community facilitators -Community-based mediation of land conflicts -Public forums on land laws -Radio programming, featuring successful initiatives and key information on land issues
THEORIES OF CHANGE	How/Why will the activities achieve the goals? Who needs to change and why? What needs to change and why? How does change need to happen and why? Theories of change are usually written as if…then statements	**YOUR ANSWERS**

The following theories of change were presented in the SFCG project proposal for Côte d'Ivoire:

- "By bringing together groups in conflict over land rights, we will provide opportunities for shared experiences and improved relationships, thereby diminishing the risk of inter-group violence."
- "Using radio broadcasts to target the broad population, we will alter mass attitudes through providing information and modelling behaviour. These broadcasts will contribute to a change in listeners' attitudes and perceptions, particularly in regards to their tolerance for violence as a means to resolve conflicts as well as their stereotypes of people seen as 'different' than them."

Tip: For the purposes of securing funding, be sure to research the donor's expectations. For example, USAID has classified theories of change into families. What <u>families</u> did the theories in Exercise 1 refer to? (Answer: Family 3/Theory 5 and Family 2/Theory 3)
However, do not be bound by these classifications! You are encouraged to use your own wording for your project's theories. Remember: theories of change are vital for the **success** of your project, not only to secure funding. **Relevance** is more important than fitting a particular

Remember: these are only the theories SFCG discussed in this proposal. You may have constructed other or similar theories of change in your answer. The important point is that they must be specific and present a logical connection to the proposed goals, objectives, and activities. In this exercise you are unable to draw on resources such as a detailed conflict analysis to formulate your theories. However, in your own projects you will want to use all of the available data to ensure the relevance of your theories.

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Practice Exercises
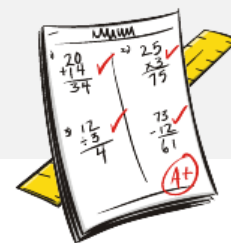
Exercise 2:
Theory of Change in a USAID-funded project in Kenya

The following exercise is also based on a recent SFCG proposal to USAID for a project in Kenya (some details have been altered for the purposes of this exercise). The intended goals and activities of the program are again provided for you.

Your task is to construct the theories of change connected to this project. If necessary, use the questions provided in the table to guide your answer. Since this is a proposal to USAID, try to base your theories of change around the <u>families</u> provided by USAID. Try using your own formulations in your description. **Do not** use their wording unless you feel it applies <u>exactly</u> to the project proposed here. When you are finished, <u>click here</u> or scroll down to the next page to see the answers from SFCG's project proposal.

PROJECT ASPECT	QUESTIONS	DESCRIPTIONS
SITUATION/PROBLEMS	A description of the situation. Who/what is causing the problems? This should be addressed by a thorough conflict analysis.	The 2007 elections created a highly partisan environment, resulting in violence that killed 1500 people. This has stalled governance and economic growth, increasing Kenya's fragility
GOALS	What is your overall purpose of the project? What change do you hope to create?	Build the capacity for collaboration and conflict mitigation at the Parliamentary level
ACTIVITIES	What will you do to achieve the outputs and objectives you want to see?	-Develop a group of leadership coaches/mentors from the Nairobi peacebuilding community -Executive coaching/mentoring service for ministers of parliament -Sustainable leadership forums -Training in conflict resolution, inclusive participation, and leadership for ministers of parliament. - Training in conflict resolution, advocacy, and leadership for women and youth.

THEORIES OF CHANGE	How/Why will the activities achieve the goals? Who needs to change and why? What needs to change and why? How does change need to happen and why? Theories of change are usually written as if…then statements	YOUR ANSWERS

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The following theories of change were presented in the SFCG project proposal for Kenya:

- "The entire initiative is based on the premise that the impact of leadership is profound whether positive or negative, and therefore national-level leaders' attitudes and behaviour must be changed in order to address the current conflict dynamic."
- "If a shift is created towards more collaborative leadership models, then this will increase the involvement of all levels of society in political and development decisions that promote peaceful actions and strengthen the link between elected officials and civil society."(Linked with USAID Family 2/Theory 2, and Family 3/Theory 5)
- "If a cadre of indigenous leadership trainers are developed who work with political elites and civil society groups from across the conflict spectrum, then this will support and strengthen capacity for top down/bottom up decision making and conflict resolution processes that address core grievances and focus on the interests of all." (Linked with USAID Family 3/Theory 5, and Family 5/Theory 9)

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Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Annual Program Statement-Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation Programs and Activities, United States Agency for International Development. http://www.usaid.gov/

Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities, Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf

Lederach, John, , Reina Neufeldt, Hal Culbertso. *Reflective Peacebuilding- A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit*, Catholic Relief Services, http://crs.org/publications/showpdf.cfm?pdf_id=80

Shapiro, Ilana. *Theories of Change,* http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/theories_of_change/

Assumptions and Risks Module

This module will guide you through the process of understanding the assumptions and risks associated with your project

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What Are Assumptions & Risks?** ➢ **What are they for?** ➢ **When should they be done?** ➢ **Who Should Be Involved?** ➢ **How to Do Them?** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Determining Assumptions and Risk** **Flowchart** ➢ **Checklist for Assumptions and Risk** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of Assumptions and Risk, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Determining Assumptions and Risk Flowchart

TOOL 2: Diagonal Logic

TOOL 3: Checklist for Assumptions and Risk

What are Assumptions and Risks?

Assumptions are the **unproven connections** between levels in a design hierarchy, theory of change, or the project context. Common assumptions focus on:

> **Tip:** Within the logframe context, risks and assumptions are two sides of the same coin: risks are framed as potential negatives, while assumptions are framed positively.

- *How the context will evolve*: how change works
- *Project philosophy or approach*, including the strategic advantage of one approach over another
- *Participation*. In a war zone, for example, many projects assume there will be sufficient security to safely access the people or certain locations.
- *Our understanding of how things work in life*. For example, we assume that relationships built by enemies in the safety of a workshop or a structured exchange will enable them to behave differently upon their return to everyday, often-polarised environments. We assume that greater transparency will lead to better governance, rather than to well-publicised corruption. We assume that a ceasefire opens space for negotiations rather than serving as a time for restocking ammunition and reinforcing military positions.

Within any theory of change (see **Theory of Change** module) there are two assumptions: how change works, and the strategic advantage of the chosen theory over other theories for the context. It is important to be able to clearly identify and enunciate these assumptions and their associated risks in your project proposal.

The Common Ground Approach and Tool Documents (available **here**) are a good place to start conceptualising SFCG assumptions on specific topics and strategies with which we work.

> ### *Example*
> Following the example of the justice system in Timor-Leste, the project assumes that once public knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards the justice system have been changed (Objective 1) the Timorese will not only know how to access that system, but that the system will be capable of handling increased caseloads.

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[1] International Organisation for Standardisation, *Risk management—Principles and guidelines on implementation*, Draft, ISO 31000:2009, accessed 2 February 2011, http://www.scribd.com/doc/23591510/ISO-31000-Risk-Management-Manual-Eng-Fra quoted in Grant Purdy, "ISO 31000:2009—Settin a New Standard for Risk Management," *Risk Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 6, 2010, p. 882, accessed 02 February 2011, http://www.theiia.org/download.cfm?file=42883.

Risk is the "effect of uncertainty on objectives."[2] **Within the logic framework approach to project design, however, risk is formulated as the negative assumptions behind, or the facts of, the project including the interaction between context conditions and the project**. In other words, risks in logic frameworks are the potential logical barriers to the achievement of the objectives for each level in the design hierarchy.

> ### *Example*
> There are two primary risks associated with the assumption above. First, is that once Timorese are willing to engage the justice system, they may not know where or how to do it. Therefore another project objective was developed to mitigate this risk: (2) Support the creation of referral pathways for marginalised groups to access legal advice and remedies (through training of mediators and paralegals), thereby promoting new behaviour when Timorese face legal problems. Second, the justice system, including CSOs, may not be able to handle such an increase in caseloads. A third objective was developed to mitigate this risk: (3) To enhance the capacity and sustainability of Timorese CSOs to play a more active role in justice, coordination, and peacebuilding processes, and to manage these functions in the long-term without external assistance.

What are they for?

It is important to identify and analyse the core assumptions behind your project to ensure the choices made can be logically justified. Being aware of assumptions allows you to identify opportunities for integrated programming to spark synergy and leverage greater results. Identifying key assumptions is also important for determining whether your project is viable (see Determining Assumptions and Risk flowchart under "**How to Do Them?**").

Any project has the potential to create unwanted consequences and to be negatively affected by internal and external factors. Identifying those risk factors and consequences before the project starts and allowing time to make deliberate decisions about the best way to move forward is critical. As interveners in a conflict it is our obligation to ensure that we first Do No Harm (**see here**) in our intervention, directly or indirectly. Understanding the potential risks involved in a project is therefore critical to developing a project that does not exacerbate local conditions, and hopefully contributes to the betterment of the context.

> **Tip:** Once a key risk associated with a core assumption has been identified, mitigate that risk by incorporating new elements in your project design: add or change an objective or activity so that the likelihood of that risk is reduced.

implementation, Draft, ISO 31000:2009, accessed 2 February 2011, http://www.scribd.com/doc/23591510/ISO-31000-Risk-Management-Manual-Eng-Fra quoted in Grant Purdy, "ISO 31000:2009—Setting a New Standard for Risk Management," *Risk Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 6, 2010, p. 882, accessed 02 February 2011, http://www.theiia.org/download.cfm?file=42883.

When should they be done?

It is important to identify and analyse assumptions early in the design process, ideally in conjunction with the creation of the levels of the design hierarchy (see **Goals & Objectives** module, p. 2) and certainly before developing indicators and the means of verification. Early analysis of assumptions helps to guide programme design and helps us avoid becoming locked into activities and indicators that may take us off course.

> **Tip:** It is important to identify and determine how to test or flesh out assumptions before beginning to work on indicators and other parts of the monitoring and evaluation plan (see **M&E Plan** module).

It is important to identify risks early in the design process. Some risks may be so unacceptable that they lead to a "no go" decision or require adding or changing the activities or approach. Manageable risks can be mitigated by planning to address them. Project designs should include mitigating plans for risks likely to occur. It is important to monitor the ongoing context within which the project is implemented (political, economic, natural events, etc.) for any changes which may require mitigation plans to be implemented. **Assumptions and assessments relating to the baseline (see Baseline Assessment module), conflict** (see **Conflict Assessment** module) **and risks** (see **Risk Assessment** module)**, should inform the design phase**. For more on risks, see the **"How To Do Them"** section.

> **Tip:** Tip: Not all risks and assumptions can be addressed in the design stage, but they should be written into a log frame for tracking and early warning purposes.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Project manager, DME Coordinator and staff and relevant **stakeholders** should all agree on the objectives for the project.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource or facilitator for the initial discussions and review of chosen objectives.

How to do them?

When we begin to look at assumptions we quickly become swamped. Which assumptions, and their associated risks, matter the most? The Determining Assumptions and Risks flow chart below can help in determining which assumptions and risks to include in the design. Generally speaking we need to consider those assumptions and risks that could possibly prevent or block a connection between one level in the design and another level in the design. A good starting point is to identify key assumptions with a certain level of the design hierarchy, for example, one of your activities.

TOOL 1: Determining Assumptions and Risk Flowchart

```
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │    How likely is it │
                        │     that the risk   │
                        │  will prevent the program │
                        │   from advancing to │
                        │   the next level in │
                        │     the design      │
                        │     framework?      │
                        └─────────────────────┘
```

Very likely	*Possible*	*Unlikely*

| | Include in the Log frame | Do not include In the Log frame |

```
        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │    Is it  possible  │          ┌─────────┐
        │  to redesign the    │ ───────► │   yes   │
        │ program in a way that │        └─────────┘
        │ reduces the likelihood Of │
        │  the  Assumption?   │              ┌──────────────────────────┐
        └─────────────────────┘              │   Redesign the program   │
                    │                        └──────────────────────────┘
                    │
              ┌─────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │   no    │ ───────► │   Program is not         │
              └─────────┘          │   Technically viable     │
                                   └──────────────────────────┘
```
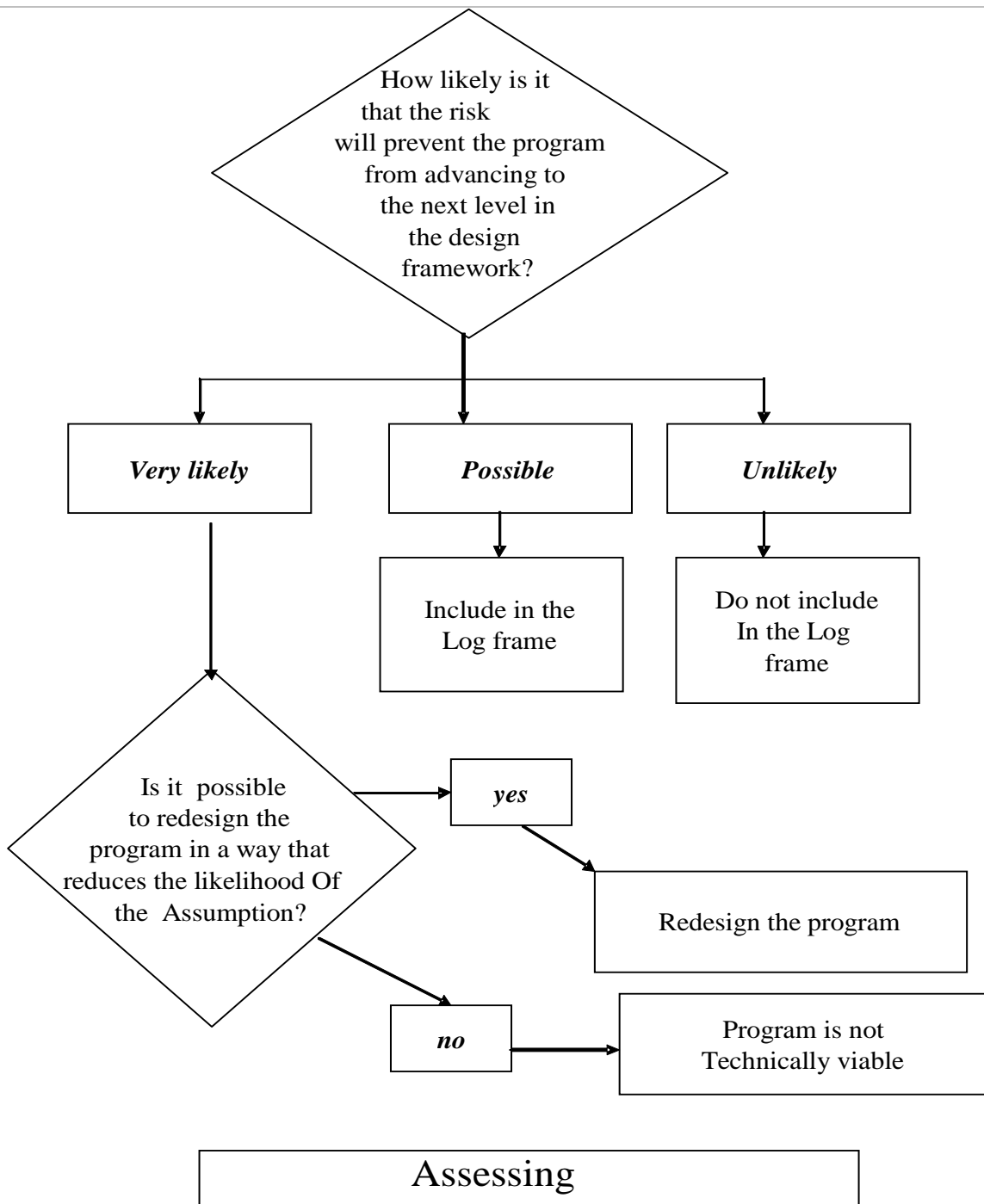
Assessing

TOOL 2: Diagonal Logic

Once you have identified the key assumptions and risks associated with each level in the design hierarchy, use diagonal logic between columns 1 and 4 in the logframe, beginning with activities and progressing upwards, to ensure logical progression of the hierarchy

Example: Logframe Diagonal Logic

Narrative	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Goal To achieve equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste			Assumption: The legal system (police and courts) will have a vested interest to ensure timely and equal access. Risk: Corruption impedes progress.
Objective 1 To increase public knowledge and change public perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system			Assumption: Marginalised and vulnerable groups experience a greater sense of ownership of and belonging to a just Timorese society
Outputs X radio talk shows produced and distributed			Assumption: Radio retains its overall function and dominance in Timorese media and the talk shows directly relate to marginalised/vulnerable groups' experiences
Activities Produce and distribute interactive radio talk shows			Assumption/risk: Availability of necessary technology.

Then the justice sector will have increased capacity and men, women and children

Then the public will have changed perceptions and attitudes towards and knowledge of
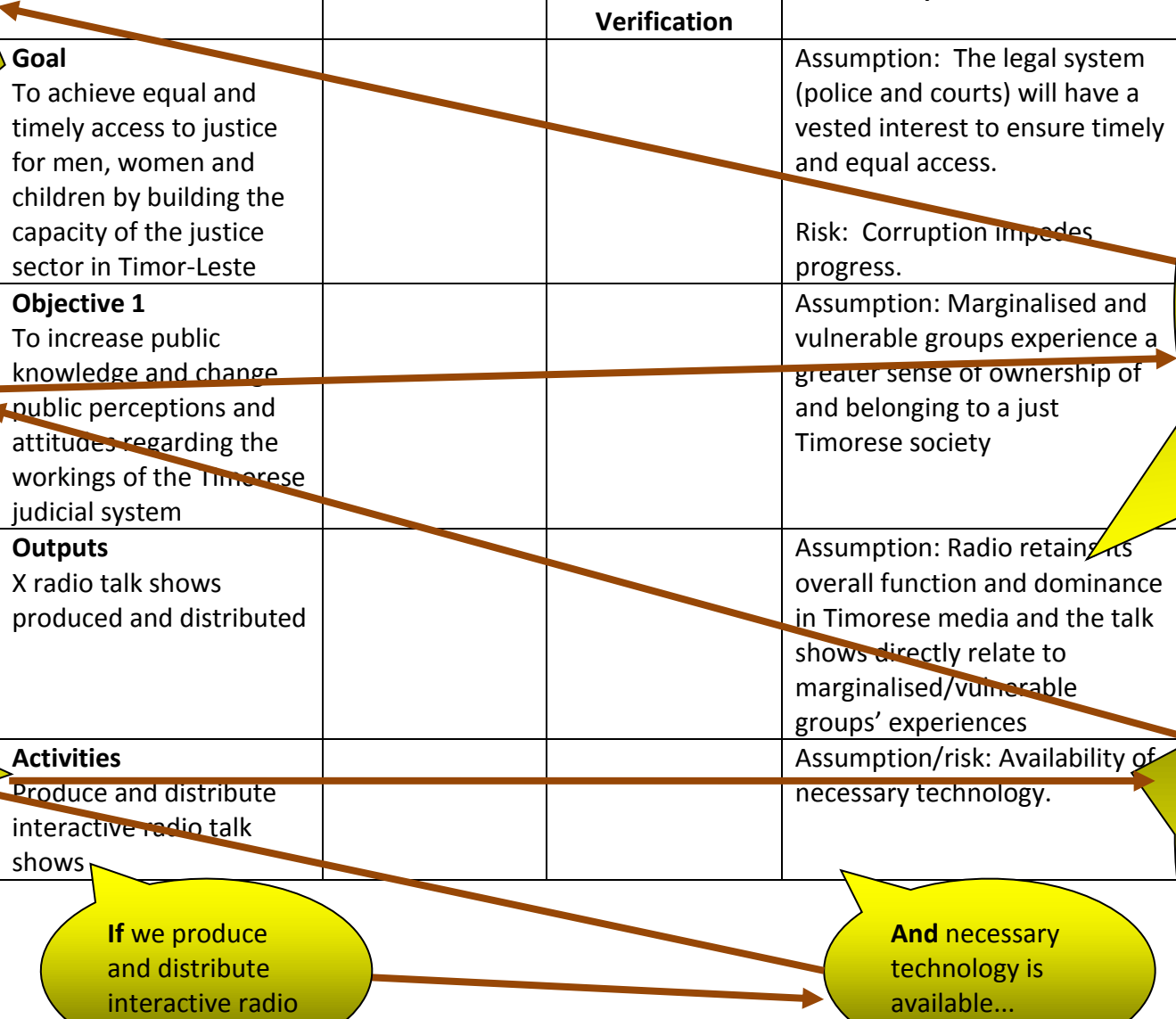
Then we will produce and distribute X radio talk shows. **If** we do this...

If we produce and distribute interactive radio

And necessary technology is available...

And marginalised and vulnerable groups experience a greater sense of ownership of, and belonging to a just Timorese

And radio retains its overall function and dominance in Timorese media, and the talk shows directly relate

Narrative	Indicators	Assumptions and Risks
Goal To achieve equal and timely access to justice for men, women and children by building the capacity of the justice sector in Timor-Leste	% of Timorese citizens in targeted communities demonstrate knowledge of judicial issues and the use of non-adversarial approaches and cooperative solutions	Assumption: The legal system (police and courts) will have a vested interest to ensure timely and equal access. Risk: Corruption impedes progress.
Objective 1 To increase public knowledge and change public perceptions and attitudes regarding the workings of the Timorese judicial system	Percentage of interviewed citizens who report listening to the radio drama; percentage of interviewed citizens who can name three messages from the radio drama and explain why they are key	Assumption: Marginalised and vulnerable groups experience a greater sense of ownership of and belonging to a just Timorese society
Outputs X radio talk shows produced and distributed	Number of radio drama episodes produced and distributed	Assumption: Radio retains its overall function and dominance in Timorese media and the talk shows directly relate to marginalised/vulnerable groups' experiences
Activities Produce and distribute interactive radio talk shows	Number of shows produced; number of callers; % of callers addressing other callers	Assumption/risk: Availability of necessary technology.

TOOL 3: Checklist for Assumptions and Risk

1. Have all the assumptions and risks been identified?
    a. Stakeholder analysis?
    b. Problem trees, etc?
2. Are the risks specific? Or too general?
3. Are the risks/assumptions at the right level?
4. Does the logic work?
    a. Diagonal logic between Columns 1 and 4

        If ─► Then   ► And
    b. Necessary and sufficient?
5. Where risks are manageable, have they been managed?
    a. Where possible, have they been turned into Activities and Outputs, i.e., moved into Column 1?
6. What are the pre-conditions?
7. Should the activity proceed in view of the remaining assumptions and risks?

Risk Management

Strategic risk management is a central part of any organisation or project. Its focus is the assessment of significant risks and the implementation of suitable responses in a continuous process; "it increases the probability of success and reduces both the probability of failure and the level of uncertainty associated with achieving the objectives of the organisation [or project]."[3] For further information on risk assessment and management strategies, see **Risk Assessment** module.

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[3] The Association of Insurance and Risk Managers, The Public Risk Management Association, and The Institute of Risk Management, "A Structured Approach to Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and the requirements of ISO 31000," 2010, accessed 1 December 2010, http://www.theirm.org/documents/SARM_FINAL.pdf.

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the identification of Assumptions and Risks. An overall guide to resources for project design from the SFCG library is available here.

Anne J. Atkinson and Carolyne Ashton, Planning for Results: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Program Planning and Evaluation Handbook (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.safeanddrugfreeva.org/planningforresults.pdf.

The Association of Insurance and Risk Managers, The Public Risk Management Association, and The Institute of Risk Management, "A Structured Approach to Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and the requirements of ISO 31000," 2010, accessed 1 December 2010, http://www.theirm.org/documents/SARM_FINAL.pdf.

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html.

Department for International Development, Log Frame Guidelines (London: DFID, 2005) accessed 24 September 2010, https://galaxy.sfcg.org/sfcg/library/attach/DFID%20LogFrame%20Guidelines.doc

James A. Dewar, Assumption-Based Planning: A Tool for Reducing Avoidable Surprises (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), accessed 30 September 2010, https://galaxy.sfcg.org/sfcg/library/attach/Dewer%2C%20James%20%2D%20Assumption%20Based%20Planning.pdf.

Indicator Module

This module will help the user understand and use indicators in project planning and proposal writing, implementation, and evaluation.

Search for
Common Ground

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable below)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you...
➢ **What is an Indicator?** ➢ **Why use Indicators?** ➢ **When Should Indicators be used?** ➢ **Types of Indicators** ➢ **Indicators on different levels?** ➢ **What are the features of a good indicator?** ➢ **Who should be involved in Creating and Developing Indicators?** ➢ **Ways to Create and Develop Indicators** ➢ **Things to Note when Developing and Using Indicators** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Practice Distinguishing between Indicators** ➢ **Practice Revising Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators** ➢ **Practice Revising Output and Outcome Indicators** ➢ **Practice Creating and Developing SMART Indicators**

Pre-test- Check your knowledge!

Please answer the following questions. Read each statement below. If you agree with a statement, write A = YES. If you disagree with a statement, write B = NO. Also, explain why you believe that statement is wrong.

_____ 1. Thoughtfully developing indicators is an optional step in the proposal development process.

_____ 2. Indicators are only used during the proposal writing stage of a project.

_____ 3. An indicator is vital for every project cycle and useful for problem-identification and measuring progress towards project goals and objectives.

_____ 4. It is important for the project manager and staff, stakeholders, proposal writer, and the DME specialist to all be involved in developing indicators.

_____ 5. An example of a SMART indicator is: "Participants reporting an improvement in their relationship".

Answers: 1 B; 2 B; 3 A; 4 A; 5 B

If you answered 3 or more incorrect, you must complete this module!

What is an indicator?

An indicator is used to answer the question: 'how do we know whether or how much we have achieved our objective?" **It refers to a measure used to demonstrate change in a situation, or the progress in, or results of, an activity, project, or program.** It is a sign showing where we are (current situation/actual results), the progress made so far (from baseline), and the remaining distance towards achieving our objective (expected results). For example:

- # of trainings organized on collaboration between military personnel and civilians since program start
- # of civilians who attended the training and can cite 2 behaviour changes of the military after the training
- % over baseline of military who can identify 3 examples of military behaviour that is in violation of human rights by end of project

An indicator is a factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to reflect changes. An indicator enables us to perceive the differences, improvements or developments relating to a desired change (output, objective, and goal). In DM&E, the term indicator is compatible with such terms as performance indicator, performance measure, indicator of success, and indicator of change.

"Indicator" is a general term that can be applied in many different fields and contexts. To name a few, in conflict settings, in development settings, in economy, education, health, governance, environmental protection, etc. No matter what kinds of fields they are used in, all indicators have one thing in common; they consist of specific information that signals change in the field they measure and they can be used by project managers and directors as a basis for relevant decision-making and/or policy change.

Example

A smoke detector in a room is an indicator that detects the presence of smoke particles in the room, alerting when it reaches dangerous levels. It is an indicator of smoke and danger. It alerts us to a potential fire.
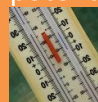
A thermometer is an indicator that measures temperature. When the temperature goes down, the scale on a thermometer goes down. It is an indicator of temperature. It alerts us to the change of weather.

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The difference between indicators, target

An **indicator** is a measure of change or progress, e.g.:
- # of new projects in which residents and repatriated refugees collaborate since the beginning of the project
- Increase over baseline in % of military personnel who can cite 5 appropriate attitudes of a military person towards a civilian

A **target** is a clear and specific statement of desired results for a specific indicator over a specified period of time. It is usually specified in terms of quantity or quality, target area, target group, and time, e.g.:
- 65% of high-level officials practice decision-making for common good in Morocco by end of phase 1 of the program
- 16 skilled advocates of coaching as a tool of leadership and conflict resolution in the region at end of the third year of the project
- Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition in Africa by 20% by 2012

A **benchmark** is a standard of measurement used to compare and judge the performance of similar components, groups of people, programs, and systems. In DM&E, a benchmark presents a reference to a standard of what is achievable, e.g.:
- The existence of ongoing dialogue groups where there were none before is a benchmark in post conflict settings.
- In the first post-conflict election 70% more people voted than in the election during the conflict. Future benchmark would be 90% voting in the next election.

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Why use indicators?

Indicators are an integral part of a DM&E system. The main functions of indicators can be summarized as:

1. **Monitoring program operations**: monitoring if and how an activity, a project or a program is performing to an agreed standard. Indicators enable program managers and directors to assess progress towards the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, objectives, and goals.

2. Improving **program performance and management**: providing information on how an activity, a project or a program works and how it might be improved. Indicators enable program staff to perceive differences, improvements or developments relating to the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, objectives, and goals. Indicators are at the bedrock of a DM&E system, especially in the framework of management by objectives. In project management and implementation, most of the monitoring activities are

conducted towards the development and measurement of the indicators. Meaningful indicators obtained from a system of data collection, analysis, findings and recommendations can lead to management information and thus play a key role in making management information systems operational.

3. **Enhancing accountability**: providing data that allows program staff, managers and directors to hold accountable to themselves, funders, beneficiaries and all other stakeholders.

When should Indicators be used?

Indicators are used at several stages in the project or program cycle including establishing baselines, monitoring, and evaluation. Information is gathered in the **baseline** to set the target for the indicator. Indicators can then be used for **determining progress toward results** in monitoring as well as in **monitoring** the context of the conflict. E.g. peace activists often track changes in militarization in order to be able to anticipate changes in the conflict context. If we want to know about changes in militarization, military recruitment is one good indicator. Recruitment may signal a number of different things: the replacement of an aging force, an increase in soldier/officer ratios, or a more equitable regional representation within the military.

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Types of Indicators

Generally speaking, there are two types of indicators: quantitative indicators and qualitative indicators

Quantitative indicators are measures of quantities or amounts, e.g.:
- A 50% increase over the baseline in the number of people who enrol their children in ethnically mixed schools by the end of the project
- 500 disputes resolved by trained mediators over 18 months
- 100 new soap opera episodes produced and aired on local conflict issues

Qualitative indicators are measures of changes in attitudes, knowledge and behaviour/skills, e.g.:
- 25% increase in the level of confidence people have in their ability to circulate safely in all areas in their community by end of project
- 10% decrease in fear of violence in village D in 6 months

Quantitative indicators are usually measures of *outputs* and always include a number (#, %, $, etc.). Qualitative indicators can often include a target number, usually a %, to indicate the percentage of change from baseline to program end in knowledge, attitude or behaviour/skills. These are, in many cases, *outcome* indicators, though many projects may also use quantitative measurement for DM&E at outcomes or impact level.

Wherever possible, indicators should be *direct,* meaning they describe the subject to be measured specifically, e.g., number of radio shows, number or percent of people listening, the percent of change from pre to post, etc. When this is not possible, an *indirect or proxy* indicator may be used. Normally this is used to demonstrate the change or results where direct measures are not feasible due to data collection constraints or time constraints. For example, SFCG often uses general listenership surveys to *estimate* the number of people who *may* hear an SFCG radio program, or, if ethnicity figures are unavailable, you might use data on how many speak the different languages spoken in a region.

Direct indicators can provide the best evidence of the condition or result they are measuring. Interpretation of indirect indicators needs to be done in a cautious and careful manner. However, the use of an indirect indicator can be more cost-effective than the use of a direct one, and is better than having no evidence at all.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators provide valuable information. Often quantitative indicators are preferred over qualitative indicators as their numerical precision may make interpretation of results data easier and more concrete. They tell us *what* happened and *how much*. However, qualitative indicators can supplement quantitative indicators by revealing more meaningful, deeper information on *how* something is working or not working and *why* this happens. Therefore a combined usage of the two types of indicators is always recommended in program design, monitoring and evaluation.

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Indicators on Different Levels

There are different levels of indicators and their uses are different. These include indicators for inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

Input indicators reflect the resources (input) allocated to an activity, a project, program or intervention. This is a measure of all resources including human, financial, material, technological, and information resources, e.g.:
- Amount of funds allotted
- Number of local consultants available
- Number of radios/TVs available for distribution
- Number of days available

- Number of trainers eligible for the program

Output indicator: Products and services produced (Immediate or short-term results)
Output indicators measure the quantity of products and services needed to meet an objective and the efficiency of production, e.g.:
- # of people in the municipality attending facilitated events that are geared toward strengthening understanding among conflict-affected groups that were supported with USG assistance in the past three months
- # of coaching sessions conducted in the 10 communities by end of the project

Outcome indicator: Immediate or Intermediate results
Outcome indicators describe knowledge, behaviour, attitude and skill changes resulting from our work. The nature of our work often makes it difficult to track these types of changes accurately and realistically, e.g.:
- Increased # of youth participating in a youth parliament and interacting with government parliament after participation in a SFCG program
- Increased % of citizens voting in current election as compared to previous election after participation in an SFCG program

Impact indicator: Long-term results
Impact indicator measures the impact or the achievement of the project or program goal. It indicates the quality and quantity of long-term results generated by programmed outputs, e.g.:
- Building the capacity for collaboration and conflict mitigation at the Parliamentary level in Kenya
- Reconciliation facilitated between divided ethnic/religious groups in Côte d'Ivoire
- Reduction in community and regional tensions over territorial conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire

The two indicator levels usually applied at SFCG are output and outcome indicators. As with the balance between qualitative and quantitative indicators, there should also be a balance between output and outcome indicators. Output indicators tell us implementation is on track. Outcome indicators tell us the desired change is on track.

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What are the features of a good indicator?

Criteria for good indicators vary across organizations. They depend on the types of goals and objectives and the type of project focus. However, all criteria for good indicators share something in common. At the very least, an indicator should be relevant to what

is to be measured, should be clear, practical, doable, and appropriate. Indicators need to contain certain basic information and also be able to pass tests of reliability, feasibility, and utility in decision making.

One of the most commonly used standards to assess an indicator is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Attainable, Result-oriented, and Time-bound). It is also the criteria we use at SFCG when creating indicators in proposal writing, and in monitoring and evaluation.

Specific: measures as closely as possible the result it is intended to measure; disaggregated data (where appropriated)
Measurable: quantitative (where possible); no ambiguity on what is being measured
Achievable/Attainable: it is technically possible to obtain data at a reasonable cost
Result-oriented: reliable; general agreement over interpretation of the results
Time-bound: data can be collected frequently enough to inform the progress and influence the decisions

SMART Indicators Example #1

Example Indicator:
Increase the percentage of participants from the southern districts reporting an improvement in their relationship with other groups to the point where they now enter each other's homes from 20% in 2005 to 70% by 2008.

➢ **Specific:**
Participants reporting improvement in their relationship with the other(s)
➢ **Measurable:**
Percentage of participants

➢ **Achievable/Attainable:**
From 20% of the participants in 2005 to 70% of the participants in 2008

SMART Indicators Example #2

Example Indicator:
Increase the number of men and women participating in at least two inter-community activities from 75 men and women/year in 2005 to 450 men and women/year for all ten program communities before the end of 2007

➢ **Specific:**
The number of men and women participating in at least two intercommunity activities
➢ **Measurable:**
Number of men and women
➢ **Achievable/Attainable:**
From 75 men and women/year in 2005 to 450 men and women/year before the end of

Sometimes we will see some other criteria for good indicators which are very similar to SMART. See the SPICED and the CREAM criteria illustrated below.

SPICED (Roche, 2002)

- **Subjective**: using informants for their insights
- **Participatory**: involving a project's ultimate beneficiaries, involving local staff and other stakeholders
- **Interpreted and communicable**: explaining locally defined indicators to other stakeholders
- **Cross-checked and compared**: comparing different indicators and progress, and using different informants, methods, and researchers
- **Empowering**: allowing groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation
- **Diverse and disaggregated**: seeking out different indicators from a range of groups, especially men and women, to assess their differences over time

CREAM (Schiavo-Campo, 1999)

- **Clear:** precise and unambiguous
- Relevant: appropriate to the subject at hand
- **Economic:** available at reasonable cost
- **Adequate:** able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance
- **Monitorable:** amenable to independent validation

Who should be involved in Creating and Developing Indicators?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

The **donors**: Sometimes donors will provide us with a set of indicators before a project starts, e.g., USAID. In this case, we will need to use, add to or adapt the indicators from the donors in project design, monitoring and evaluation. If the donors do not provide us with indicators, it is a good idea to involve them in the process where possible.

The **project manager, DME coordinator and other staff**, along with relevant **stakeholders**, will make decisions about the goals, objectives, and activities of the project. Consultation of mission plans and interviews with project staff may be necessary to select indicators. Often, this process can help reveal differences in assumptions of varying members of staff. Everyone should be on the same page regarding how the program will contribute to peace and development.

The **proposal writer** will need to clearly describe and discuss the selected indicators in the proposal and should therefore be familiar with the underlying premises of the project.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a resource to help the team develop and decide on indicators.

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Ways to Create and Develop Indicators

There are different ways to develop indicators. Below is one suggested way using four steps for indicator development.

1. **Preparation**
   - Clarify goals, objectives and intended results for your project of interest;
   - Articulate your theory(ies) of change as well as the types of change specified in the objectives;
   - Check what indicators have already been developed, tested, and refined in your program and other programs with which you are in contact. You can ask other practitioners in peacebuilding for their indicators.

2. **Generation**
   - Brainstorm all related things or dimensions that can be counted, measured, or sized and look for creative ways to combine some of those;
   - Consult the parties or stakeholders in the conflict what they consider to be significant signals of change;
   - Break issues into smaller components. Rather than measure reconciliation, consider its components: mercy, justice, truth, and peace. Try not to use vague "buzz" words. Be able to describe in operational terms what, reconciliation, mercy, etc. will look like; have a descriptive criteria. To

measure capacity, focus on skills, technical knowledge, process, motivation, and opportunity. This practice also goes by the name of factor analysis where all factors that influence the change are identified and, where possible, weighed according to the degree of influence each factor has;

- Develop a list of possible indicators.

3. Refinement and Selection
- Modify your draft indicators to make them as specific and simple as possible.
- Come up with at least one or two indicators for each key activity or objective.
- "Select no more than 10-15 indicators per area of significant program focus" (MENTOR).
- Select indicators that can realistically be collected with the resources available.
- Use a mix of data sources so that indicators could be collected from different data sources.

4. Testing Indicators
- Test your new and newly modified indicators for their utility in decision making as early as possible, preferably during the design phase while there is still time to make changes. This test is different from a test of the data collection method. The idea is to determine the utility of the indicators in the analysis and subsequent decisions. Pick hypothetical extremes using fictitious data and consider how the different extremes will influence decisions. If vastly different information has no influence over the decisions, the indicator is probably not useful and should be changed. Select the best indicators for your use.
- You should also test both the most promising indicators and those which are also viable but not as ideal to ensure there is an alternative in the event that the ideal indicators don't survive the test;

You can also use the Levels of Conflict Transformation Framework. In peacebuilding and conflict resolution settings, sometimes people follow an organizing framework proposed by Lederach, et al. (2007) when creating and developing indicators. Lederach, et al. comments that as social conflict can cause changes in four dimensions: the personal, the relational, the structural and the cultural, peacebuilding and conflict resolution work should also try to act at each of these levels and achieve results at all four levels (as illustrated by the diagram below).

The organizing framework proposed by Lederach, et al. is certainly a choice we may adopt in our work to guide our questions and design for indicators. Actually the SFCG Nepal Office has been using this model in their proposal writing and monitoring system. The information
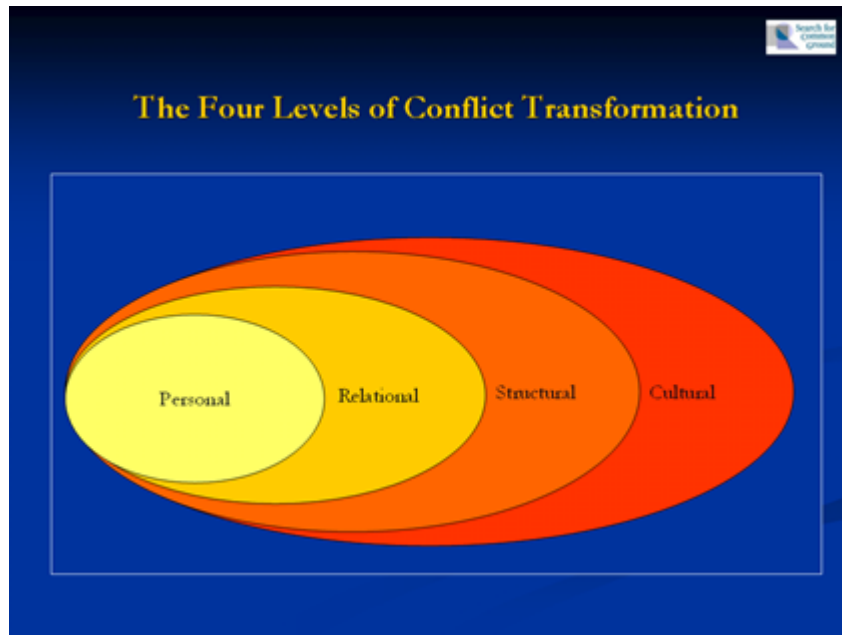
below is provided by the SFCG Nepal Office explaining the use of the Lederach, et al. framework and how their office managed to use the Lederach, et al., framework to plan their work. To know more about the Lederach, et al. framework, the Further Research section at the end of the module.

The Four Levels of Conflict Transformation	Conflict Transformation Objectives for each Level	Questions to Think about in Developing Indicators for each Level
The Personal Level	Enhance personal capacities, attitudes and behaviours	• What has changed? • How do we know if participants have developed skills and positive attitudes toward cooperation? • What has changed? • How do we know if they are applying our methods to foster peace?
The Relational Level	Create relationships among different groups in society	• What has changed? • How do we know whether we are building relationships across dividing lines? • What has changed? How do we know if our beneficiaries are working together to foster peace and reconciliation?
The Structural Level	Create opportunities and space for potential facilitators	• What has changed? • How do we know whether we are creating spaces for all cross-sectors of society?

		• What has changed?
		• How do we know whether we are working with key sectors of society?
The Cultural Level	Overcome stereotypes and cultural constraints that led to conflict	• What has changed?
		• How do we know whether we are working to overcome stereotypes which led to conflict?
		• What has changed?
		• How do we know whether we are dealing with cultural issues in a sustainable manner?

Below are some examples of indicators the SFCG Nepal Office have created and developed in their work using the Lederach, et al. framework.

Nepal Indicators Example

Personal Objective: To increase ownership and local participation in the transition to peace and democracy

Indicators:
➢ Increase the % of people trained who demonstrate knowledge in peacebuilding
➢ Increase the % of people trained who incorporate our methods in their activities
➢ The # of peacebuilding initiatives that result from our programs

Relational Objective: To strengthen inter-communal relations across ethnic, caste, and geographical lines.

(Continued on next page)

Nepal Indicators Example (continued)

Relational Indicators:
➢ Increase the % of citizens in target VDCs who report cooperation from across dividing lines
➢ The # of initiatives resulting from our programs led by people from across dividing lines
➢ The # of projects initiated by participants which aim to break down dividing lines

Relational Objective: To involve multiple stakeholders, particularly those who have been traditionally marginalized, in democratic processes at local and national levels

There are different ways to create and develop indicators, and the Lederach, et al. framework is one of the examples that we can follow to guide our thoughts in indicator development. One thing is certain. That is, no matter what kind of framework we choose to follow or what steps we choose to adopt, we must try our best to develop SMART indicators. Indicators that are not SMART will be of little use for problem-identification and measuring progress towards our project goals and objectives.

Things to Note When Developing and using Indicators

- **Developing good indicators requires in-depth conflict analysis and a good understanding of the context.** Good indicators need to be applicable to the local context. There are no universally good choices of indicators. Indicators suitable for one project might not suit the same or a similar project in a different setting. When we use existing indicators for a new project or a different setting, careful

consideration should be given as to whether and how the indicators could be adapted to suit the objectives of the new project or population in the new context.

- For each outcome indicator, **a baseline is necessary**. This is crucial in measuring progress toward an intermediate result or objective. Depending on the type of indicator being measured, the baseline data can be a point-in-time observation, a cumulative or an average value over a period of time. For output indicators we do not compare with a baseline, but with our benchmarks or targets.

- Indicators must be chosen and used in a way that **relates very specifically to the objectives** of the project or program.

- When selecting indicators, be sure to **select at least one or two for each objective**.

- Do not rely on a single indicator to measure the significant effects of a project because, if the data for that one indicator became unavailable, it would be difficult to document the effects. Thus it is important to try to **select a diversity of indicators** in DM&E. However, you probably need no more than two or three indicators for each outcome.

- It can be cost-effective and time-effective to build on existing indicators when developing new indicators. However, they **must be adapted to fit, or supplemented with others** that are more locally relevant.

- Sometimes an indicator applied to an entire population will hide the fact that there are variances and discrepancies among different groups in that population. Thus it may be important to collect information on an indicator separately for each group. This is called "**data disaggregation**." Typically, information is collected in ways that reflect the components most relevant to the project such as gender, identity, ethnicity, age, or area of origin. e.g., if we are considering youth involvement in politics, an increase in the number of youth joining political parties may conceal the fact that young women are not becoming more involved.

- **Indicators can tell us that a change we are interested in is occurring, but they cannot explain why or how that change occurs. Determining why change happens requires additional research and analysis.** This is because the activities a project implemented may be the sole contribution to the change happening, or to some degree, or not at all. There could be other factors at work. Therefore, a more credible approach is to identify and acknowledge all the major contributing factors and illustrate how the program contributed along with the other factors. This implies some analysis and understanding of the many forces bearing on the issues under consideration.

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Summary

- **Indicators are a means to measure change. They are the raw materials for much of monitoring and evaluation. Yet indicators are approximations, based largely on assumptions: the smaller or more accurate the assumption, the more reliable the indicator.**
- **Indicators need to be clear, practical, doable, appropriate, relevant, and reliable.**
- **It is important to involve and engage all stakeholders in the design and implementation of indicators for their insights and inputs.**
- **A mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators usually reveals nuances and greater insight into what is happening.**
- **Test or pilot indicators before staring to use them in monitoring and evaluation. If some indicators are found not working well in piloting, they must be dropped or modified.**

Practice Exercises

Answers are provided below, but try getting as far as you can in the examples before looking at the answers!
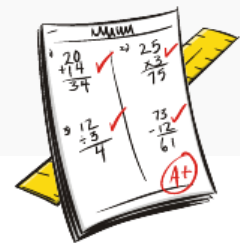
Exercise 1:
Distinguishing between Indicators

The table below lists in its left column some indicators used in SFCG proposals. Go through these indicators. Think what types or levels of indicators they are in the four choices given below (Quantitative Indicators, Qualitative Indicators, Output Indicators, and Outcome Indicators). Then put a "√" in the corresponding column you choose in the table. Note that you may need to put more than one "√"in the corresponding columns for each indicator. When you are finished, click here or scroll down to the next page to see the answer sheet.

Table 1

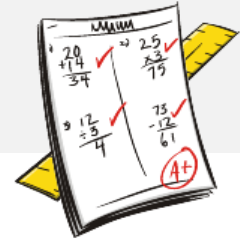| Indicators	Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Indicators	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
# of leadership coaching training sessions provided for decision makers in Kenya in 2008				
Increase over baseline in 15% of survey respondents in targeted areas who can name candidates from special populations (e.g. a woman, person with disabilities, or from other special population) within one month of elections				
Media outlets surveyed that have increased their elections-related programming by two or more programs/articles each week between beginning of project and end of election period				
# of public fora/educational events to teach public about peace process supported by USG assistance from June 2006 to December 2007				
Reduced % of reported acts of violence over baseline per month as reported to community police stations				
Increase in 12% of trained youth leaders who can name three conflict resolution strategies, basic rights according to the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and citizen roles in civil society by EOP over baseline				

Here is the answer sheet for Table 1. Compare it with your own answer sheet to see how many correct choices you made. For the wrong choices you made, can you understand now why the indicator(s) is/are not the type or level you chose?

Answer Sheet for Table 1

Indicators	Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Indicators	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
# of leadership coaching training sessions provided for decision makers in Kenya in 2008	√		√	
Increase over baseline in 15% of survey respondents in targeted areas who can name candidates from special populations (e.g. a woman, person with disabilities, or from other special population) within one month of elections		√		√
Media outlets surveyed that have increased their elections-related programming by two or more programs/articles each week between beginning of project and end of election period	√			√
# of public fora/educational events to teach public about peace process supported by USG assistance from June 2006 to December 2007	√		√	
Reduced % of reported acts of violence over baseline per month as reported to community police stations	√			√
Increase % of trained youth leaders who can name three conflict resolution strategies, basic rights according to the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and citizen roles in civil society by EOP over baseline		√		√

Practice Exercises

Exercise 2:
Revising Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

Below you will see two tables (Table 2 and Table 3). Each table uses the same three project objectives. You will see three draft quantitative indicators in Table 2 and four qualitative indicators in Table 3 corresponding to the objectives. None of these indicators are SMART. Considering the objectives, can you revise these indicators to make them SMART? Write your answers in the blank column in each table below. When you are finished, click here or scroll down to the next page to see suggested revision for Table 2 and Table 3 by SFCG.

Table 2

Objectives	Draft Quantitative Indicators	Your Revised Quantitative Indicators
Increase in solidarity between 450 former enemies in five municipalities in Chalatenango over three years	More former enemies to join mixed-community organizations	
Enhance capacity of regional and local government institutions and communities to monitor, report, and manage conflict in two years in three southern provinces	Number of disputes	
Increase the political empowerment of women in the province over two years	More women to be elected parliamentarians	

Table 3

Objectives	Draft Qualitative Indicators	Your Revised Qualitative Indicators
Increase in solidarity between 450 former enemies in five municipalities in Chalatenango over three years	More former enemies identifying themselves as members of the larger community rather than belonging to one group or faction	
Enhance capacity of regional and local government institutions and communities to monitor, report, and manage conflict in two years in three southern provinces	Authorities to believe more often that monitoring reports lead to a timely intervention and the prevention of escalation	
Increase the political empowerment of women in the province over two years	More women parliamentarians believing that their voices are making a difference in decision-making Elected women feel less that they are marginalized in decision-making	

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UKaid from the Department for International Development

Below is a suggested revision for the draft quantitative and qualitative indicators. Compare it with your own revision and think how you may be able to write SMART quantitative and qualitative indicators of your own next time. Note that there is not one answer to each revision. Different people might come up with different ways for revision. It depends on goals and objectives of the project and the context where the project is implemented. All indicators need to be SMART and they need to suit the objective, population, condition and context of the project they are developed for.

Suggested Revision for Table 2

| Objectives	Draft Quantitative Indicators	SMART Quantitative Indicators
Increase solidarity between 450 former enemies in five municipalities in Chalatenango over three years	More former enemies to join mixed-community organizations	% of the former enemies in five municipalities in Chalatenango who have joined mixed-community organizations at the end of year one
Enhance capacity of regional and local government institutions and communities to monitor, report, and manage conflict in two years in three Southern provinces.	Number of disputes	# of disputes reported at each level during the course of the project
Increase the political empowerment of women in the province over two years	More women to be elected parliamentarians	50 women elected parliamentarians in the next election

Suggested Revision for Table 3

Objectives	Draft Qualitative Indicators	SMART Qualitative Indicators
Increase solidarity between 450 former enemies in five municipalities in Chalatenango over three years	More former enemies identifying themselves as members of the larger community rather than belonging to one group or faction	% of former enemies who, at the end of year one, routinely identify themselves as members of the larger community rather than belonging to one group or faction
Enhance capacity of regional and local government institutions and communities to monitor, report, and manage conflict in two years in three Southern provinces.	Authorities to believe more often that monitoring reports lead to a timely intervention and the prevention of escalation	# of instances at each level where authorities believe that monitoring reports lead to a timely intervention and the prevention of escalation over the course of the project
Increase the political empowerment of women in the province over two years	More women parliamentarians believing that their voices are making a difference in decision-making Elected women feel less that they are marginalized in decision-making	10% increase in women parliamentarians' belief that their voices are making a difference in decision-making 15% decrease in elected women's perception that they are marginalized in decision-making

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Practice Exercises

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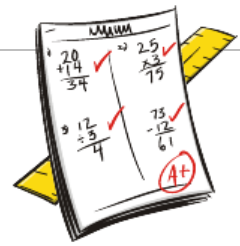
Exercise 2:
Revising Output and Outcome Indicators

Below you will see two tables (Table 4 and Table 5). Each table uses the same two project objectives. You will see two draft output indicators in Table 4 and two outcome indicators in Table 5 corresponding to the objectives. None of these indicators are SMART. Considering their objectives, can you revise these indicators to make them SMART? Write your answers in the blank column in each table below. When you are finished, click here or scroll down to the next page to see suggested revision for Table 4 and Table 5 by SFCG.

Table 4

Objectives	Draft Output Indicators	Your Revised Output Indicators
Increase trust between the two communities.	Training events	
Increase inter-community collaboration on public policy issues that address common interests.	Public policy debates or forums	

Table 5

Objectives	Draft Outcome Indicators	Your Revised Outcome Indicators
Increase trust between the two communities.	More mobility among residents living on both sides within the areas	
Increase inter-community collaboration on public policy issues that address common interests.	More public policy debates or forums among the three communities	

Practice Exercise 3– Answer 1

Below are suggested revisions for the draft output and outcome indicators. Compare it with your own revision and think how you may be able to write SMART output and outcome indicators of your own next time. Note that there is not one answer to each revision. Different people might come up with different ways for revision. It depends on goals and objectives of the project and the context where the project is implemented. All indicators need to be SMART and they need to suit the objective, population, condition and context of the project they are developed for.

Suggested Revision for Table 4

Objectives	Draft Output Indicators	SMART Output Indicators
Increase trust between the two communities.	Training events	# of men, women, and children in the two communities participating in the SFCG trust building training events in the year
Increase inter-community collaboration on public policy issues that address common interests.	Public policy debates or forums	# of public policy debates or forums where all three communities contribute interest-based solutions on natural resource management disputes by the end of 2009

Suggested Revision for Table 5

Objectives	Draft Outcome Indicators	SMART Outcome Indicators
Increase trust between the two communities.	More mobility among residents living on both sides within the areas	50% of men, women, and children from each side increase their mobility within the areas controlled by the other side by at least one square kilometre per year
Increase inter-community collaboration on public policy issues that address common interests.	More public policy debates or forums among the three communities	All three communities contribute interest-based solutions on natural resource management disputes by the end of 2009 through expansion from twice/year to six times/year public policy debate forums.

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for the development of goals and objectives.

Anne J. Atkinson and Carolyne Ashton, Planning for Results: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Program Planning and Evaluation Handbook (Richmond:

Virginia Department of Education, 2002), accessed 24 September 2010,
http://www.safeanddrugfreeva.org/planningforresults.pdf

Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* Part 1 (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), accessed 24 September 2010, http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Department for International Development, *Log Frame Guidelines* (London: DFID, 2005)

European Commission, *Aid Delivery Methods Vol. 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, Part 2 Chapter 5 (Brussells: EuropeAid Cooperation Office, 2004).

J.P. Lederach, Neufeldt, R., Culbertson, H. *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Tool Kit*. (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2007), accessed August 25, 2011, http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/reflective_peacebuilding.pdf

MENTOR (Monitoring and Evaluation Network of Training Online Resources), accessed August 25, 2011, https://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/training/mentor/me_fundamentals/basic_m _and_e_concepts/what_is_monitoring_and_evaluation

Salvatore Schiavo-Campo. "'Performance' in the Public Sector," p. 85. (World Bank Manual - Building a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System, 1999) , accessed August 25, 2011, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/crg/annex-2.htm http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/topic_03DF8A69-0DAC-47D5-8A14-1E1833901BFE_BBA5D8DC-5C40-4F9C-A6A4-0268098134D7_1.htm

UNICEF Monitoring & Evaluation Training Package. Indicators: definitions and distinctions. UNICEF, accessed August 25, 2011, http://www.ceecis.org/remf/Service3/unicef_eng/module2/docs/2-3-1_indicators.doc

Following are various models that complement the
ABCDE and **SMART** models in developing indicators:

SPICED
(Roche, 2002, http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/topic_03DF8A69-0DAC-47D5-8A14-1E1833901BFE_BBA5D8DC-5C40-4F9C-A6A4-0268098134D7_1.htm [accessed 15 September 2010])

Terms of Reference Module

This module will guide you through the steps of developing a Terms of Reference (TOR) for evaluation.

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SFCG

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is Terms of Reference (TOR)?** ➢ **What is TOR used for?** ➢ **Why do we do TOR?** ➢ **When should TOR be used?** ➢ **Who should be involved in developing TOR?** ➢ **What should be considered when drafting a TOR?** ➢ **How do we write a TOR?**	➢ **Test your TOR knowledge** ➢ **Use a checklist for developing your own TOR** ➢ **Use a template to guide your TOR writing** ➢ **View a sample TOR** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to select measurable goals and objectives, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Checklist

TOOL 2: TOR Template

TOOL 3: Sample TOR

Pre-test: Check your Knowledge

True or False Questions:

Please answer the following True or False questions. Read each statement below. If you agree with a statement, write T = TRUE. If you disagree with a statement, write F = FALSE. Also, explain why you believe that statement is wrong.

_____ 1. A TOR is an optional step in the evaluation process.

_____ 2. A TOR is created after an evaluation has been completed.

_____ 3. A TOR needs to be as detailed as possible to act as a proper guide.

_____ 4. A TOR does not need to follow any specific criteria or guidelines.

_____ 5. It is important to specify the exact deliverables in a TOR.

_____ 6. A TOR is the culmination of the planning and design phase of an

evaluation.

_____ 7. A TOR is not the place to detail qualifications desired of the

evaluator(s).

_____ 8. A TOR cannot be changed or tweaked once it has been created.

Answers: 1: F; 2: F; 3: T; 4: F; 5: T; 6: T; 7: F; 8: F

If you answered 3 or more incorrect, you must complete this module!

What is TOR?

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for an evaluation defines the work that must be carried out by the evaluation team. It specifies the requirements and expectations for an evaluation

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What is TOR used for?

The TOR serves as both a guide to carrying out the evaluation as well as recruiting materials for the evaluator(s).

> **Tip:** Goals and objectives are not essentially different—rather, they differ in the *level* of result each addresses Where goals operationalize *impacts*, objectives operationalize *outcomes (results)*.

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Why do we do TOR?

The TOR ensures that the evaluation is carried out in an efficient and organized manner. It also allows everyone involved in the program to have a common understanding of expectations, lessening the risk of misunderstandings and ineffectiveness. Finally, it allows for the evaluation to shape and inform future decision making.[1]

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[1] Department for International Development (DFID), *Guidance on Evaluation and Review for DFID Staff*, (July 2005), accessed 13 May 2011, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/guidance-evaluation.pdf, pp. 37.

Who should be involved in developing TOR?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

The organization's project team, along with any relevant stakeholders, should spearhead the development of the TOR. An Evaluation Manager should be appointed to manage the evaluation, hire the evaluation team, approve the evaluation plan, ensure that goals or milestones are met, and sign off on the final evaluation. The DME specialist can be involved as well and should also be kept informed of the decisions made so that there is a connection to the overall work of SFCG.[2] It is important that all involved agree to the components of the TOR before it can be finalized and the evaluation can begin.

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What should be considered when drafting TOR?

Prior to writing a TOR, many different issues need to be considered in order to better conceptualize an evaluation and ensure that the TOR properly steers the evaluation in the proper direction. The following topics will have implications on the TOR and therefore need to be contemplated:[3]

- o Deciding on the Purpose and Dimensions
- o Clarifying Projected Uses
- o Deciding on Level and Scope
- o Considering Approaches and Methodologies[4]

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[2] Church and Rogers, "Evaluation Management," pp. 139.

[3] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Toward DAC Guidance,* (11 September 2007), accessed 13 May 2011, http://www.adb.org/documents/papers/dac-guidance/approach-dac-guidance.pdf, pp. 39-45.

[4] Specific information regarding these topics are interspersed throughout the "How do we write TOR?" section.

How do we write TOR?

A TOR can be organized in many different ways. The sections vary depending on each new evaluation, but in general the sections below are required to create a detailed TOR that ensures a proper evaluation is conducted:

(You can click on the underlined step to go directly to the location of the step in this module.)

1: Background Information
2: The Evaluation
3: Scope of Work
4: The Evaluation Team
5: Proposal/Application Guidelines
6: Budget Guidelines

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1. Background Information

This section is meant to inform the readers of various details of the evaluation. It can be broken down into two subsections: Project Summary and Organizational Background.

1.1 Project Summary

The Project Summary section dives into the project being evaluated. For a thorough detailing, the following information should be described:

- o The purpose for implementing the project
- o The theory of change or overarching goal of the initiative on which the project is based
- o The specific project objectives
- o The specific project activities and focus
- o The target groups
- o The intended results of the project
- o Why the project is being evaluated and what type of evaluation it is[5]

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[5] Determining which type of evaluation is being conducted will greatly guide the evaluation. By considering the type of evaluation (e.g., mid-course, end-of-program, or self-evaluation, et cetera), one can

In addition to providing these details, the Project Summary section may also include the size or scale of the project and its duration, among other pertinent details.

1.2 Organizational Background

In the Organizational Background section, a general overview of SFCG should be given. This includes the mission, years in operation, size, and types of programs offered. Additionally, SFCG's length of time in the specific country of focus along with the work of the field office involved in the project being evaluated should be described.

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2. The Evaluation

This section should include the following four subsections: Organizational Goal, Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions, Audience, and Evaluation Methodology.

2.1 Organizational Goal

SFCG's evaluation frequency and purpose is explained in the Organizational Goal subsection.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions

This subsection provides a substantial bulk of the evaluation. First, the primary objectives of the evaluation are given. In explaining this, the focus of the evaluation is also provided, including the focus on changes or outcomes.

> **Tip: BACKGROUND: Evaluation Criteria**
> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) established a set of standard international criteria to guide all evaluations of development assistance. It is

Second, the various criteria being considered for the evaluation are provided here, which are chosen based on the objectives. In order to guide

better understand how to construct the TOR. The focus and structure of an evaluation will change considerably depending on what type of evaluation it is determined to be. (From: OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 39-40.)

all evaluations of this nature, the OECD's DAC created a set of criteria to be considered. Such standard are important to abide by in order to ensure the evaluation process is impartial and effective. The DAC criteria are as follows:[6]

2.2.1 Relevance

This indicates the degree to which an intervention conforms to the needs and priorities of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Analyzing relevance allows one to determine the appropriateness of the program design. This criterion is considered to be central to evaluations.[7]

Sample questions to consider include:[8]

- Is the project based on an accurate analysis of the conflict?
- Are the most pertinent issues in this context being considered?
- Does the project address the causes, driving factors, or dynamics of the conflict?
- Are the goals and objectives of the project relevant to the conflict's central issues? Do the activities comply with this?

2.2.2 Effectiveness

This factor looks at the extent to which an intervention has met its objectives, considering desired changes as well as unintended positive and negative changes.

Sample questions to consider include:[9]

- Has the project achieved its purpose or can it reasonably do so?
- Has progress been achieved (or will it) within an acceptable time frame?
- Does the effort improve nonviolent forms of conflict resolution?
- What major factors contribute to the achievement (or non-achievement) of the objectives?

2.2.3 Efficiency

Outputs and inputs are compared here to determine if the inputs were economically converted to results. Optimal efficiency is obtained when the value of a change or development outweighs the cost of the inputs.

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[6] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008), pp. 39-45
[7] OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities,* pp. 33
[8] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 40.
[9] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp.40-41.

Sample questions to consider include:[10]

- ❑ Does the intervention deliver its outputs and outcomes in an efficient manner?
- ❑ How does the program approach compare in costs to other options that may achieve the same goal?
- ❑ How well are resources used to achieve results?

2.2.4 Impact

Impact analyses the short- and long-term effects of the project, including positive, negative, intended, and unintended effects. These effects can be measured at different levels and should follow the "results chain" (inputs→ outputs→ outcomes→ impacts). In order to measure impact, it is important to establish baseline data to measure gathered information against. Additionally, understanding the impact includes considering conflict sensitivity.

> **Tip: Aspects to Consider**
> In compliance with OECD's DAC guidelines, it is important to consider certain principles when creating the TOR, including:
> - Conflict sensitivity
> - Gender awareness
> - Protection and ethical responsibilities

Sample questions to consider include:[11]

- ❑ How has the situation changed over time, and how has the project contributed to said changes?
- ❑ Are there any secondary negative effects?

2.2.5 Sustainability

This criterion encompasses the extent to which the positive effects of the intervention continue. It is important to assess here the degree to which the efforts of the program have been integrated into local processes.[12]

Sample questions to consider include:[13]

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[10] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp.43-44.
[11] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp.41-42.
[12] OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 35.
[13] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 42-43.

❑ Which steps have been taken or are planned to create long-term processes, structures and institutions for peacebuilding?

❑ Will new institutions designed to address conflicts survive?

❑ Will improvements persist despite challenges?

❑ Have spoilers been addressed?

2.2.6   Coherence and Coordination

This looks at how aligned the intervention is to the larger policy contexts within which it is occurring, how connected it is to a conflict strategy or country framework, and how coordinated it is with other relevant policies, programs, and projects.

Sample questions to consider include:[14]

❑ Was coordination factored into inputs and output?

❑ How well was the program implementation process managed?

❑ Is there harmonization across actors?

❑ Is the project's strategy coherent with SFCG's approach?

The following criteria are optional:[15]

2.2.7   Linkages

This considers the connections between activities and policies at different level and across sectors. It is important to look at the relevant efforts undertaken by multiple actors to assess if there is consistency, and in this sense this criterion is intimately linked to the coherence criterion.[16]

2.2.8   Coverage

This can be used to analyze the extent to which the impact of the project affects the target population or geographical area.

2.2.9   Consistency with Values

This assesses the consistency of values in means and ends as well as conflict sensitivity.

These factors explore the project being evaluated from a slightly different perspective and are thus interlinked and interdependent. It is important to note that not all of the criteria listed above need to be applied; rather, each criterion's applicability depends on

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[14] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 44.

[15] DAC, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp.44-45.

[16] OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 35.

the specific nature of the project and its evaluation. However, the first six should be considered and weighed more heavily than the last three.

Ultimately, the evaluation objectives will determine which criteria are to be used. When determining which are to be applied in your TOR, devise questions for each. These questions should be specific and will be addressed later.

Furthermore, all variables that are to be measured throughout the evaluation should be provided in this section.

2.3 Audience

This section indicates the evaluation's primary audience, referring to who will use it, and the secondary audience, referring to those interested in the results and lessons extracted.

2.4 Evaluation Methodology

The methodology is the approach used to collect and analyze information during an evaluation. The quality of the evaluation depends greatly on the methods used. There are various methodologies that can be applied to an evaluation, consisting of both advantages and disadvantages which need to be considered. Determining which is the most appropriate will help construct the foundation on which the rest of the evaluation will be built.

However, while there are a variety of methodologies, each approach should consider certain common principles in order to establish a strong evaluation. These principles are:[17]

- o **Inclusiveness**—the methodology should include a wide range of viewpoints.
- o **Testing the theory of change**—specific data needs to be generated by the methodology which addresses the theory of change.
- o **Mixed-method approaches**—both qualitative and quantitative methods needs to be present in the methodology.
- o **Rigor of evidence**—gathered information needs to be reliable and transparent
- o **Unexpected impacts**—the methodology needs to include techniques which assess planned and unplanned impacts.
- o **Ethics**—the methodology needs to consider ethics in order to protect the evaluation from political pressures.

It is also important to state in this section adherence to any standards. In addition to describing the evaluation's commitment to SFCG's principles, it needs to be articulated that the evaluation complies with the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. These expectations and standards can be attached as an appendix to the TOR.

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[17] OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities,* pp. 43-44.

3. Scope of Work

> **Tip: Important Facets to Include**
> Within your TOR, it is vital to specify the following details:
> - The kind of evaluation (e.g., mid-course review, final evaluation, et cetera)
> - The level of analysis (e.g., project, country strategy, multi-donor, et cetera)
> - Whether to assess outputs, outcomes, or

The scope of work section includes four subsections, including location, deliverables, duration and deadlines, and logistical support. When constructing this section, the project team needs to determine the level of the

evaluation, such as community, national, regional, et cetera.[18]

3.1 Location

The location details of the evaluation are provided here.

3.2 Deliverables

Within this section the products required from the evaluation are provided, most commonly the final evaluation report. Details regarding this report should also be outlined here, including the number of copies required, language, page length, style, font size, format style, et cetera. Furthermore, specific sections required for the report should be provided, such as an executive summary, table of contents, list of acronyms, evaluation findings (with a stress on tables, graphs, quotes, and anecdotes to illustrate the findings), recommendations for future action, and appendices (that includes evaluation tools, lists of interviewees, and questionnaires where applicable).[19]

3.3 Duration and Deadlines

It is important to give a time span for the contract, including specific dates and number of working days. The number of working days can be estimated by allocating days to each task outlined in the evaluation process.

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[18] OECD, *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pp. 41.
[19] DFID, *Guidance on Evaluation and Review for DFID Staff*, pp. 37.

Deadlines for various deliverables should also be articulated, such as:

- o Evaluator recruitment (when applications or proposals are due to the Evaluation Manager)
- o The evaluation plan
- o The field evaluation
- o The draft report
- o The final report

3.4 Logistical Support

SFCG can save time and money by providing logistical support to the evaluation team. As such, it is important to describe in the TOR any logistical support SFCG can feasibly provide. This may include:

- o Background materials (e.g., project proposal, periodic reports, existing evaluations, et cetera)
- o Meeting, phone, email communication
- o Interviewees (and their contact information)
- o Technical assistance
- o Field visit logistics (e.g., travel cost, translation services, et cetera)
- o Meeting arrangements with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the field

4. The Evaluation Team

Details pertaining to the evaluator(s) are described here. First, it is important to indicate the number of evaluators required to tackle the project being evaluated. It is also important to note if they should be internal or external and local or international. Second, the evaluator's responsibilities need to be defined. Third, the evaluator's competencies need to be outlined to guarantee strong candidates apply and are selected. While the qualifications will vary by location and project, certain qualifications to consider include:

- o Evaluation expertise
- o Experience working in conflict contexts
- o Academic degree in peacebuilding or related field
- o Facilitation skills

- o Oral and written communication skills
- o Conflict transformation knowledge
- o Country or regional experience
- o Language skills

When selecting the evaluator(s), it is important to consider the gender balance, cultural norms, and conflict context, which can affect the evaluation's success.[20]

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5. Proposal/Application Guidelines

The Evaluation Manager can recruit evaluators in three ways:[21]

- o Sole sourcing—offering consulting position to someone generally well known to organization.
- o Short-lists—create a list of candidates, provide them with TOR and ask them to apply.
- o Open tender—TOR is circulated widely and anyone interested can apply.

Once the recruitment type is determined, this section will include an explanation of what candidates need to provide in their proposal/application, the deadline for these materials, and where to send it.

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6. Budget Guidelines

This section may not always be appropriate to include. If it is, include an estimate of the cost of the evaluation and what is included in that figure (salary, per diem, travel, et cetera).

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[20] Church and Rogers, "Evaluation Management," pp. 149.
[21] Church and Rogers, "Evaluation Management," pp. 151.

TOOL 1- Checklist

Use the following checklist when drafting your TOR to ensure all major components are covered:

- ✓ Background Information
    - ✓ Project Summary
        - ✓ Purpose
        - ✓ Theory of change
        - ✓ Overarching goal
        - ✓ Project objectives
        - ✓ Project activities and focus
        - ✓ Target groups
        - ✓ Intended results
        - ✓ Why being evaluated
        - ✓ Type of evaluation
    - ✓ Organizational Background
        - ✓ General overview of SFCG
        - ✓ Overview of specific country program being evaluated
- ✓ The Evaluation
    - ✓ Organizational Goal
        - ✓ Purpose of evaluations
    - ✓ Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions
        - ✓ Objective(s) of evaluation
        - ✓ Criteria chosen and questions relating to each
        - ✓ Variables to be measured
    - ✓ Audience
    - ✓ Evaluation Methodology
        - ✓ Type chosen
        - ✓ Adherence to standards
            - ✓ SFCG's principles
            - ✓ DAC Evaluation Quality Standards
- ✓ Scope of Work
    - ✓ Location
    - ✓ Deliverables
    - ✓ Duration and Deadlines
    - ✓ Logistical Support
- ✓ The Evaluation Team

- ✓ How many
- ✓ Internal or external, local or international
- ✓ Evaluator's role
- ✓ Evaluator's competencies
- ✓ Proposal/Application Guidelines
- ✓ Budget Guidelines *(not always appropriate to include)*

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TERMS OF REFERENCE
for
_____ Evaluation of the Project "_____"
Program Office Name

Search for Common Ground, *country* program seeks an experienced evaluator to carry out the project evaluation of its project "*Project Title*", a *short description of project*. The program is funded by _____.

This Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the work that must be carried out by the *external* evaluator. It provides a brief outline of the project; specifies the scope of the evaluation and outlines the evaluation method.

1. Background

1.1 Project Summary

Answer the following sections and put into narrative form.

- o *The purpose for implementing the project*
- o *The theory of change*
- o *The overarching goal of the initiative on which the project is based*
- o *The specific project objectives*
- o *The specific project activities and focus*
- o *The target groups*
- o *The intended results of the project*
- o *Why the project is being evaluated and what type of evaluation it is*

1.2 Organizational Background

Some variation of this should be provided: Since 1982, Search for Common Ground, an international non-governmental organization, has been working to transform the way the world deals with conflict: away from adversarial confrontation, toward cooperative solutions. Our philosophy is to "understand the differences," but "act on the commonalities." SFCG is engaged in a long-term process of incremental transformation, so we make long-term commitments. We seek cross-cultural integration of indigenous and international concepts of conflict prevention. We work with partners on the ground to strengthen local capacity to deal with conflict. SFCG and its Brussels-based partner, the European Centre for Common Ground, currently work in or with fifteen countries:

Angola, Belgium, Burundi, D.R. Congo, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Liberia, Macedonia, Middle East (with offices in Jerusalem and Amman), Morocco, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Ukraine, and the USA. Our "toolbox" includes mediation/facilitation training, community organizing, radio/TV, journalism, sports, drama, and music.

Also discuss the specific country program that is the center of the evaluation.

2.   The Evaluation

2.1 Organizational Goal

Some variation of this should be provided: SFCG, as an organization, has committed to conducting programmatic evaluations on a two-year basis in order to maximize the effectiveness of our programming and engage in continuous improvement and learning within programs and across the organization.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions

The primary objective of the requested evaluation is to _____. It should serve to _____.

The evaluation will specifically focus on the following dimensions taken from the OECD DACs Guidance on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding activities:

Name all criteria to be considered during the evaluation (e.g., relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, et cetera) and provide multiple questions pertaining to each. This section will be the lengthiest portion of the TOR.

Also describe all major variables to be measured here.

2.3 Audience

The primary audience of this evaluation is _____ and the result will be used for _____.

The secondary audience is _____.

2.4 Evaluation Methodology

The SFCG approach to evaluation is grounded in the guiding principles of our work: participatory; culturally sensitive; committed to building capacity; affirming and positive while honest and productively critical and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context. In addition the standards of utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy

developed by the American Joint Committee on Standards for Evaluation will be adhered to.

This section includes the methodologies and tools to be used in evaluating various program activities. If appropriate, include how many interviews/surveys/discussions/case studies to be completed, specific questions/points to be answered/examined, who will be interviewed/surveyed et cetera.

3. Scope of Work
3.1 Location

This evaluation will take place in_____ .

3.2 Deliverables

The Final Report should be *length and other important details* and consist of:
- *Executive summary of key findings and recommendations – no more than 2 pages*
- *Table of contents*
- *Research findings, analysis, and conclusions with associated data presented, where appropriate in clear graphs or charts*
- *Recommendations for Future Action*
- *Appendices, which include collected data, detailed description of the methodology with research instruments, list of interviewees, bibliography, and evaluator(s) brief biography*
- *The number of bound hard copies and/or submitted in electronic form (suggested to do both)*
- *The language(s) that would be most effective for the full report*

SFCG will exercise no editorial control over the final evaluation report. Both the final and the summary report will be credited to the consultancy team and potentially placed in the public domain at the decision of SFCG.

3.3 Duration & Deadlines

The duration of the contract will be a total period of… starting from _____ till _____.
Deadlines include:
- *Evaluator recruitment deadline*
- *When and for how long will the evaluator(s) be in-country*
- *Deadline for first draft of results*
- *Deadline for final receipt of all deliverables*

3.4 Logistical Support

SFCG will provide preparatory and logistical assistance to the evaluator(s), which include:

4. *Background materials (project proposal, periodic reports, existing evaluations, et cetera)*

5. *Meeting, phone, email communication*

6. *Interviewees (and their contact information)*

7. *Technical assistance*

8. *Field visit logistics (e.g., travel cost, translation services)*

9. *Meeting arrangements with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the field*

4.   The Evaluation Team
4.1 Evaluator's Role

The evaluation will be conducted by *a team of how many people/ an individual managed by…* The evaluators will be expected to travel to the various locations cited above to conduct this work. The final writing of the deliverables can be conducted externally to the area.

The *evaluator/team* is expected to be responsible for the following:
- *Form an assessment team*
- *Identify and define evaluation priority areas, methodology and indicators*
- *Design and implement data collection*
- *Facilitate survey crew training and data collection tools*
- *Engage stakeholders in the assessment process*
- *Data analysis and report*
- *Develop and present a draft evaluation report to SFCG staff and other stakeholders*
- *Produce an evaluation summary report, covering key findings, major conclusions and recommendations, for organizational sharing and learning*
- *Write and submit a final evaluation report*

4.2 Evaluator Competencies

- *Language proficiency*
- *Technical expertise in… /More than … years of experience in…*
- *In-country work experience*
- *Regional understanding*
- *Evaluation methods and data collection skills in developing world or conflict context*
- *Facilitation skills*
- *Excellent oral and written communication skills*
- *Conflict resolution/peacebuilding experience*
- *Availability*
- *Anything else that might be relevant to your project*

5. Proposal/Application Guidelines

Complete *proposals/applications* should be submitted by *deadline* through *preferred method (mail, fax, email). Proposals/applications* should include:
- *Proposal (lengths, content, etc.)*
- *Budget estimates and Price quote*
- *CV*
- *Cover letter*
- *Availability*
- *References*
- *Writing sample*
- *Etc.*

6. Budget Guidelines

If appropriate, estimate the cost of the evaluation and the source of the fund. The budget may include travel cost, salaries, per diem and expenses, translators, interviewers, data processors, etc.

Please submit *proposals/applications* by *deadline* to:
Name
Position
Contact info

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Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the Project
"Capacity Building in Youth and Peacebuilding"

Search for Common Ground, Nepal program seeks an experienced evaluator to carry out the project evaluation of its one year project "Capacity Building in Youth and Peacebuilding in Nepal", a peacebuilding program targeted for child protection organizations who are members of the Children in Armed Conflict (CAAC) Working Group and those working as UNICEF partner organizations. The program is funded by UNICEF Country Office in Nepal.

This Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the work that must be carried out by the external evaluator. It provides a brief outline of the project; specifies the scope of the evaluation and outlines the evaluation method.

1. Background
1.1. Project Summary

The peace and democratization process in Nepal continues to progress despite frequent delays and challenges. Since the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed in October 2006, many progresses have been made in implementing the peace process. A year ago, almost four thousand verified minors and late recruits (VMLRs), as defined by UNMIN, were released from the cantonments without much problem and are being reintegrated into the community they belong to. Up to 11,000 additional children, who served as soldiers during the armed conflict , and were auto-demobilized, are also finding their own ways home and continue to face challenges in their reintegration, particularly with regards to accessing educational opportunities.

Many civil society organizations are working for the causes of children with the support of national and international organizations/agencies and local civil society organizations. However, most of these organizations are operating in remote rural settings and are lacking resources, leadership skill as well as skills and strategies to implement reintegration programs. As a result, these organizations are not able to produce desired results to facilitate the increased access to the rights and participation of children in socio-political sphere. Thus, it is realized that the organizations working for the protecting and promoting the rights of children and youth urgently need capacity building for incorporating peacebuilding, conflict transformation and leadership

strategies into their programming so that they can better serve the people they work for. This initiative aims to equip child protection organizations to develop and implement youth and peacebuilding activities as part of their overall programs.

The **theory of change** on which the program is based is:
- With increased leadership capacity and knowledge and skills on peacebuilding issues, leaders of child protection organizations will integrate peacebuilding components into their programming.
- If we build capacity of local youth on youth leadership and peacebuilding, they will initiative peacebuilding activities at local level
- If we train local organizations on skills and strategies on how to engage VMLR in community based activities, they will be better able to support their social reintegration and enhance social cohesiveness

However, the evaluator should develop rival theories of change during the course of evaluation in consultation with SFCG program team and the DM&E Specialist.

The overarching goal of this initiative is *to facilitate social-reintegration of verified minors and later recruits, including self/informally released CAAFAG in their community and enhance their participation in the peace process as agents-of change at the local level.*

The specific objectives are:
1. To develop resource materials for capacity building of implementing partners and youth to carry out social-reintegration and youth peacebuilding activities;
2. To build the capacity of UNICEF implementing partners to incorporate youth and peacebuilding into their overall programs; and
3. To support youth groups in carrying out local level peacebuilding initiatives.

The **target groups** for this initiative are:
- Program managers and child protection practitioners affiliated to child protection organizations who are members of CAAC Working Group and those who are partners of UNICEF
- Youth: 15 to 29 years old who are participants in SFCGs and UNICEF's program;
- Practitioners on youth and peacebuilding in Nepal
- Children

The **project activities** include:
1. Development of resource materials on youth and peacebuilding
   a. Course module on youth and peacebuilding
   b. Facilitators guide to conducting peacebuilding dialogues
   c. Audio-visual training aid

2. Capacity building to UNICEF partner organization on youth and peacebuilding
    a. Course on Youth and Peacebuilding (Only one M Hamilton)
    b. Training on Reflecting on Peace Practice (2 training)
    c. Review and Advance Training on 'Conducting Peacebuilding Dialogues. (22,23,24 & 4,5,6)
    d. Follow-up coaching (5)
    e. Orientation and planning meetings (8 regional meetings)
3. Capacity building in Youth leadership and peacebuilding
    a. Training to youth leaders on peacebuilding (Dialogue to Cooperative Action) 2 Training
    b. Advance training on youth and peacebuilding to youth leaders (2 planned, one completed)
    c. Peacebuilding events facilitation (Picnic, sports, Koshi Tappu programs)
    d. Support to youth clubs on implementing peace building activities
    e. Linkage with *Saathisanga Manka Kura*

This project was intended to have several direct results:
- Peacebuilding practitioners will have increased access to materials in Nepali that help them to implement peacebuilding projects focused on young people;
- Sixty program managers will have increased knowledge and skills in implementation of youth and peacebuilding activities and will have applied those skills; and
- Sixty youth leaders will have increased knowledge and skills in leadership and conflict analysis and will have applied those skills in developing and implementing local level peacebuilding initiatives.[22]
- CAAFAG Implementing partners will have increased knowledge to engage verified minors and post recruits in community based activities and to support their social-reintegration and enhance social cohesiveness

1.2 Organizational Background
Search for Common Ground (www.sfcg.org) has been working in Nepal since February 2006. The mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict: away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions. SFCG works in 21 countries in across five continents engaging in long-term process of incremental transformation.

In Nepal, SFCG has a multi-pronged program to support the peace process, combining media with community peacebuilding work. SFCG has 35 staff with a presence in 14 districts across the country and works with children and youth, media, and civil society.

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[22] Support to youth clubs to organize peacebuilding activities will be implemented by UNICEF partner organizations except in the three districts, Siraha, Mahottari and Sarlahi SFCG's partner organization SAMGRA will implement the peacebuilding activities with youth clubs.

2. The Evaluation

2.1 Organizational Goal

SFCG, as an organization, has committed to conducting programmatic evaluations on a two-year basis in order to maximize the effectiveness of our programming and engage in continuous improvement and learning within programs and across the organization. Additional evaluations are conducted on specific projects such as this one.

2.2 Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

The primary objective of the requested evaluation is to reveal the results of the project funded by UNICEF Country Office in Nepal. It should serve to inform the program leadership and staff to make decisions on how to shape the capacity building of local NGOs on youth and peacebuilding, both in terms of programmatic objectives and in overall methodologies. Documentation of lessons learnt and recommendations will further help to redesign or replicate the program.

SFCG understands that it might not be possible to assess 'impact' meaning 'peace writ large' of the project within the short duration of its implementation. Therefore, SFCG focus on monitoring and evaluating the intermediate changes or 'outcomes' in knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors of its target groups. SFCG also seeks out intended and unintended changes in our monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation will specifically focus on the following dimensions taken from the OECD DACs Guidance on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding activities:

Relevance:
- To what extent was the project approach relevant to facilitate social-reintegration of verified minors and later recruits, including self/informally released CAAFAG in their community and enhance their participation in the peace process as agents-of change at the local level. Was the set of activities sufficient? To what extent did the different categories of activities complement each other?
- Did the project target the right group of beneficiaries? Who received support and why? (was there an inclusion/exclusion bias in selection of stakeholders and bias in selecting the participants within the youth that were involved in the project)?
- Was the approach of working with the selected implementing partners, youth groups and the youth targeted the most relevant to the problem being addressed?
- What unexpected results did the project lead to?

Effectiveness:

The evaluation will consider the indicators in the project logframe but will also need to pay attention to the following key questions:

- To what extent did the project achieve its intended results? What major factors contributed to achieve or not its objectives (factors of success and challenges)?
- Did the participant's knowledge and skills in youth leadership and peacebuilding and conflict transformation improve and to what extent did the participating youth use the learned skills to resolve conflict and reintegrate back into their communities?
- To what extent can the information collected on that be attributed to the project success?
- To what extent did the project empower youth? To what extent did the skills learned through the training and/or awareness activities helped youth to resist violence and provocations to violence?
- How successfully have the trained youth leaders been in serving as positive leaders among their peers? What successes and challenges did they experience in this regard? What was the degree and quality of SFCG and partner assistance to youth leaders to help them to fulfill that role?
- Did the project foster dialogue between youth groups, between youth and other stakeholders (directly through follow-up exchange or indirectly through other activities and youth's own initiatives? To what extent did the project depoliticize dialogue between youth groups?)
- What was the effect of the coaching and its contribution on the target organizations?
- What is the ex-post level of willingness to act and resolve conflict among participating youth?
- How well did the program do in meeting the needs and expectations of the local stakeholders (especially the UNICEF partner organizations) to incorporate peacebuilding into their programming intervention (including unintended positive/negative results)?

Sustainability

- Which steps have been taken or are planned to create long-term processes, structures and institutions for the successful reintegration of specified youth in their community and for their effective participation in the peace process as agents-of change at the local level?
- Have new institutions been designed to continue the work begun by this project and will they survive?
- Will hard-won improvements in intergroup relationships persist in the face of challenges?
- Has a meaningful "handing over" or exit strategy been developed with local partners or actors that enable these partners to build or continue the work?

- Have those who benefit from ongoing violence or instability or who resist movement towards peace ("spoilers") been addressed adequately?
- Does the effort contribute to momentum for peace by encouraging participants and communities to develop independent initiatives?

Coherence and coordination:

- Was SFCG successful in coordinating its interventions with other relevant youth organizations and relevant authorities?
- How well was the program implementation process managed?
- How was the coordination between UNICEF, SFCG and partner organizations in harmonizing the project into each other's programming?
- Is the project strategy coherent with SFCG Children and Youth approach? Did it take into account the lessons learned from similar SFCG youth projects?

The evaluation considers the indicators in the project logframe as the general basis. Some of the major variables to be measured should include, but not limited to:
- Participants knowledge and skills in youth leadership
- Participants' knowledge and skills on peacebuilding and conflict transformation
- Effectiveness of the coaching and its contribution on the target organizations
- Most significant changes brought by the project
- To what extent does the participants attribute the change to SFCG programs
- What other help do they want from SFCG?
- Unintended outcomes, if any.

2.3 Audience
The primary audience of this evaluation includes:
- The staff and members of SFCG Nepal and partner organizations for drawing out reflections and lessons learnt from the project and to use the recommendations for future project design, and
- UNICEF, the funding agency for assessing the effective and efficient use of the funding to achieve stated goals and results of the project.

The secondary audience includes UNICEF implementing partner organizations, SFCG headquarters and other country programs; external funders and partner organizations who may be interested in the results and lessons learnt from the project evaluation.

2.4 Evaluation Methodology:
The SFCG approach to evaluation is grounded in the guiding principles of our work: participatory, culturally sensitive, committed to building capacity, affirmative and positive while honest and productively critical and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context. In addition to the standards of the utility, feasibility, propriety,

and accuracy developed by the American Joint Committee on Standards for Evaluation will be adhered to.

The evaluator will visit the at least four districts in the east and west for the purpose of evaluation. S/he will meet with the project participants, partners, SFCG staff and relevant stakeholders. The methodology and tools of the evaluation will be further developed and finalized in consultation with the SFCG management and DM&E Specialist.

S/he will basically use quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation, which includes:
- Desk research on previous evaluations, quarterly reports, baseline survey, success stories, training manuals, etc;
- Review of SFCG Monitoring Database;
- KII with SFCG partner organizations, key target youth clubs and youth network members, beneficiaries of seed grant and community members and other project stakeholders; and
- A Mini Survey among the participants of the training and coaching to appraise the effectiveness of the training and coaching;

2.4.1 Specific questions to be answered by the evaluation are set out in section 2.3 above. In addition, the evaluation should address the list of questions below:
- What have the participants learnt from SFCG training and workshops? How did they put their learning and skills into practice?
- Hove the participating organizations incorporated peacebuilding components into their program design after participating in SCFCG Programs?
- What was the role of coaching in building the skills of the participants? What was the value added by the coaching? Would the results have been the same without the coaching?
- What is the perception of the coaching participants on the process and the contribution of coaching?
- Does the theories of change explained in the proposal work in the ground level? If yes, how have they worked and if not, where is the gap?
- What are the unintended results of the program? Are they positive or negative? If negative, what led to these results?
- What is the most significant change taking place among the child protection organizations, their managers and program implementers? To what extent do these organizations attribute these changes to SFCG programs?
- What else they want SFCG to contribute to facilitate their organizational and personal development?
- Has there been coordination among youth and the local government bodies in the program areas?

- How effective is the program in reaching all cross sections of society including gender?

2.4.2 Process questions to be answered by the evaluation are (But not limited to):
- How efficiently and effectively is the program being administered (e.g., best uses of time, personnel resources; assessment of partnership (i.e. organizations, relationships, etc.)?
- How effective is the programmatic approach in bringing the desired changes?
- How effective was the training, coaching methods and approaches?
- What are the required changes in making the programmatic approach more effective in the future?
- How is the partnership with the local implementing NGO going? What is working and what need to be improved?

3. Scope of Work
3.1 Location:
This evaluation will take place in at least four districts of Nepal to be finalized in consultation with the Community Peacebuilding Manager and the DM&E Specialist.

3.2 Deliverables:
Final Report:
The report should be written in English language and should not exceed 30 pages. It should be submitted electronically in a MS-Word document. It may include:
- Executive Summary of key findings and recommendations;
- Evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions with associated evidence and data clearly illustrated. Use of tables and graphs and quotes, anecdotes and stories to illustrate findings and conclusions is encouraged;
- Recommendations for future action, which should be practical and linked directly to conclusions; and
- Appendices, including methodology and evaluation tools, list of interviewees, questionnaire, and brief biography of evaluator.

The evaluator will incorporate the comments furnished by SFCG and will submit an edited final report at the end. The report will be credited to the evaluator and potentially placed in the public domain at the decision of SFCG.

3.3 Duration & Deadlines
The duration of contract will be a total of 24 person days between 20 March, 2011 and 7 May 2011.
- The evaluation plan should be submitted by 25 March 2011
- The field evaluation should take place between 1-15 April 2011.
- The first draft of the report along with all the financial receipts should be submitted by 25 April 2011.

- The final report should be submitted by 7 May 2011.

3.4 Logistical Support
SFCG will provide preparatory and logistical assistance to the evaluator(s), to include:
- Background materials (project proposal, periodic reports, existing evaluations, etc.)
- Meetings, phone/e-mail communication with program administrators
- Identify interviewees and provide contact information
- Technical assistance, e.g., input for questionnaire development, background information, etc.
- All logistical support for the field visit, including the travel cost (local as well as air travel)
- Arranging meetings and appointments with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the field (if necessary).

4. Evaluator's Role and Competencies
Evaluator's Role
The Evaluation will be carried out by a single external evaluator who would report to and work under the guidance of SFCG's DM&E Specialist.

The external evaluator will:
- Identify and define evaluation priority areas, methodology and indicators;
- Design and implement data collection;
- Analyze data and findings and prepare report;
- Write and submit a final report;
- Make a brief presentation of findings and recommendations to SFCG Nepal.

Evaluator competencies
- Sound knowledge about the peace process and peace building activities in Nepal
- Sound knowledge on organizational development issues
- Academic degree in peacebuilding and conflict transformation field or related field.
- Demonstrated technical skills in peace building project evaluations
- Proficiency in English;
- Sound understanding about the child protection organizations and their work in Nepal.

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Additional Resources

Search for Common Ground Evaluation Guidelines
[Doc available]

Designing for Results, Chapter 9 "Evaluation Management"
[Pdf available]

UNESCO Guidelines for Developing Terms of Reference
[Pdf available]

Designing an Evaluation Module

This module will help the user understand the steps and processes of designing an evaluation

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	Interactive Pages (i.e. Worksheets) will help you...
➢ **What is an evaluation?** ➢ **What is an evaluation for?** ➢ **When should an evaluation be designed?** ➢ **Who should be involved in the evaluation design?** ➢ **How is an evaluation design used?** ➢ **Practice Exercise** ➢ **Additional Resources**	➢ **Evaluation Decisions Flow Chart** ➢ **OECD/DAC Recommendations** ➢ **Evaluation Approach Guide**

What is an evaluation?

An **evaluation** is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of the relevance, validity, efficiency, effectiveness of project implementation, results and sustainability of planned, on-going or completed projects or programmes.[1]

Evaluations take on many different forms, functions, approaches, types – the list goes on. This module will provide a starting point for someone who is looking to design an evaluation.

When designing an evaluation, there are the specific components that should be considered:

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[1] OECD-DAC, Glossaries of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-based Management, accessed 14 November 2012, http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/glossaries-key-terms-evaluation-and-results-based-management-15-languages.

Evaluation Objectives
- Audience
- Evaluation type
- Role
- Approach

- Scope
- Evaluators
- Timing
- Budget

Compare designing an evaluation to designing a conflict transformation project; the same key questions need to be asked: What do we want to do? How are we going to do it? And who is our target audience?

These questions can be put in to evaluation terms:
- What do we want to learn about the project?
- What method of data-gathering will I use to get the information I need?
- Who will be using the evaluation, and for what?

> **Tip:** What's the difference between monitoring and evaluation? Put simply, it's the difference between tracking and assessing. Monitoring helps you **track** your project's progress during program implementation, where evaluation helps you **assess** your project when it is over (or halfway through the project lifecycle).

What is an evaluation used for?

The primary purpose of an evaluation is for **learning** and **accountability**, and is used in order for SFCG, its partners, and donors to be able to be continually improve their effectiveness. Depending on the objectives of the evaluation, the focus and use of the evaluation may change. Practical uses for an evaluation include:

- Aid project management decisions
- Keep project on target at mid-term
- Assess the past and plan for the future
- Ensure that project activities reflect the organization's mission and goals
- Stay accountable to stakeholders and donors by keeping them informed
- Assess pilot programs, test the feasibility of different projects and programs, and refine existing approaches
- Record and disseminate best (and worst!) practices and results

> **Tip:** Sometimes evaluations are seen only as an accountability structure to the donor. But this is not the case! Certainly, some donors require a specific system or set of tools to be used, but evaluations should be first and foremost designed for the project team and its participants.

When should an evaluation be designed?

The broad design of an evaluation should happen simultaneously with the design of the project. These elements include:
- Goal
- Outcomes
- Indicators for outcomes and goals and/or benchmarks/targets
- Outputs
- Activities
- Output indicators
- Indicator means of verification
- Indicator method of data collection

These elements are generally included in the logic framework.

The benefits of outlining the evaluation at this point in time are wide-ranging. First, it ensures that the evaluation is relevant to the project and the logical framework or theory of change that is being utilized. It also ensures continuity of all evaluations that occur in the project cycle, and allows the evaluator and their team to have an increased knowledge of the project, contributing to a faster learning curve and a speedier evaluation process. When the evaluation is implemented, these decisions can be reviewed and changed, if necessary.

Keep in mind that while it is good to begin to plan for the evaluation during design, the specifics of the evaluation are usually developed at a later stage in the project cycle, through Terms of Reference and Scopes of Work.

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Who should be involved in evaluation designed?

Keep in mind this varies by project, programme, and personnel:

Project manager, **DME Coordinator** and **staff** should all agree on the evaluation design for the project, with input from **relevant stakeholders**. The project team must lead in the decision-making for evaluation preparation, with the DME coordinator providing technical support to the pros and cons of the evaluation decisions. Including **proposal writers** in the process is also helpful, as the evaluation procedures should be included in the proposal and the evaluation design should include measuring indicators.

The **DME Specialist** in the DC office can be used as a lead facilitator for the initial discussions and creation of the evaluation design.

How is an evaluation design used?

In *Designing for Results,* Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers provide a great resource for the decision-making process when designing and planning evaluations. According to Church and Rogers, there are nine categories in which "decisions" must be made:

(Click on the category to directly jump to its according page)

Objectives
Audience
Type
Role
Approach
Scope
Evaluators
Timing
Budget

Click here to check out the **Tool 1: Evaluation Decisions Flow Chart**

While these decisions are important to think about, it is just as important to remember that there is no one correct way to evaluate in the field of conflict transformation. As the OECD/DAC states, "Evaluation is a toolbox and the golden rule is to apply the right tool for the right question."

OECD/DAC has a list of recommendations for peacebuilding evaluation. Check out Tool 2: **OECD/DAC Recommendations**

Helpful documents to have on hand

You don't have to create the evaluation from nothing. The project proposal included a logframe. This is your ally in evaluation design. The logframe will list the project goals, objectives, outcomes, and indicators to guide the evaluation.

In some circumstances, a baseline might have also been completed. This is especially useful as the baseline data can be used in the evaluation to compare results from before the project was implemented. You may consider developing your evaluation questions from the questions asked in the baseline.

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OBJECTIVES

An **evaluation objective** is the criteria by which a project will be evaluated. Begin by asking: *What do we want to learn? What do we need to know about the project?* Knowing the answers to these questions will largely determine the shape of your evaluation.

When determining your evaluation objectives, take into consideration the OECD-DAC Criteria. These five criteria will be used to come to evaluative conclusions about the project or program in question:

OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance[2]
Relevance The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. *Effectiveness* The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. *Efficiency* A measure of how economically resource/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. *Impacts* Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. *Sustainability* The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience of the risk of the net benefit flows over time.

These criteria are a good starting point, but by no means should an evaluation cover all or be limited to these criteria. Questions should not be added just to cover criteria, and questions should also not be eliminated because they do not fit the criteria. Ultimately,

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[2] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance Factsheet*, Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2008, http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/6/49756382.pdf.

the criteria should be used as a guide and the project team and its partners should decide what is best for the specific project and context in which they are working.

Keeping the evaluation criteria in mind at this point is helpful to develop **key evaluation questions.** Key evaluation questions allow you to focus in on what exactly you would like to be answered, and later-on can be turned into sub-questions and indicators. Key evaluation questions are clear, focused, and relevant and are based upon the type of project. Thus key evaluation questions vary from project to project. Some examples of key evaluation questions for peacebuilding are[3]:

- Is this effort making a relevant contribution to durable peace, by deliberately and effectively addressing key driving factors of conflict among crucial conflict actors/constituencies?
- Is this effort making a demonstrable contribution to preventing violence, either by intervening swiftly to avert escalating violence or by addressing long-term structural drivers of conflict?
- Has an assessment of peace-conflict dynamics been undertaken (and maintained) and has this influenced development programming choices? Does this effort (or could it) engage on key social tensions that have been identified as driving factors of past, current or potential conflict?
- Does the intervention avoid creating tensions within the crisis-affected community; between displaced people and host communities; between agencies over the type and quantity of assistance?

For more information on evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions, check out the **Terms of Reference Module.**

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AUDIENCE

Begin by asking: *Who are the intended primary users of this evaluation, and what will they use it for? Who are the readers?* **Users** are those who will be applying the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations and **readers** are those who are interested in the report to stay informed. Users and readers could include donors, project staff, Search for Common Ground administrators, project beneficiaries, policy makers, or other members of the peacebuilding community.

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[3] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Guidance for Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, pg 29-30 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2008,

Key to designing a quality evaluation is **knowing your user**. What are they interested in? What language do they speak? Do they have any requirements (This is especially important if your user is a donor)? Knowing your user allows the evaluation team to have a direction, and also ensures that the end product will actually be *utilized*.

TYPE

This "decision" begins with the question: *What type of evaluation will it be?* A type of evaluation is generally determined by when the evaluation takes place. The table below describes the different types:

Type of Evaluation	Timing of the evaluation
Mid-term (also called formative)	In the middle of the project cycle
Summative	At the conclusion of the project

ROLE

What function will the evaluator play?

There are three roles which an evaluator can perform for an evaluation :

Role of Evaluators
Operative   Traditional approach to evaluation. Evaluator only implements the evaluation and the job is finished when the report is written.   *Consultant*   Expands on the responsibilities of an operative evaluator, focusing on the "use" of the evaluation. This includes developing practical recommendations, workshops, and working to develop future plan based on the evaluation.   *Learning Facilitator*   Combines the two evaluation roles above and also seeks to broaden project learning to the organization level and into development of the next phase of the project.

Although the consultant role is the most common, there is no mandated role for evaluators. The role which the evaluator ascribes to should be determined by the stakeholders and which role best fits the project.

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[4] Adapted from Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers, *Designing for Results,* pg. 112*,* Search for Common Ground, 2006, http://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart1.pdf

APPROACH

This decision begins with the question: *What evaluation approach will be used in the evaluation?* An **evaluation approach** provides the framework, philosophy, or style of an evaluation.[5] Below are just a few of the common approaches to evaluations:

Theory Based Evaluation
Theory-based evaluation is an approach that analyses in-depth the "program theory" or "program logic" (this may also be referred to as a theory of change) to identify critical successes or failures within the program.

Similar to developmental evaluation, theory-based evaluation looks at evaluation in a non-linear way, focusing on why and how changes occur in projects. Instead of assuming a cause-effect relationship, it maps out causal factors judged important to success, allowing complexity and fluidity in the evaluation.

Rapid Appraisal Methods
Rapid appraisal (RA) is an approach that draws on multiple evaluation methods and techniques to quickly yet systematically collect data when time in the field is limited.[6] This evaluation approach is particularly useful when there are time and budget limitations. Rapid appraisal uses a variety of methods such as quick and short surveys, interviews, and secondary data collection. They are especially helpful when information is needed within days or weeks, but can be inaccurate. A rapid appraisal should never be solely used as a final or summative evaluation for this reason. The disadvantage is the lack of time to do more in depth research on the project.

Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analysis
Cost benefit analysis attempts to measure the economic efficiency of project costs versus program benefits, in monetary terms. In the case that a project cannot be measured in monetary terms (which is often), cost effectiveness can be used, as the concept is the same. Cost effectiveness and cost benefit evaluations look at all project costs and benefits and then compute cost/effectiveness ratio.[7] This approach to evaluation is mainly quantitative, but can include some subjective indicators. However, often it is difficult to assess the quality and accuracy of these subjective indicators.

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[5] Church and Rogers, pg. 114.
[6] USAID Rapid Appraisal Tip
[7] Impact Evaluation Guidelines.

Impact Evaluation (RCTS, Quasi-Experimental Design, Mixed-Methods)
While the type of data collection tools impact evaluators use is wide ranging, impact evaluation seeks to answer one question: What is the impact or causal effect of a program on an outcome of interest? In other words, impact evaluations answer cause and effect questions which determine the extent to the program was successful. This helps an evaluator measure the direct impacts or effect the program had on the intended outcomes. However, it does not answer the larger questions of how and why change occurs; therefore it is rarely used to measure unintended or behavioural types of change. It also costs more than the level of funding for evaluation that most donors are willing to provide, and can be quite time consuming.

Developmental Evaluation
Developmental evaluation is an adaptive learning process that seeks to develop long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development by engaging in team discussions with evaluative questions, data, and logic. Contrary to impact evaluation, developmental evaluation is highly fluid, adaptive, and contextual. As a result, this approach is often used in complex and

emergent situations that involve multiple actors and where change is often non-linear. Often embedded into a program team instead of contracted, a development evaluator focuses on context and relationships to bring about innovation and informed decision making. A potential disadvantage is that the evaluator may become too closely aligned with program staff and participants.

Most Significant Change
Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory and process oriented approach to evaluation that involves the collection of stories highlighting "significant change" that emanate from the field level, and the systematic selection of the "most significant" of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The MSC approach to evaluation works more with stories than indicators. It works on the idea that the informal narrative of stories will allow for all involved parties to develop a discussion about what they see as the impact and performance of the program as a whole. As a result, MSC is valuable for locating undefined outcomes and unexpected change. This is a highly qualitative and subjective approach not providing quantitative data. It is good to use when wanting to triangulate data (compare data from different sources).

A more detailed list of approaches is also available in SFCG's <u>Designing for Results</u> by Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers, on page 114.

For approach uses, pros, and cons, check out <u>Tool 3: Evaluation Approach Guide</u>.

As you may have noted, many of the approaches have some similar attributes. Sometimes there will be a natural fit between the approach and the evaluation goals, but this is not always the case. When this happens, don't be afraid to add components from other approaches and subtract from the original. Remember; always design your evaluation to best fit your needs!

A sub question to this decision asks what method of data collection you will use. Will it be quantitative? Qualitative? Mixed-methods? Sometimes this is determined by the approach, but not always. SFCG supports a mixed method approach, as it is most appropriate for peacebuilding evaluations and mixed method approaches are considered the best pairing of rigorous methodology with richness of data and content. Here are some of qualitative and quantitative techniques are listed in the following

	In order to engage in…	I need to…
Qualitative	Observation	Watch and record events
	Key informant interviews	Talk to knowledgeable individuals
	Community mapping	Engage the community in the process of creating a map (for conflict assessment, asset mapping, etc.)
	Case studies	Collect data and engage in storytelling of a particular person, village, or event related to the project
	Photos and images	Take pictures with a camera Map the area using GIS
	Focus groups	Gather selected individuals together to talk about the project and record their ideas
Quantitative	Surveys and questionnaires	Administer a survey using my: Mobile Phone, or Paper and Pencil
	Pre- and Post-project testing	Survey the project participants before and after to test their knowledge as a result of our program
	Statistical analysis	Use a computer program like Excel, SPSS or STATA

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SCOPE

Begin by asking *what are the parameters of the evaluation?* **Scope** is determined by looking at six components of a project:

- Issues covered
- Funds spent
- Time period
- Type of intervention
- Geographical coverage
- Other elements of the intervention that is addressed in the evaluation[8]

When deciding on the scope, it is important to look at these within the context of purpose, resources, and time. Looking at scope ensures that the evaluation will be within the ability of the project team to complete, and to complete well.

EVALUATORS

Begin by asking: *What type of person is needed to conduct this evaluation?* A key part of designing an evaluation is assessing the skills of the evaluator, and should be taken into consideration. Key questions to think about are:

- Will the evaluators be internal or external?
- What type of experience is required?
- How many evaluators are needed?
- Will the evaluators be local hires or recruited internationally?
- Is a particular language required?

> **Tip:** Think about your evaluator in terms of your evaluation approach. What type of experience does the evaluator have? Qualitative? Quantitative? Mixed-Methods? Impact? Developmental? Make sure their expertise aligns with your evaluation approach!

For the most part, SFCG handles evaluations internally, but sometimes an external evaluator is hired. Ideally, this evaluator would be hired at the project design phase and return to conduct the evaluation later. While an external evaluator provides neutrality to the evaluation process, there are also some downfalls to using one. Below is a table looking at internal and external evaluations, and the pros and cons that come with each:

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[8] List adapted from Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Overview of Key Steps in Planning and Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Work, pg 27, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2008.

	Pros	Cons
Internal	• Knowledge of the context • Low cost; can be quicker • Positioned to make more relevant recommendations	• Less objectivity in project analysis • Project resources may be scarce, especially evaluation knowledge and skill, time and personnel
External	• Independent • New perspective • Can act as facilitators or build staff capacity • Bring professional evaluation knowledge or other expertise	• Can drive up costs • Lack of contextual knowledge, require briefing and other assistance • Can be difficult to find evaluators with skill in this field

TIMING

This decision asks: *When will the evaluation take place?* This question is not concerned with what type of evaluation is preformed (although the type of evaluation also uses time as a factor), but rather the context and events that might occur around the time the evaluation is performed. For example, an evaluation should not take place around an election, as this is often a tenuous time with heightened sensitivity and likeliness for violent conflict. This also includes times of celebration: memorial days, religious events, and anniversaries of peace accords are all events that could skew the results of your evaluation, in either a positive or negative direction.

Some practical issues should also be taken into account:
• Will key staff be in the country and available to the evaluators during the proposed evaluation??
• Is there a deadline imposed by SFCG or its donors for the evaluation findings?
• Are there any weather conditions such as a rainy season or extreme snow that might limit the evaluator's ability to travel to different parts of the country?
• Will the program participants be accessible? For instance, it would be difficult to conduct an evaluation of a peace education program in schools during the summer months when children are out of school.

- Does this conflict with any major events or deadlines within the project being evaluated?[9]

BUDGET

This decision asks: *What will the evaluation cost?* Typically, baseline, monitoring, and evaluation costs combined make up around **5-10%** of the total project budget. Although practical thinking might say the budget is the first step in designing an evaluation, leaving the budget for the last step allows for more creativity and ensures that the evaluation truly evaluates what is needed. If the evaluation does end up needing to be reworked due to budget constraints, you will have a much clearer picture of what is needed for a good evaluation, and can then allow the least important portions of the evaluation to be identified and cut with greater ease.

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[9] Questions adapted from Cohen and Rogers, pgs. 131-132.

Evaluation Preparation Decision Flow Chart

EVALUATION GOAL
Improve peace building programming practically and conceptually.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES
What do we want to learn?
What do we want to know?

PRIMARY AUDIENCE
Who are the primary users?
Who are the readers?

TYPE OF EVALUATION
What type of evaluation will it be?
Formative, Summative, Impact

EVALUATOR'S ROLE
What function will the evaluator play?

APPROACH
What evaluation style will
be used in the evaluation?

SCOPE
What are the parameters
of the evaluation?

EVALUATION TEAM
What type of person is needed to
conduct this evaluation?

TIMING
When will the evaluation take place?

BUDGET
What will the evaluation cost?

OECD/DAC Recommendations for Peacebuilding Evaluation

Emerging lessons from the analytical work underpinning this guidance

The joint process of developing this guidance has begun to reveal some important lessons for donor agencies and others working in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. The following list of emerging lessons will be revised and updated once this working draft has been field tested.

1) Donors should promote the systematic use of evaluation for all conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, and require implementing partners, such as NGOs, to conduct evaluations. Evaluation can support learning and accountability as professionals in this area of development co-operation strive to improve practice and results. Such learning is key to becoming more effective at building peace.

2) A clear need for a better strategic policy framework for conflict prevention and peacebuilding work has been demonstrated. There is a need to evaluate at the strategic level and to look at the interconnections between strategies, policies, programmes and projects. Policies and operations in this sensitive field need to be more effectively linked – a goal which could be achieved in part by working with practitioners and policy makers to update the existing *DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (including the 1998 *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation*), in which donors recognised that work on these issues is a central part of development, extending beyond humanitarian assistance alone.

3) Evaluations should be facilitated through better programme design, even in the planning stages when, for instance, objectives should be clearly articulated to facilitate future assessment of results. There is a general need for further development in terms of planning, funding, management and implementation of activities that try to prevent conflict or build peace. In this field in general, there is a need to build tailored tools for learning and accountability to contribute to the professionalization of interventions, including the identification of best practices.

4) Coherent and co-ordinated intervention and policy strategies are needed to make progress towards peace. Donors cannot rely solely on aid and must look at other policy instruments and their impacts on conflict and the chances for peace. Strategic engagement at various levels and across governments is essential.

5) Concepts and definitions of peacebuilding and conflict prevention require clarification. Evaluators should work with staff, policy makers, managers and stakeholders to determine and assess the concepts of peace their activity is operating on.

6) The results of conflict analysis need to be translated into action, used to influence the programming and evaluation processes and linked to other forms of analysis, such as governance assessments, power and drivers of change analysis, as well as early warning indicators. (Note: As field applications are conducted and as learning and practices evolve, this list may be refined.)

7) The use of mixed-method approaches to evaluations is recommended due the complexity and multi-faceted nature of interventions in this field.

8) Joint evaluations allow for more harmonised approaches that demonstrate how efforts of different donors add up. Involving country partners is also important for understanding how change occurs and is a key element of supporting the Paris Declaration.

TOOL 3

Theory Based Evaluation

Definition	Use	Pros	Cons
Theory-based evaluation is an approach that analyses in-depth the "program theory" or "program logic" to identify critical successes or failures within the program.	■ Test theory of change ■ Map determining or causal factors ■ Evaluate non-linear change	■ Provides early feedback ■ Allows early correction of problems ■ Identifies unintended side-effects ■ Helps in prioritizing which issues to investigate ■ Provides basis to assess impact	■ Can easily become overly complex ■ Difficult to determine key indicators
Definition	**Use**	**Pros**	**Cons**
Rapid Appraisal (RA) is an approach that draws on multiple evaluation methods and techniques to quickly yet systematically collect data when time in the field is limited.	■ Provides rapid information for management decision-making ■ Provides qualitative understanding of complex changes, situations, and motivations. ■ Quick assessments before	■ Can be conducted quickly ■ Provides flexibility to explore new ideas ■ Low cost ■ Provides context and interpretation for quantitative data	■ Difficult to generalize findings ■ Concerns of validity, credibility, and reliability ■ Limited time for in depth research
Definition	**Use**	**Pros**	**Cons**

Impact Evaluations answer cause and effect questions which determine the extent to the program was successful.	■ Measures direct impacts on outcomes ■ Answer cause-effect questions	■ Provides comprehensive evaluation ■ Ease of interpreting results ■ Use of both quantitative and qualitative data	■ Very expensive and time consuming ■ Does not measure behavior or unintended change ■ Difficult to find control groups ■ Potential for unethical methodological tools

Rapid Appraisal

Cost Benefit/Cost Effectiveness Analysis
Impact Evaluation

Developmental Evaluation

Definition	Use	Pros	Cons
Cost Benefit analysis attempts to measure the economic efficiency of project costs versus program benefits, in monetary terms. Cost Effectiveness does the same except with non-monetary quantitative terms.	■ Determines the most efficient allocation of resources. ■ Determines the highest rate of return on investment	■ Determines efficiency ■ Makes explicit the economic assumptions ■ Provides justification of activities	■ Fairly technical ■ Difficult to assess quality and accuracy of questions ■ Requisite data for cost-benefit calculations may not be available ■ Highly dependent on assumptions ■ Difficult to apply to qualitative questions

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Most Significant Change

Definition	Use	Pros	Cons
Developmental Evaluation is an adaptive learning process that seeks to develop long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development by engaging in team discussions with evaluative questions, data, and logic.	■ Evaluates non-linear change ■ Provides understanding of complex and emergent situations ■ Focused on context and relationships	■ Evaluator is embedded in project team ■ Supports creation of innovative approaches ■ Use of diverse data collection methods and tools ■ Emphasis on processes	■ Potential evaluator bias ■ Mass amount of information is time consuming ■ Risk of ambiguity or lack of focus on results
Definition	**Use**	**Pros**	**Cons**
Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory and process oriented approach to evaluation that involves the collection of stories highlighting "significant change" that emanate from the field level, and the systematic selection of the "most significant" of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff.	■ Complex environments ■ Projects that focus on social change ■ Evaluations that focus on learning	■ Provides structure for monitoring ■ Identifies unexpected changes ■ Participatory processes	■ Solely qualitative ■ Difficult to obtain results on prescribed outcomes and impacts ■ Lack of focus on accountability

Additional Resources

The following resources are particularly good for designing an evaluation. An overall guide to resources for evaluation design from the SFCG library is available **here**.

Designing an Evaluation Resources, Samples, Etc.

Church, Cheyanne. (May 2011) The Use of Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) in Peacebuilding Evaluation. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. **Link**

Church, Cheyanne, and Mark Rogers. (2006) Designing for Results. Search for Common Ground. **Link**

Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt, and Hal Culbertson. (2007) Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit, Kroc Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame. **Link**

OECD DAC. (2008) Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities Factsheet. **Link**.

OECD DAC. (2008) Guidance on Evaluation Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities. Working draft. **Link**.

OECD DAC. (2007) Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Towards DAC Guidance. OECD Journal on Development, Volume 8, No. 3. **Link**

Evaluation Utilisation Module

This module will help project/programme staff make full use of the evaluation report and results.

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Search for Common Ground

UKaid from the Department for International Development

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is Evaluation Utilisation?** ➢ **What is the use of Evaluation Utilisation?** ➢ **Why do we conduct Evaluation Utilisation?** ➢ **When should Evaluation Utilisation be used?** ➢ **Who should be involved in conducting Evaluation Utilisation?** ➢ **How do we use Evaluation Utilisation?** ➢ **Tools, Examples and Templates**	

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Evaluation Utilisation Plan

TOOL 2: Key Findings Document

TOOL 3: Recommendations Response Table

TOOL 4: Evaluation Report Checklist

What is Evaluation Utilisation?

A key step in the <u>evaluation</u> process is to determine how to make full use of both the evaluation report and the <u>recommendations</u> made in the report. This step is what we call "evaluation utilisation."

What is the use of Evaluation utilisation?

Evaluation utilisation enables us**:**

- To identify potential uses of the information gathered during the evaluation
- To decide how to best communicate the results of the evaluation and with whom
- To decide how to best implement the recommendations/<u>lessons learned</u> in the current or future work of the programme
- To expand Search's knowledge about <u>best practices</u> and to share it with other Search programmes

Why do we conduct Evaluation Utilisation?

Evaluations are often thought of only as end-of-project reports, destined for the donor's desk and the organisation's archives. We need to change the way we think about evaluations – they are tools with practical and clear relevance for supporting and improving the quality of our work, clarifying our priorities, and gaining funding.

> **Tip: Timing for planning evaluation utilisation.**
> If those decisions were not made for the TOR, they can still be made once the evaluation is in progress or has been completed.
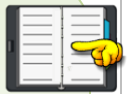
When should Evaluation Utilisation be used?

Deciding how the evaluation will be used should be part of the discussion when first planning the evaluation, during the development of the <u>Terms of Reference (TOR)</u>. These decisions include:
- who should receive the report
- how the report should be used internally
- how information can be extracted from the report to share with others (donors, potential donors, partners, others)

- The process that is created can then be followed during and after the completion of the evaluation and into the development of new projects. The evaluation utilisation plan template (see below) offers a guide for creating this process.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following varies by project, context, and personnel:

Programme manager and staff, along with relevant **stakeholders**, should be involved in designing the initial plan for how the evaluation report will be shared both internally and externally. This same group could also be the ones who meet to discuss how to respond to the recommendations that will come from the evaluation.

The **DME specialist** can be involved in the above discussions, as facilitator or participant, and should also be kept informed of the decisions made so the connection to the overall work of SFCG can be made.

How do we use Evaluation Utilisation?

1) Prior to completion of the evaluation, the project staff and stakeholders create a **plan** for how the evaluation will be used. This plan includes:
   a) to whom the report will be sent
   b) what additional documents will be created (e.g. one-page summary, press release, talking points, presentation, **Key Findings,** etc.)
   c) how/where the results will be shared
   d) who will be responsible for each part of the plan

2) Once the evaluation is completed, the project staff and stakeholders have a discussion regarding how the project will **respond to the recommendations** from the evaluation.

3) As discussions about new projects begin, include a quick overview of evaluations (executive summaries and Key Findings could be useful here) from past projects to capture what has been learned that might be relevant to the new project.

TOOL 1: Evaluation Utilisation Plan Template

Your plan should focus on **who** needs to receive **what** kind of information about the evaluation results and **who** will be responsible for creating the document/action. This template divides your audience into three groups – internal, related, and external – and offers some initial ideas of what might be appropriate for each group. Keep in mind that you may have different or additional individuals/groups depending upon your context and you may have ideas for other documents or actions that could be useful in sharing the information from the evaluation.

Evaluation Utilization Plan Table

Internal Audience				
Group Requiring Information	**Action/ Documents needed**	**Who is Responsible?**	**Due Date**	**Comments**
Local Project/Program Staff				
				A single or multiple presentations could be conducted for the local staff, Key stakeholders and partner organizations.

Key Stakeholders				

Partner Organizations				

Related Audience				

External Audience

TOOL 2: Key Findings Document Tool Guide

What is it?

The Key Findings document is a summary of the essential <u>lessons learned</u> and <u>recommendations</u> from the evaluation. It is similar to but goes more in depth than an <u>executive summary.</u>

What is it for?

The document can be used to share the evaluation findings more widely both within and outside of Search.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following might vary by project, context, and personnel:

Programme/project staff member should be assigned to create the Key Findings document once the final evaluation report has been completed. DME staff in the Washington office may also be available to produce this document.

How to use it?

[Evaluation Utilisation Plan](#)

Additional resources

See the Angola (2004) example. Link:
http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/summary_angola.pdf

TOOL 3: Recommendations Response Table

What is it?

The Recommendations Responses Table (see **template below**) is a tool used to reflect upon whether and how to respond, in practical terms, to the conclusions and recommendations that came from the evaluation.

What is it for?

The table is a place to list out the conclusions and recommendations that came out of the evaluation and then encourage consideration about what action to take regarding each recommendation/conclusion. It is useful place to structure and document your responses to the recommendations. In addition, auditors often look at whether the programme responded to the recommendations and this can be a useful document to show them.

Who should be involved?

Keep in mind that the following might vary by project, context, and personnel:

Project staff and (potentially) key stakeholders should meet to discuss each recommendation and if/how the programme will respond to it. If needed, the DME Specialist can help facilitate this discussion.

How to use it?

The table structures a discussion among the project team or between the project team and DME Specialist and then serves as a follow-up tool to monitor progress.

Tools

Recommendations Table template

Additional resources

See the Angola (2004) example. Link: Additional resources
http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/summary_angola.pdf

Recommendations Response Table Template

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?	Who is responsible for this?
The conclusions from the evaluation report should be listed in this column, one conclusion per row.	Any recommendations made by the evaluator(s) pertaining to the conclusion should be listed here, one recommendation per row. Not all conclusions will have recommendations.	These next four columns are the questions to be considered for each recommendation.			

Additional questions to consider during the discussion:
- What are the key learning points from this for the future?
- What were the critical factors for success?
- What are the pitfalls to look at for the next time?
- How could we refine our strategies for future projects?
- How comprehensively did the evaluation identify our results?
- What do the evaluation results say about our theory(ies) of change?

Back to Recommendations Response

Morocco ADR example

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
The order and timing of activities for ADR1 was effective. They were well conceived and logically progressed. Overall, the organisation of the activities worked very well.				
SFCG-M's facilitation of events was strong although the need for expert facilitation was evident.	**SFCG-M's should continue to ensure that facilitators have the right level of expertise for events.**	It shows that our credibility depends mainly on our level of expertise. It may also suggest that this is one of the weaknesses of SFCG-M.	* More focus on staff development: Sabrina is spending two full months in Rabat with the objective of strengthening the staff training capacity. Eva Dalak is also spending two weeks in Rabat in February. * There was no Lawyer at SFCG-M. In January 2006 we have recruited a young Lawyer, programme assistant.	* Staff development programme: January, February, March 2006.
The visibility of SFCG-M could be improved.	**The visibility of SFCG-M should be improved. At each**	Very useful. It reflects the ADR1 project. The participants (judges)	* At each activity, there will be a speech on the objectives of the ADR programme, its history,	

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Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
	event SFCG needs to communicate who they are and what their role is. Consideration should be given to producing SFCG documentation on mediation and the role of SFCG.	were invited by the Ministry of Justice without being informed of the context of the workshop (SFCG's role, British funding).	SFCG's role, the British support. * A newsletter will be issued in March 2006, and then every three months. It will cover the main ADR activities, as well as other SFCG-M activities.	
There has been little monitoring of progress, meaning there is no early warning system or systematised information for programme management or accountability to funder. There is also demand for better communication from the funder on programme results.	**SFCG-M should systemically collect and analyse feedback from participants at the end of individual activities; monitoring at the outcome level should also be considered. This data would need to be collected periodically (every 3 to 6 months) and the information should be aggregated, analysed and disseminated to SFCG and the donor.**	Very useful. Indeed there has been little monitoring of progress during ADR1. Therefore it was hard to be accountable to our funder's requests.	* A baseline will be developed for ADR2. It has started in November and will be completed by early March. * A post-activity evaluation will be organised systematically. A standard evaluation form (that needs to be developed) will be used throughout the life of the project. * Report periodically to the funder the results (and progresses) of the analysis post-activity.	

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
The fast changing context of judicial reform in Morocco may necessitate revisions to the log frame again in the future.	"Keep focusing on the legal context, and on the evolution of the project's needs".	Very useful. Because it is hard to plan in advance all the future needs of the project. Especially that the reform phase may last longer than previously expected. For example, if the Project of Mediation Law, which is today before the Parliament, is not passed in 2006, we would need to review our log frame and suggest new activities. Example: a special workshop to the benefit of the MPs.	Monitoring more regularly. Coordinating with all stakeholders.	
The Working group remained engaged through the whole process and found the process to be relevant and effective. There is a clear need for a stronger focus on the practical side of mediation in the future.	SFCG-M should ensure that participants have a good understanding of the practical mechanisms of ADR and considers the use of media to provide this demonstration.	Very useful.	The ADR3 proposal was developed. It includes the production of a pedagogical video to the use of the future trainers of mediators.	

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Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
ADR achieved a strong position of trust and collaboration with the Ministry of Justice.	**Keep it as it is!**			
The tensions surrounding the Outreach Conference as a transitional activity bringing together diverse stakeholders were to some degree inevitable, although SFCG-M should make more efforts to communicate the purpose of the Conference to stakeholders.	**Given the complexity and changing nature of the situation due to reforms underway in Morocco, SFCG-M needs to pay careful attention to ensuring that when stakeholders are brought together, the results are positive. For example, stakeholders should be made aware well before an event of what the event is and who the participants are.**	Extremely useful. We are going to face the same challenges during ADR2.	We may create a committee, composed of representatives of different stakeholders (Ministry of Justice, Lawyers, civil society groups), to coordinate the efforts and prepare the activities. The choice of the members will be crucial. The question is: Will the committee be representative? What credibility will it have?	Ideally it has to be created before the first activity in March 2006.
The varying levels of involvement of different stakeholders in the programme, as well as in the Mediation Law	**Since there has been a certain level of resistance from the lawyers, more work should be done with**	That's an interesting recommendation. Was it suggested by the ministry of justice?	* We will identify the "pro-mediation" Lawyers. Include some of them in the committee. And collaboratively design a strategy for approaching other	

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
Project, facilitated positive attitudes towards institutionalised mediation in some stakeholders and resistance in others.	**the ones who have a favourable opinion about mediation and its law. If approached appropriately, they can voice the benefits of the implementation of mediation and help initiate dialogue with the lawyers who are resisting the institutionalisation of mediation.**	We could identify the pro-mediation Lawyers and work with them. But what about the others? Shouldn't we also try to change their perception and attitudes towards mediation? It looks easier to focus on the pro-mediation Lawyers than the others.	Lawyers. * We will do the same thing with Civil society groups.	
The programme needs to go beyond working with small groups of stakeholders and achieve a stronger awareness of mediation within the general public. This will help to remove any resistance emerging from lack of awareness.	**SFCG-M could consider the use of mass media to raise awareness. Television could be a good (though expensive) option- producing a Moroccan example of mediation in action for example. This could be used during training activities and could also be aired generally.**	Very useful. However we need first to know and decide what is the target public/audience. Will it be Moroccan citizens in general? Or only families? Or consumers? Or tenants/landlords? Poor people living in rural areas? People living in big cities? Of course TV and radio	So far we haven't decided to use mass media. This is not a priority yet. It will become relevant in the future, but there are other priorities at the moment (training mediators, sensitising key involved stakeholders). We may use TV to promote mediation through public debates for example. We may also approach a	

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Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
		would reach all the mentioned groups.	producer of television series and suggest they choose mediation as a topic for a specific series.	
Strong results were achieved in terms of changes in the awareness and attitudes in the Working Group and judges stakeholder groups. These changes are largely related to the design of the programme that considered the rollout of events carefully.				
The changes in awareness and attitudes in other stakeholder groups were negligible, although that was not a key objective of ADR1. However, the final activity, the Conference, stimulated the engagement of different participants, who are enthusiastic to learn more about mediation and to				

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
collaborate.				
SFCG-M needs to maintain the goodwill from judges and the ministry of Justice whilst incorporating other stakeholders into the programme. The CSOs, in particular, present a potentially delicate situation.	**SFCG-M needs to ensure that judges remain within the process and do not feel 'excluded' from AFR by CSO/lawyers. To achieve this balance, SFCG should communicate more directly with stakeholders about its role in the process and its consensus approach.**	This is true. Judges will be "excluded" during ADR2.

The challenge is not to make the ministry of justice feel excluded during ADR2. | The ADR3 proposal should start as soon as possible.

All the activities will be held (hopefully) at the Institute of Magistratures in Rabat, managed by the Ministry of Justice. The latter will then feel an ownership of the project. Ministry of Justice's representatives will also attend and participate actively to the events. | |
| | **The extent of the implications of the Mediation Law for CSOs needs to be clarified with them as soon as the information is available to SFCG.** | Sure. | The first activity in March will target Civil society groups only. That will be a roundtable with CSOs, Ministry of Justice, and SFCG. | Hopefully in March. |

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
	A similar amount of cooperation and communication should be maintained between SFCG-M and the MoJ and closely monitored during the future ADR phases. However, how this related to ADR2 and the increased focus on CSO and lawyer stakeholders needs to be very carefully considered.	Sure.	The joint committee could then be the solution.	

Conclusion	Recommendation	How useful is this recommendation? Why?	How do you plan to respond to it? (What specific changes will you make?)	What is the timeframe for this?
Lawyers have demonstrated a certain level of resistance to the institutionalisation of mediation.	**The future ADR phases will have to carefully deal with the apprehension of lawyers, ADR2 needs to create an environment for discussion and dialogue between the legislators and the lawyers**	Sure.	It will. In April, we will have a roundtable targeting Lawyers only. Before the summer we hope to organise a special workshop for the legislator, the Members of Parliament. Later on the year we will have joint activities with the different stakeholders.	
	Steps should be taken to include lawyers in the mediation process or/and to grant them the opportunity to act as Mediators as well.	Very useful.	We got a copy of the project of Law. It allows any person to act as a mediator, if there is an agreement between both parties.	

Back to Recommendations Response

What is it?

The Evaluation Report Checklist is a tool that can be used either during or after an evaluation to ensure the quality of the Evaluation report. The checklist is used to determine whether the evaluation has met the standards required by Search For Common Ground.

What is it for?

The Checklist can be used when an evaluation report is in a DRAFT format to:
- Identify areas of necessary improvement by asking key questions – for example ' Are the conclusions clearly supported by the evidence presented?"

The Checklist can be used when an evaluation report is in a FINAL format to:
- Ensure quality control for SFCG evaluations
- Provide constructive feedback on the evaluation to the evaluator
- Identify the lessons learned about the evaluation process especially for new TORS. For example, Did the evaluator use all the monitoring records available? If not, why not?

Who Should be Involved?

Keep in mind that the following might vary by project, context, and personnel:

Depending on the project/programme, the **Program Manager** should work on the Checklist with the support of the **DME Specialist**/ or the **DME Coordinator** in country.

How to use it?

The Checklist identifies a number of issues to be looked for within the reports so that the evaluations can best fit SFCG's needs.

The DME Specialist and Program manager will use the list of questions in the Checklist to assess the quality of the evaluation report.

Evaluation Report Checklist:

Question	Comment
Is the language of the report in line with Search language (this document and the DME Glossary)	
Have all parts of the Terms of Reference been followed?	
Does the main report plus annexes comply with the reporting guidelines in terms of: • Structure and content • Length • Clarity • Format	
Does the report contain a comprehensive and clear executive summary?	
Have all the major documents been reviewed, and the contents adequately reflected in the report?	
Is the methodology clearly described and adequate?	
Was the method of selecting respondents for the evaluation credible?	
Have all the major stakeholders been consulted, and their views adequately reflected in the report?	
Has the extent of participation been adequate?	
Are the conclusions clearly supported by the evidence presented?	
Are the Recommendations relevant, feasible, useful and linked to conclusions?	
Does the report contain a clear assessment (incl. scores if appropriate) of the evaluation criteria?	
Have the following cross-cutting issues been adequately addressed in the evaluation process and the report: • Gender • Children and Youth	
Is the overall quality of the evaluation process and the report acceptable? Is it: • useful • accurate • independent • credible	
Did the Evaluation follow an adequate ethical process	
Have comments received on the draft report been adequately taken into account?	

Reflections Process Module

This module will help the user understand what the reflections process is, how it can best be used, and provide practice activities on how to complete a reflections process.

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THIS MODULE INCLUDES:

Contents (Direct links clickable belo[Abstract]w)	**Interactive Pages** (i.e. Worksheets) will help you…
➢ **What is a Reflections Process?** ➢ **What is the use of a Reflections Process?** ➢ **Why and when should a Reflections Process be used?** ➢ **Who should be involved in conducting a Reflections Process?** ➢ **How do we use a Reflections Process?** ➢ **Tools, Examples, and Templates**	➢ **Practice conducting a Reflections Process** ➢ **Use a practical sample indicator as an example for the worksheets** If you are interested in gaining a certificate of completion for your study and knowledge of how to conduct a Reflections Process, please complete the Interactive Pages, and turn in completed pages to the DM&E expert at the Washington DC office.

TOOLS IN THIS MODULE

(You can click on the underlined tool to go directly to the location
of the tool in this module.)

TOOL 1: Small Group Reflection Tool

TOOL 2: Large Group Reflection Tool

TOOL 3: SFCG Ukraine Reflections Document

What is a Reflections Process?

The Reflections Process is a tool used to think about and reflect on the project or programme experience. It is a structured conversation among staff or between project staff and DME staff that asks a series of specific questions relating to

- the design of the project;
- the key results obtained;
- critical factors in the planning and implementation;
- lessons learned from the experience.

What is the use of a Reflections Process?

The Reflections Process is not intended to duplicate or replace monitoring or evaluation. It is specifically designed to give the project/programme director and staff the opportunity to:

- Recapitulate the experience and share knowledge
- Provide key information about the project which was not considered during M&E, such as the beginning stages or management issues
- Identify new lessons learned about doing this kind of a project
- Develop recommendations (to encourage clarity and utilization of the information or lessons learned)

Why and when should a Reflections Process be used?

The Reflection Process involves looking back at the experience with some distance and thinking about it in practical, logical terms. It is intended to generate lessons learned which are applicable both to the specific project or programme and to Search generally, and to develop recommendations based upon the lessons learned.

The Reflections process can be used at the initiative of programme or DME staff at either the mid-term or end of the project cycle.

Who should be involved in conducting a Reflections Process?

- As a minimum the project director/team and the DME Coordinator should be involved.
- Depending on how broad the exercise is, other staff could be involved, including the DME specialist, Brussels or Washington support staff, other programme/project staff

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How do we use a Reflections Process?

1. **The format of the discussion depends on who is involved:**

A) Small Group: In the majority of cases and if the discussion is between the DME Specialist and small project team the questions are asked to the whole group (by the DME Specialist) and are used to structure reflection. This process can happen either face-to-face or on the telephone. This discussion can be structured using the main tool:

SFCG Small Group Reflection Tool

B) If there is going to be a wider group of people involved a roundtable with the project team brainstorming and answering the questions among themselves is a better option. This is best done as a group meeting. If the DME Specialist cannot attend, the DME Coordinator should facilitate and document the discussion.

- To do this broader discussion effectively, it may be better to select a sub set of questions and focus on these.
- Additionally, to ensure a rich debate, it can be a good idea to make the responses to questions anonymous if you are reaching out to the broader staff involved in a project.

For example:

In a situation where the whole programme team are to be involved in a reflections process, the smaller group of people (Following process A above) use the SFCG Small Group Reflection Tool to identify key issues, these issues are then brainstormed as a group.

In our example, the question,

- What do you think were/will be the long-lasting effects? (Was the conflict transformed?)

- Can be turned into a closed question - How likely is it that there will be long-lasting effects? Score 1 – no possibility, 2 – slight possibility, 3 – some possibility, 4 – fair possibility, 5 – definite
- Participants in the discussion are asked to write on a piece of paper 1-5, they are then stuck on a flipchart so people can all see what the mean score is.
- This then facilitates a discussion of why there will be long-lasting effects or not
- This could work for any other questions from the reflections process.
- The discussion can be structured and captured using the Large Group Reflection Tool

2. Documentation and Lessons Learned/Recommendations Identification:

During the group session, participants can identify possible recommendations and/or lessons learned. Either the DME Specialist or a designated person will make a record of the discussion. Following the session the DME Specialist will draw out specific lessons learned and recommendations and share that with project staff.

3. Response

The project staff can respond to recommendations/lessons learned and re-design the project where possible/appropriate or consider how to apply them to future projects.

4. Sharing

DME staff analyse the document to identify and generalise lessons learned and apply them to similar projects being used elsewhere in Search or extract them to the Common Ground Approach documents for use across the organization.

They can also be disseminated to other stakeholders, including partners, participants, donors, etc.

TOOL 1: SFCG Small Group Reflection Tool

Purpose

To document, and share with others, programmatic reflection at the end of individual projects. To enable lessons learned and other tips and information on project conceptualisation, implementation and results, to be transmitted to other SFCG staff. This should be of use to the country office implementing this project as well as to staff planning or currently implementing a similar project. This template is a draft and will over time become increasingly integrated with the Common Ground Approach documents: both to reflect on completed projects and to inform our Approach documents.

This exercise is different from an evaluation or a funder report as it is supposed to be an informal, candid and critical reflection on the project. The information is for internal SFCG use only.

Who should be involved?

This process can be initiated by either DME, other ILT member or programme staff. Ideally, the person who developed the proposal will be involved in the discussion, as well as other involved people, including from the programme and ILT.

Process

The questions in this document are to lead an interview between DME staff and programme staff. DME staff should attempt to provide answers to the descriptive section prior to the interview (to ensure they have a good understanding of the project). The tone of the interview should be honest and reflective. The questions are lead questions but they do not all require answers, Information from the process will be used to contribute to 'top tips' or 'lessons learned' documents and communicated within Search and externally. However, this information will be made generic and this document is not to be shared beyond the DME and Country Office team.

Country:

Project Name:

A – Descriptive:

What was the timeframe? (*Project start/milestones/completion***)**
- ○

What was the geographic scope of the project?
- ○

Who were the main direct participants / partners?
- ○

Who were the indirect stakeholders? *(I.e. people who were not directly involved in the project but were reached indirectly)?*
- ○

What was the context analysis and how did your project fit with the context? *(Please describe briefly the region/community/country situation)*
- ○

B - Overview of project design:

What needs or opportunities were the project designed to address?
- ○

Was it based on an assessment?
- ○

Was it following or based on an earlier project?
- ○

What/who sparked the idea for the project? Why did SFCG decide to undertake this project?
- ○

What was the goal of the project? What were the logical links between activities, outcomes and this goal? (Attach a logframe or other full description of the project logic if available)
- ○

What were the assumptions about project results at the beginning? Did the assumptions hold true? What would you have changed?

○

What indicators did you identify (please list), did you measure these? When? How?
○

How did you identify partners/stakeholders for the project?
○

How was the implementation of this project made unique by SFCG? How were SFCG ideas incorporated? *(What was the Common Ground Approach?)*
○

How innovative or familiar was the project?
○

C - Key Results:

Please describe in relation to the project objectives: what did the project do? Did it meet its objectives?
○

What do you think were/will be the long-lasting effects? (Was the conflict transformed?)
○

How were these results measured/ identified? I.e. was there an evaluation? What monitoring was done during the project?
○
What expected results (please refer to the original proposal) were not achieved? Why?
○

What else happened after the project?
○

D - Lessons learned and Critical Factors:
What were the first necessary steps?
○

What were the most critical steps? Why?
○

List the critical factors that influenced the project (these could include decisions, personalities, expertise, relationships, communication, donor support etc), explain why they are critical

o

List any challenges faced and how they were overcome, or why not overcome?

o

How much control did you have over the project outcomes? What were other factors?

o

What have you learned about conflict transformation that could be applied to other contexts?

o

What would you do differently next time and why?

o

Please describe any other <u>lessons learned</u> you have identified

o

Which lessons do you think could be useful elsewhere in Search?

TOOL 2: Large Group Reflection Tool

Purpose

To document, and share with others, programmatic reflection at the end of individual projects. To enable lessons learned and other tips and information on project conceptualisation, implementation and results, to be transmitted to other SFCG staff. This should be of use to the country office implementing this project as well as to staff and country offices planning or currently implementing a similar project. This template is a draft and will over time become increasingly integrated with the Common Ground Approach documents: both to reflect on completed projects and to inform our Approach documents.

This exercise is different from an evaluation or a funder report as it is supposed to be an informal, candid and critical reflection on the project. The information is for internal SFCG use only.

Who should be involved?

This process can be initiated by either DME, other ILT members or programme staff. This tool is designed for larger groups to brainstorm.

Process

This is best done as a group meeting. If the DME Specialist cannot attend, the DME Coordinator should facilitate and document the discussion.
- To do this broader discussion effectively, it may be better to select a sub set of questions and focus on these.
- Additionally, to ensure a rich debate, it can be a good idea to make the responses to questions anonymous.

For example:
In a situation where the whole programme team are to be involved in a reflections process, the smaller group of people (Following process A above) use the Reflections Template to identify key issues, these issues are then shared with and discussed by the whole group. The group can prioritize for discussion.

STEP 1:
The facilitator develops a table like the one below on a flip chart. The questions have been identified previously as the most important questions.

Example Questions	Example Scores					AVERAGE SCORE
How well were partnerships put together?	1 – Poorly	2 – Somewhat poorly	3 – Neutral	4 – Fairly well	5 – Very well	
How likely is it that there	1 – No possibility	2 – Slight possibility	3 – Moderate	4 –Fair possibility	5 – Definite	

Example Questions	Example Scores					AVERAGE SCORE
How well were partnerships put together?	1 – Badly	2 – Not well IIIIIIII	3 – Neutral IIIII	4 – Fairly well	5 –Very well	**2**
		WHY?				
How likely is it that there will be long-lasting effect?	1 – No possibility I	2 – Slight possibility II	3 – Some possibility IIIIIIIIII	4 – Fair possibility	5 – Definite	**3**

(continued from previous page)

will be long-lasting effect?			possibility			

STEP 2:
Participants write down their scores on post-it notes or paper.
The facilitator collects them all and writes up on the table. See below for an example with 13 people:

STEP 3:
After summarising the scores, the facilitator starts a discussion about why the most common score is 2. Why do some people think the partnerships were not an issue etc. The aim is to stimulate a lively debate, whilst letting people remain anonymous and protecting them.

The steps are repeated for each question.

Documentation:
The scores and discussion are documented. Either by the DME Specialist / DME Coordinator or someone else.

Purpose

To document, and share with others, programmatic reflection at the end of individual projects. To enable lessons learned and other tips and information on project conceptualization, implementation and results, to be transmitted to other SFCG staff. This should be of use to the country office implementing this project as well as to staff planning or currently implementing a similar project. This template is a draft to reflect on completed projects and to share with other country offices to inform our work.

This exercise is different from an evaluation or a funder report as it is supposed to be an informal, candid and critical reflection on the project. The information is for internal SFCG use only.

Instructions

Please try to answer all questions, using bullet points, If you did produce a logframe and attach it to the document, you do not need to repeat the information in this form.

Country: **Ukraine**

Project Name: **Radio Soap Opera "Nasha Ulitsa" ("Our Street")**

A – Descriptive:

What was the timeframe? (*Project start/milestones/completion*)
- o   Between Jan 2002 to March 2003 the project team developed, produced, and aired 13 episodes. Actual production (not including training of production team) took 5 months versus 1.5 months of broadcasting

What was the geographic scope of the project?
- o   Crimean region

Who were the main direct participants / partners?
- o   Project partners included a multiethnic theatre group

Who were the indirect stakeholders? *(I.e. people who were not directly involved in the project but were reached indirectly)?*
- o   Indirect stakeholders were the listeners of Nasha Ulitsa, the main group being were teenagers (aged 14 to 24)

What was the <u>context analysis and how did your project fit with the analysis</u>? *(Please describe briefly the region/community/country situation)*

- o Economic, social and political instability are unfortunately still commonplace in the former Soviet Union. During the Soviet era, Crimean Tatars and many other smaller ethnic groups were deported en masse to Central Asia. The return of these formerly deported minority peoples adds considerably to the typical post-Soviet strains on an already fragile social and economic infrastructure. Although many people in Crimea will claim to live peaceably with their neighbours, their protests are reminiscent of those made in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990's.
- o The main assessment was done with regard to identifying, whether radio is an appropriate means of Media and there are indeed youth in Crimea who listens it. For that an InterMedia report on Ukraine and some local research was used. Next radio stations were visited and interviewed to try to identify the best partner with good coverage and interested enough in partnership to broadcast for free. (That was done already within the project timeframe once money were already in). There was almost nothing done specifically on research of interethnic relations or target group preferences, but experts were involved in the production team.

B - Overview of project design:

What <u>needs or opportunities</u> was the project designed to address?
The goal was to facilitate cooperation, communication and mutual understanding between Ukrainian and Crimean youth – there was a need for cultural dialogue and ethnic solidarity.

Was it based on an <u>assessment?</u>
- o Yes, the assessment was based on information provided by an organisation who studies media in different countries - InterMedia – who were credible enough, to be used again.

Was it following or based on an <u>earlier project</u>?
- o The project was linked to the pre-existing Crimea Dialogue project.

What/who sparked the <u>idea for the project</u>? Why did SFCG decide to undertake this project?
- o The idea generally came from opportunities which were identified between SFCG and a potential donor. There seemed to be a lot of interest from the donor and continuity with earlier work, although the radio tool was new.

What was the <u>goal of the project</u>? What were the logical links between activities, outcomes and this goal? (Attach a logframe or other full description of the project logic if available)

- o The goal of the series was to educate Ukrainian and Crimean young adults about the region's shared cultural wealth and to model new ways of working together across social and ethnic lines No logframe was developed for the project.
- o The implicit logic was similar to any intended outcome media production that SFCG has done. As used in Nashe Maalo, the intended outcome process starts from the development of a context document with clearly defined goals and objectives and followed by a production period, during which each particular script and episode should be reviewed according to reaching the goal and meeting the objectives defined for each episode. Reviewing scripts worked well, however the final product was delivered all at once and we were able to change just a few most extreme pitfalls, instead of following the production process one by one, mainly because of a long distance between Kiev (where the creative team sat and Crimea, where production took place).

What were the <u>assumptions</u> about project results at the beginning? Did the assumptions hold true? What would you have changed?

- o There were many assumptions because the project was new, a key one being the assumption that producing entertaining educational programmes would have results. The basic assumption was that radio is a useful tool to achieve behavioural change. Another assumption was that if peoples' attitudes and behaviour were changed due to the radio that this change would affect different groups and be multiplied. We never had a chance to test those assumptions, (although the BBC for example says that it takes 2-3 years to achieve behavioural change). The project design could have been a bit more modest and not aim to influence the whole of society with just a 13-episode pilot radio drama, but to treat it as it is exactly what it was: a pilot test of how we can produce radio drama in Crimea and capacity building of local team.

What <u>indicators</u> did you identify (please list), did you measure these? When? How?

- o A production plan was developed at the beginning and our progress towards this plan was seen as a sort of implementation progress indicator. There were no other monitoring indicators, for either implementation or results.
- o The end of project evaluation was not designed at the beginning. Although the evaluation sited many signs of change (people who had changed their attitudes towards others and learnt about possible/necessary skills in conflict resolution, for example), indicators were not developed at the beginning and the evaluation did not systematically use indicators.

How was the implementation of this project made unique by SFCG? How were SFCG ideas incorporated? *(What was the <u>Common Ground Approach?</u>)*

- o At this time, there was no defined Common Group Approach; the project was in keeping with an implicit understanding of the CG Approach however. Cooperative approach to conflict was key at this time; therefore it was similar

but not elaborated. At this time, no other organizations were doing entertaining/education (edutainment) in relation to conflict in Ukraine. Individuals from different ethnic groups were involved from the beginning in writing and producing the episodes. The curriculum/subject matter of each episode focused on conflict transformation goals.

C - Key Results:

Please describe in relation to the project objectives: what did the project do? Did it meet its objectives?
   - A 'Concepts Document' which elaborated on the types of change sought through media drama was developed. Based on this, and through focus groups, the evaluators demonstrated successful examples of change resulting from the broadcast of the soap opera. One of the tools the evaluators used was a 'social scale' – people were surveyed before and after listening to the radio drama. This revealed powerful changes in participant's attitude toward the "other" (representatives of other ethnic groups), the social distance that they were ready to establish came closer after listening. The evaluation stated that the project achieved its objectives by focusing listener attention on inter-ethnic issues and problems and in delivering the cluster of interrelated messages that it intended to deliver. Additionally, some participants had developed good understanding of skills/ necessary in conflict resolution as a result of the soap opera. Longer lasting or wider effects or changes resulting from the project were not assessed.

What do you think were/ will be the long-lasting effects? Cannot say, but it is most likely that there were no long-lasting effects, since there was no continuation of the project after all (money allocated to that by the British went to Iraq).

How were these results measured/ identified? I.e. was there an evaluation? What monitoring was done during the project?
   - No monitoring was done, but there was an independent evaluation at the end of the project that used focus groups and the 'Baggardus social scale' to elaborate the changes in knowledge and perception of the listeners to the soap opera.

What expected results (please refer to the original proposal) were not achieved? Why? The appropriate working system of production and management was not developed, since nobody had taught it to the team in advance and there was no experienced producer involved. The need was not identified during the design stage and the project didn't have a budget for production and management training as well as the involvement of a professional and good instructor / outside expert.

What happened <u>after the project</u>?
   - Additional funding has not been raised (the external situation changed - war in Iraq may be the reason), even though it had a 'positive' evaluation. So the project is not continuing.

What were the first necessary steps?
- o The training stage was crucial because the use of radio was new to SFCG Ukraine. An assessment on how to implement the project was missing although this would have been critical. It was very important to have some form of media production training process, provided by someone more experienced (i.e. ideally by a media expert from SFCG – who could have told us about the production process).

What were the most critical steps? Why?
- o Learning from within SFCG helped to guide this new project. Lessons learned from Nashe Maalo (the Macedonian Television, Theatre and Outreach programme) and SFCG staff from that project supported the set up of the new radio project. An external training expert helped to integrate conflict resolution into entertaining media programmes.

How were the partnerships put together?
- o Partnership was based on existing relations with a theatre group which may not have been the best approach for radio production. There was no partnership with the radio station at all, and although it was sought, there was little convergence of interest (they had little engagement with conflict issues). Finding a broadcaster was not so easy because they expected payment for broadcasting the programme. Eventually two radio stations with good coverage were identified.

How were other stakeholders identified?
- o The audience was identified through a selection process during the broadcast process. The project used information about broadcasters' capacity, their coverage and the audience/listenership rates etc. The theatre group was already known to Search.

List the critical factors that influenced the project (these could include decisions, personalities, expertise, relationships, communication, donor support etc), explain why they are critical
- o Donor support – when the donor support was lost there were no other funds. This was a critical factor in the project not continuing.
- o The existence of the concept document and support provided by other SFCG staff was invaluable. When we discussed the issues with SFCG experts, it was clearer what needed to be done.

List any challenges faced and how they were overcome?
- o It was SFCG Ukraine's first experience with radio drama and took longer than expected to produce – particularly the recording and broadcasting components -

also the reporting component took longer than initially expected. The project was eventually extended by three months.

- o Difficulties were faced relating to starting a new project using a new tool (radio), and particularly in designing and producing media products. Programme support from SFCG headquarters was only forthcoming once the project was underway, by this time it was of little value because the project could not be redesigned.
- o The project had only budgeted a small amount for the actual broadcasting, but when broadcasters were sought, it was clear that they generally expected to be paid far higher amounts. A great deal of time was spent seeking partnerships with broadcasters and in the end 2 were identified (they either didn't expect payment, or only asked for small payment).

Please describe the most useful recommendations from evaluative process and cite the sources (evaluation activities, reports or monitoring activities, reports). Why were they useful? What changes did you make to the project/ future projects?

The project evaluation focused on the project objective of increasing knowledge though media, not on project development or any administrative/implementation processes. Among the recommendations made by the evaluators were:
- o Recruit young people to share their real-life experiences
- o Change the language used in the drama to more accurately reflect language currently used by youth
- o Emphasize ways to resolve conflicts constructively.

A different evaluation report completed at the end of the project offered recommendations regarding project development and administration. Among these recommendations were:
- • To study others experiences and then to work out UCCG's own original algorithm of non-stop Drama production.
- • To let employees not to get scattered on other projects (to establish suitable conditions of work, to present clear scheme of financial relationship).
- • To arrange constant meetings with project management to define the results and new directions of work.
- • To arrange regular feedback from young people and evaluation of the Drama curriculum effectiveness.

Please describe any other <u>lessons learned</u> you have identified
- o Using internal SFCG experts can be more effective than hiring someone externally. It is difficult to know in advance if an external expert will provide value for money, even if they come with a recommendation. Additionally, a solid reputation externally doesn't necessarily mean that their skills are applicable to a new context.
- o If you want to demonstrate results, a 1 year timeframe may not be enough, even for a pilot. The project was too ambitious in thinking it could change attitudes and behaviour in the original 1 year project time scale. At the end of the project it is unclear if the relationships between the different groups had changed. The

duration was not enough. Also, the pilot project was conceived as an opportunity for the programme to get experience so that more funding could be secured; but without the necessary duration or monitoring and evaluation, to know whether objectives had been achieved was impossible.

o The goal should be achievable.

o The project should not be based on pre-existing partnerships, but rather through identifying the necessary skills/requirements and then looking for the best partners. This should have occurred through a process of pre-assessment. Pre-assessment would also have guided the approach and the need for training. The identification of potential broadcasters, and the potentials for developing sustainable relationship with them should have been thought of during this phase, which would have also reduced the risks faced by ensuring that the media product would reach its audience.

o The focus for SFCG-Ukraine is on Restorative Justice and so there was a bit of a disconnect between this project and other Search projects within the country. It would have been better to have figured out a way to include more Restorative Justice themes within this project to make this link.