



**Sambodhi
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[READING MATERIAL]

**Training Programme on Monitoring & Evaluation
of Development Projects**

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Goals, Objectives and the Logical Framework

Goal & Objective

The most critical step in designing a project is definition of setting-up goals and objectives. And of course, these are two different concepts often used interchangeably. Specificity and clarity of the goal and objective is quintessential for any projects as the entire project design flows from and aligned towards the objective.

The **goal** of project is the general statement of the desired conditions. A goal thus have connotations of long-term and vision e.g. improvement in quality of life.

The **objective** of the project is the specific statement of the desired state or the target condition. SMART Criteria is often used for designing objective, this being

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Time-bound

The Logical Framework Analysis

The **Logical Framework Analysis** or **LFA** is a simple project design tool that helps organize and structure thinking in the project. As the name suggests, it's a logical approach for designing efficient and effective project. On one hand it facilitates optimal resource allocation while on the other hand it sets performance measures and standards that provide for a framework for monitoring and evaluation. This all helps in efficient project management.

The process steps in LFA are

1. Situation analysis
2. Problem Analysis
3. Objective Analysis
4. Alternative Analysis
5. Risk Analysis
6. Development of Project Planning Matrix

The LFA leads to development of **Project Planning Matrix (PPM)** or **logframe** that is a snapshot view of the entire project.

The LFA-PPM

The logframe or the PPM is a four-by-four matrix that details the logical connect between the various project components as well as gives the framework for assessing performance.

The basic philosophy of the LFA is the logical approach in achievement of the impacts. It states that, inputs given through the activities would lead to outputs, which would lead to outcomes, which would lead to impacts. This hierarchy forms

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the rows of the PPM matrix and the logical connect between various levels is termed as the vertical logic.

For each of the hierarchical level, performance measures are set, these being called as indicators. And for each of the measure, sources of information are also listed. Finally, the assumptions that must happen for the activities to translate into outputs, or outputs to purpose, or purpose to goal are also listed. This forms the horizontal logic of the PPM. The columns and rows of the PPM are given below.

HORIZONTAL LOGIC →				
VERTICAL LOGIC ↑	Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)	Means of Verification (MOV)	Assumptions/Risks
	Goal			
	Purpose			
	Outputs			
	Activities	Inputs		

THE PROJECT PALNNING MATRIX – ZOPP

Strategy	Indicators	Assumptions	Indicators of the assumptions
Overall Goal: Superior strategic goal for the project			
Development Goal: The changed situation designed by the target group	How to recognize whether the development goal has been achieved		
Project Purpose: Change in action of the users of the project's services	How to recognize that the project purpose has been achieved	Matters outside the influence of the target groups which must happen for them to achieve their developmental goal	How to recognize that the assumption has taken place
Results: Products and services generated by the project management	Major characteristics of the results	Matters outside the project which must happen if the project purpose is to be achieved	How to recognize that the assumption has taken place
Activities: To achieve the results	Quantities and costs		

Monitoring and Evaluation Basics

Understanding M&E

Monitoring essentially is the process of tracking of implementation of activities of the project and attainment of planned outputs. It is the process of systematically collecting data in order to provide information for all stakeholders (managers, funders, participants) on the progress of implementation and the achievement of desired outcomes.

Critical functions of monitoring are to gather feedback from participants; analyse contextual changes; and provide an early warning system of potential challenges. The analysis of monitoring data is critical to making informed mid-term programmatic changes. Monitoring is applicable to all programme levels (from output to outcome) - most commonly the focus is on output data, although tracking the goals and objectives is also important.

The monitoring results help:

- Improve strategies and targeting, allowing decision-makers to concentrate resources where they can have the most leverage and impact
- Provides a framework for understanding of barriers to the envisioned objectives
- Ensures a focus on impact level changes throughout the project, rather than just at the end of project evaluation.

Evaluation is the assessment of outcomes and impacts. It is to answer the question first that whether the envisaged objectives and goals have been achieved or not. And secondly, whether the achievement is because of the project interventions or not. So to say, evaluation is to see that there is no deviation from the goals and objectives, the change achieved can definitely be attributed to the project interventions. Evaluation established the cause-effect relationship between the activities and outputs with the objectives and goals.

While monitoring facilitates mid-course correction in attainment of project outcomes; evaluation helps analyze variances from envisioned objectives and goals. Providing feed-forward to the project functionaries, M&E thus facilitates learning by doing. Development and enhancement of in-house capacities to anchor the M&E functions thus is prerequisite for learning organizations.

Monitoring Vs Evaluation

To put in simple words, monitoring is to see "what we are doing" whereas evaluation is to assess "what we have done". Some of the distinctions between M&E are given in the matrix below.

Monitoring	Evaluation
▪ Systematically tracks down the key elements in the performance of a given program/project ▪ Focuses on activities and outputs ▪ Generally an internal activity ▪ Systematic activity ▪ Is more frequent basis of evaluation	▪ Sequential valorization of change in the results proposed that may be attributed to the program/project ▪ Focuses on outcomes and impacts ▪ Generally an external activity ▪ Episodic activity, not very frequent ▪ Requires more resources and time

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M&E levels

As is clear from the above matrix, monitoring is a routine day-to-day activity of assessment of project progress whereas evaluation is the episodic assessment of overall achievement. With respect to the logic, the M&E levels are given in the matrix below:

Impact	Evaluation
Outcomes	
Outputs	Monitoring
Process	
Inputs	

Or to say, with respect to the Logical Framework, the top two rows are the domain of evaluation whereas the bottom two rows are the domain of evaluation.

Goal	Evaluation
Objective	
Outputs	Monitoring
Activities & Inputs	

Thus, the major M&E levels are:

- Inputs
- Activities
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Impacts

Monitoring typologies

Monitoring generally is a task that is undertaken by the 'doers' or the project implementers themselves. Therefore, monitoring is inherently **internal monitoring**. Sometimes, projects may involve parties external to the project for facilitating the monitoring functions. This is classified as **external monitoring**.

Another way to look at monitoring is on the basis of who all are involved in the monitoring process. If the project implementers restrict the monitoring process all to themselves, it is **non-participatory monitoring**. The communities here just remain mere information providers and have no role in analyzing the information and providing inputs for project implementation. When functional participation of not only the communities but other stakeholders of the project is also solicited in the monitoring process, it is **participatory monitoring**.

Evaluation typologies

As monitoring is inherently an internal activity, evaluation is an external activity usually done by those external (individuals/agencies/institutions) to the project. Generally speaking, evaluation is **external evaluation**. However, the project implementers may undertake evaluation all by themselves. In such a case evaluation is **internal evaluation**.

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Evaluation *per se* is a less frequent activity generally undertaken at completion of a project for assessment of attainment of objectives. This is the post-project or **post-facto evaluation**. For a longer duration project, it may be required that the status of achievement is assessed half-way through the project. If so, a **mid-term evaluation** is undertaken. Another scenario would be when on a more regular basis it is thought necessary to assess the achievement of objectives. Then, it is also possible to assess outcomes and impacts on a yearly or six-monthly basis. This is the **time series** design of evaluation commonly known as **concurrent evaluation**.

To relate the achievement of objectives and goals directly to the project, it may also be necessary to compare the status in the project area with an identical non-project area. The non-project areas selected for such a comparison would form the **control group** and the project villages would be the **experiment group**. This kind of evaluation design is called as **control-experiment design**. It can then be concurrent, mid-term or post-facto and similarly internal or external.

Indicators

Central to M&E are the indicators therefore the first step for designing a monitoring system or evaluation is development of indicators. Indicators are units of information measure over time that documents changes in the specific conditions. With respect to the various M&E levels specific indicators need be developed. Thus, there would be different set of indicators for goals, different for objectives and outputs and activities. Also, for one particular level there can be more than one indicator.

Based on the nature of information that a particular indicator relates to, it can be **Quantitative** or **Qualitative**. Those dealing with information that can be expressed in numbers are quantitative indicators; and those dealing with information units expressed in any form other than numbers viz. statements are qualitative indicators. Thus, income measured in absolute numbers lets say measured as rupees is a quantitative indicator. But, if the same information is collected as income levels of High, Medium and Low, the indicators would be qualitative indicator.

SMART and SPICED Indicators

There are two schools of thoughts that when it comes to indicators. One advocates of the use of quantitative indicators and want the indicators to be SMART. While the other school of thought advocates of qualitative indicators and wants the indicators to be SPICED. The SMART and SPICED is given in the matrix below.

SMART	SPICED
▪ Specific ▪ Measurable ▪ Attainable ▪ Realistic ▪ Time-bound	▪ Subjective ▪ Participatory ▪ Interpreted & communicable ▪ Cross-checked & compared ▪ Empowering ▪ Diverse and disaggregated

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Designing indicators

Be it SMART or SPICED, an indicator has to document change and therefore any indicator finalized should essentially be able to capture change in the condition that being assessed using the indicator. A good indicator would therefore be:

- Simple: As all the good things in the world are
- Measurable: would provide a metre for depicting change
- Precise: Defined in the same way by all
- Consistent: would measure the same thing and would not change over time
- Sensitive: Would be able to capture the smallest amount of change in the target condition

For designing indicators, the first step is to brainstorm for identifying candidate indicators for a specific condition. Once we have listed a number of indicators for a given specific condition, the next step is of assessment of each of the indicator with respect to the characteristics of a good indicator. So we see that whether the candidate indicator is simple, measurable, precise, consistent and sensitive or not. Candidate indicators that satisfy the criteria can then be taken as the indicators for assessment of that particular condition. We can also modify the candidate indicators till they are in tune with the characteristics of a good indicator.

RIGHT INDICATORS

Using and designing indicators that capture development perspectives is challenging. It is particularly hard to measure things such as participation, non-discrimination, equality and accountability. Often it is not possible to find a direct measure of the expected result of programme or project activities on these perspectives

Assessing and monitoring whether programmes have respected and promoted participation, non-discrimination, accountability and equality throughout the programming process is also complicated. Measuring development perspectives requires the use of disaggregated data to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable groups have been reached. It also requires greater use of qualitative indicators; for example in monitoring non-discrimination and equality, it is important to hear the views of marginalized groups, such as the poor and women, on the programme or project. Equally, measuring the principle of accountability requires peoples' opinions of the accountability of the development practitioners and development agency themselves. Developing these qualitative indicators and collecting the required data may require extra time and resources in the evaluation and monitoring stage of the programme. So too will the highly participatory and transparent process of choosing indicators and collecting the required data that the principles of participation and accountability demands.

At the 'beneficiary' level, indicators will measure such things as how programmes have impacted people's participation; whether there is an increased awareness whether there is improved access to development programmes and information etc. At the 'implementer' level, indicators will measure such things as how project functionaries are more responsive and accountable; their knowledge and capacities.

This radically changes the way that indicators are used. Whereas traditional development programmes focused on improvements in material outcomes, there are other issues such as changes in attitudes, behaviours and relationships; good governance issues etc. Thus, a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators need to be employed to get the real picture. For example, in a livelihood project, quantitative indicator for income levels needs to be complemented with qualitative indicator for vulnerability context. In an HIV-AIDS project; quantitative indicator of surveillance needs to be supported by discrimination or stigma indicators that are qualitative.

Developing Monitoring Plan

The monitoring plan

Monitoring is not a one-time activity but an on-going process. It requires collection of information from varied places, at varied times in different forms, from different people and by different people. Therefore, it makes sense in organizing all the monitoring efforts. A written document detailing and integrating all these at one place would tremendously facilitate monitoring efforts in a project. This as well would facilitate optimization of human and financial resources allocated for the monitoring process.

Monitoring plan is an outline for the steps you will undertake to ensure that the project is on track. It lists a project's audience, their information needs, the strategies that will be used for data collection, the indicators, the methods that will be used to collect data, and when, by whom, and where data will be collected.

A monitoring plan brings in one place all the aspects of monitoring in a project. It details the monitoring indicators, their periodicity, method of information collection, from where the information is collected and by whom the information is collected.

Developing the monitoring plan

The process of developing a monitoring plan is essentially finalizing indicators for various M&E levels, assigning periodicity to the indicators, finalizing method of assessment, defining the source location and assigning responsibility for getting the information. These are thus the components of a monitoring plan. Upon finalization, a monitoring plan would something like that shown in the matrix below.

What (Indicator)	When (periodicity)	How (method)	Where (location)	Who (responsibility)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

What to assess?

The decisions of what to monitor are essentially the decisions of finalization of the indicators. We have already discussed the process of developed of good indicators. We will here use the indicators agreed upon for the various M&E levels.

When to assess?

The next question to answers for each of the information unit is, how frequently the assessment is going to be. This is the frequency or periodicity of the indicator. Periodicity of a particular indicator would be decided by the nature of the information unit and how frequently the specific attribute would change in the project.

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How to assess?

Once we have decided what to assess and how frequently the assessment has to take place, we move to finalizing the method of assessment. There can be a number of ways in which a measurement can be taken. Out of these several methods available, we have to select what is best suited for the project. Few of the things that need be kept in mind while arriving at the best possible method are:

Reliability & Accuracy: Reliability in measurement context relates with repeatedness. Will the method lead to same results when the process is repeated again and again? Whereas, accuracy refers to, how close the measurement results would be to the actual value.

Capabilities: The next critical question in selecting an appropriate method is to keep in mind the capabilities, both of the personnel as well as technological capabilities available with the project.

Cost-effective: And finally we have to see, what kind of cost-implications the selected method is going to have on the project. The idea is to optimize resources and therefore, a method that builds on the human resource and capabilities of the project as well is cost-effective has to be chosen for assessment of a specific information element.

Where to assess?

Here we specify from what particular location the information is to be collected. Based on the indicators there would be different sources like villages, training centres, project offices, other department offices etc. For each of the indicator we specify this.

Who will assess?

We now assign the responsibility to specific personnel for fetching this piece of information on a regular basis. Responsibility of the person in question would be for gathering the required information from the specific location at the decided periodicity. It also makes sense to assign responsibilities for supervising or overseeing data collection.

Designing monitoring reports

Once we have finalized the monitoring plan, the next step is to design various Monitoring reports. A well designed monitoring plan can very easily be translated into various reports that the monitoring plan would require.

The first step in designing reports is to club all indicators that are to be assessed at one place.

Next, segregate all indicators from this list, the one having same periodicity.

Transpose the rows to columns.....you have the monitoring reports ready.....

Implementing the monitoring plan

We now have the monitoring plan ready for implementation. For implementation of the monitoring plan, the first step is to orient the monitoring teams to the project framework in general and monitoring framework in particular. A training workshop or workshops of all those concerned with monitoring (those collecting information at all levels and those

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overseeing information collection) may first be organized. During the workshops, shared understanding of the M&E system and monitoring plan has to be developed among the monitoring teams. During these workshops, the understanding of the various periodic reports and method of information collection also has to be developed. A pilot round of the entire information collection process can greatly contribute towards having an efficient and effective monitoring system. This will ensure common understanding and therefore bring in uniformity in the monitoring process.

Once the monitoring system is 'rolled-out' trouble shooting and streamlining would be the next step. Field data collection may also require some hand-holding support. Further, there may be modifications alterations in information collection methods or even some of the reports need be modified. Once, the final system is in place and continuously providing information as desired, we can start analyzing the monitoring information.

DATA BASICS AND MEASUREMENT SCALES

A **variable** is defined as the attribute of a case, which varies for different cases. Its variability is usually captured in measurement scale, varying between two scale values to potentially an infinite number of scale values for binary scale or continuous metric scale.

Research as a process is nothing but an attempt to collect information about variable of interest and assessing change in that variable as a function of internal and external environment. The process of grouping observation about variable of interest in a systematic and coherent way provides us data, which could be qualitative or quantitative in nature, depending on the nature and type of observation. For sake of simplicity, as of now we can segregate qualitative data by words, picture or images and quantitative data by numbers on which we can have basic mathematical operations.

Returning to definition of variable, instead of defining variable as an attributes of a case, some researcher prefer to say that the variable takes on a number of values. For example, the variable gender can have two values, male and female. Variables can be further classified into three categories:

- **Dependent variable:** Dependent variable is also referred by some researcher as response variable /outcome variable. It is defined as variable, which might be modified, by some treatment or exposure, or a variable, which we are trying to predict through research.
- **Independent variable:** Independent variable also referred as explanatory variable is variable which explains any influences/ change in response variable.
- **Extraneous variables:** Extraneous variables are variables that are not part of study as per conceptualized design, but may affect the outcome of a study.

Types of Data

Data can be broadly described into a) Qualitative data and b) Quantitative data based on objects they measure.

Qualitative data, measures behavior which is not computable by arithmetic relations and is represented by pictures, words or images. Qualitative data are also called categorical data, as they can be classified in categories based on or class, individual, object, or process they fall in.

Quantitative data are numerical records that result from a process of measurement and on which basic mathematical operation could be done for example though we may represent gender variable values, male and female as 1 and 2, but as no mathematical operation could be done on these values (adding 1 and 2 doesn't make any sense), as data remains qualitative in nature.

Quantitative data can be further classified into **metric** and **non-metric data** based on the metric properties defining distances between scale values. Scales are of different types and vary in terms of the ways in which they define the relationships between scale values. The simplest of these scales are **binary scale** where there are just two categories, one of the cases that possess those characteristics and one for the cases that do not. **Nominal scale** and **ordinal scale** can have several categories depending on

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the variables of interest for example in case of gender we have only two categories such as male and female, but in case of occupational qualification, we can have several categories, depending on the way we decide to define categories.

1) Non-Metric Data

Data collected from binary scale, nominal scale and ordinal scale are jointly termed as non-metric data i.e. that is, and they do not possess a metric with which distance between scale values can be measured.

2) Metric Data

Though for some scale, there is a metric with which we can define distances between scale values. Hence quantitative data can be further classified into Metric and Non-metric based on presence of metric scales used to collect data.

Metric data can be further classified into two groups: a) discrete data and b) continuous data. Discrete data are countable data, for example, the number of students in a class. Continuous data, when the variables are measurable, are expressed on a continuous scale, for example, measuring the height of a person.

Measurement scales

There are four types of scales that are used in measurement: **nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales**. In fact they follow a hierarchy of measurement scales, nominal being at the lowest rung of hierarchy and even application of statistical procedure are classified in relation to scale used. They are categorized into two groups: categorical and continuous scale data, wherein nominal and ordinal scales are categorised together as categorical data whereas interval and ratio scales are grouped together as continuous data.

Nominal data having unordered scales are called nominal scales for example gender categories male and female. Categorical data having ordered scales are called ordinal scale. In case of continuous data, scale having representing interval data scales are called interval scales and data having both equal intervals and an absolute zero point are called ratio scales.

a **Nominal variables:** The values of the nominal variable data have no numeric meaning as no mathematical operation except counting can be done on the data. They are in fact used to classify whether the individual items belong to some distinctively different categories. For example, all we can say is that individuals are different in terms of variable for example in terms of gender or caste, but more than that nothing can be said about the variable and typical examples of nominal variables are gender, race, color, city, etc.

b **Ordinal variables:** Ordinal variables unlike nominal variables allow us to rank the items we measure in terms of order and we can specify that higher order item definitely represent more of the quality represented by the variable, but still we can't tell how much more than other item. A typical example of an ordinal variable is the rating assigned to impact of programme i.e. excellent, average and poor. Now we can say that x % rated programme to be excellent and y% rated average and another z% rated poor, but researcher can't say for sure about the difference

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between excellent and average is same as that of average and poor. In case of ordinal variables, only certain mathematical variables such as greater than or less than are feasible and only measures such as median and range can be calculated.

- c **Interval variables:** Interval variables provide more flexibility in terms of measurement as it allows us not only to rank the measured items but can also help in quantifying the sizes of differences between them. For example, temperature, as measured in degrees Fahrenheit or Celsius, constitutes an interval scale. We can say that a temperature of 80 degrees is higher than a temperature of 40 degrees, but still we can't say 80 degree is twice as much as hooter as 40 degrees. Another example could be of time system such as B.C or A.D, wherein we measure time taking B.C. or A.D as reference (initial point of reference is assumed as zero), but it doesn't mean that time doesn't exist before B.C or A.D. We have simply constructed a reference scale to measure time, which doesn't have a true or rational zero.
- d **Ratio variables:** Ratio variable measured by scale not only have equidistant point but also have a rational zero. Thus in addition to all the properties of interval variables, they feature an identifiable absolute zero point. Typical examples of ratio scales is Kelvin temperature scale, wherein not only can we say that a temperature of 60 degrees is higher than one of 20 degrees, we can also specify that temperature of 60 degree is thrice as high as 20 degree. Most of the variables we use to measure in field situations conform to ratio scale properties, though most statistical data analysis procedures do not distinguish between the interval and ratio properties of the measurement scales.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS

Probability sampling techniques are those that involve the random selection of study units by chance. For this to be possible, a sampling frame must exist. There are a number of probability sampling techniques and any of them could be used in a study depending upon the study problem and the purpose of the study. These comprise;

Simple Random Sampling (SRS)

This is the simplest form of probability sampling. It involves:

- making a numbered list of all units in the study;
- deciding the size of your sample;
- choosing the number you require.

For example, suppose we are faced with a problem of selecting 60 households in a community of 360 households to learn more about their attitudes towards the use of antibiotics in cough. We could proceed by first giving each household a number. These numbers are then written on small pieces of paper and placed in a box. Numbers are then picked from the box up to the required total; making sure that the box is well shaken each time to ensure the principle of equal and random selection.

Systematic Sampling

The principle involved in using this method is similar to the SRS, but with an added condition that the selection of units is based on regular intervals starting from a determined point. To use the example above, we can obtain our interval by dividing 360 by 60 which gives 6. Once the sample interval has been determined, the first unit is then drawn between 1 and 6.

Afterwards, every sixth case must be drawn until the total sample of 60 has been drawn.

The technique is particularly useful where large numbers are involved such as the sampling of prescription records. For instance, if we need 30 prescriptions from a register in a health facility which contains 50 pages of 25 lines per page, the sampling interval must be calculated by dividing the product of 50 and 25 by 30 to obtain 41.7. Based on this figure, every 42nd prescription would be selected for the study.

Stratified Sampling

This is an alternative method to systematic sampling and preferable where the sampling frame contains distinct populations. For example, assuming our antibiotics study covers an entire district, it would be necessary to ensure that both rural and urban facilities are adequately covered. This would not be possible using the SRS or systematic sampling techniques.

Alternatively, using a procedure that groups study units who are similar in certain characteristics into strata ensures that all relevant groups are appropriately covered. In drug use studies stratified sampling could be used to sort facilities into various levels of care, i.e., community clinics from health centers and both from district hospitals. When the method is used, the final stage of selecting the units is also based on the principle of equal selection by chance.

Cluster Sampling

Assuming our district is a large one with a landscape that makes travelling around

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facilities difficult, then cluster sampling offers a better alternative. This involves selecting clusters or groups of study participants or units rather than on individual basis. Clusters may be villages or families or a specified group of patients or providers.

For example, if we want to select two facilities for study in a geographically difficult area, then we could select a cluster of two facilities by randomly selecting a single facility and then selecting another one close to it. The method saves time in data collection.

Multi-Stage Sampling

This is a combination of all the methods described above and is very useful if the purpose of the structured observation method is to generalize study results from diverse populations. As the name implies, it involves sampling in two or more stages as follows:

1. Forming clusters and selecting a random sample of these.
2. Making a separate list of all study units within each of the selected clusters.
3. Selecting study units separately from each cluster in the sample.
4. Interviewing selected study units.

For example, if we intend to select 12 health facilities in a district with 36 facilities, we can first group them into the various clusters or levels of health care such as community clinics, health centers, and hospitals. We can then randomly select our 12 facilities from the 3 groups. This is two-stage sampling. If we want to select 30 prescriptions from each facility, we can continue from this stage with the process described in selecting every 42nd prescription under systematic sampling. This is three-stage sampling.

NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS

There are two common types of non-probability sampling, namely convenience or purposive sampling and quota sampling.

Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is that in which the study units that happen to be available at the time of data collection are selected for purposes of convenience. Most clinic based studies use this method. It is the common method for selecting participants to a focus group discussion.

Quota Sampling

Quota sampling is used when it is considered that convenience sampling would not provide a desired balance of study units. For example when assessing patient understanding of how to take drugs, a quota sample could be used to ensure that both males and females are covered in the study.

Non-probability sampling methods are less representative than probability sampling methods and thus inappropriate if the objective of a study is to generalize findings. They are often used in qualitative methods because of their flexibility in adapting to local situations and settings.

ASSESSING IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

District _____ Serial
Block _____

RESULT*			
VISIT	DATE	day month year	day month year
01	Completed		
02			
03	Postponed		
04	Others(Specify)		

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about various stages of group development and its impact on your livelihood. These questions would help us in understanding the impact of collective group action on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood.

Name of Client _____
 Sex : Male -1 or Female -2 ☐
 Address _____
 Name of group _____
 Number of group members No. of male members No. of female members
 Group formation date MMY

Section 1 Group Formation :

101	When did you join the group? Please specify the entry date?	
102	Number of members in the group, when you joined and now?	
103	What was the first saving that you deposited when you joined the group?	
104	What are the factors, which motivated you to join the group?	
105	What expectations (in terms of services) you had from the group when you joined?	
106	Did you had some specific monetary expectations when you joined the group?	
107	If yes, what was the moneatry expectation (monthly) ?	
108	What are the objective you have in mind , when you joined the group?	

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109	Who approached you/ or who did you approach to join the group?	
110	Who all did you consult before joining the group?	
111	Who finally decided that you should join the group?	
112	Please specify whether internal lending has increased or decreased?	
113	Have more groups been formed in your village since you have joined the group?	
114	If yes, How many?	

Section IV Group meetings/records

401	What is the frequency of group meeting?	
402	When did you have your last meeting? Or how many days back?	
403	How many members participated in the last meeting?	
404	What are the issues usually discussed in such meetings?	
405	Who decides when to have meetings?	
406	When do you come to know about meetings?	
407	When do you come to know if there is a change in the meeting date?	
408	Has there been any change in members in the group, since you joined the group?	
409	If yes how many members dropped out since you joined the group?	
410	How many new members have dropped?	
411	What do you think is the reason for their dropout?	
412	What are the records that are managed in your groups?	
413	Who maintains the records?	
414	Does the group pay the member/accountant for his/ her services?	
415	If yes, How much?	
416	Can you get the information related to records whenever wanted?	

ASSESSING IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

District _____ Serial

Block _____

RESULT*			
VISIT	DATE	day month year	day month year
01	Completed		
02			
03	Postponed		
04	Others(Specify) _____		

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about various stages of group development and its impact on your livelihood. These questions would help us in understanding the impact of collective group action on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood.

Name of Client _____

Sex : Male -1 or Female -2 ☐

Address _____

Name of group _____

Number of group members:

No. of male members No. of female members

Group formation date:
M M Y Y

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Section 1 Group Formation

Qno		
101	When did you join the group? Please specify the entry date?	MM YY
102	Number of members in the group, when you joined and now?	When you join Now
103	What was the first saving that you deposited when you joined the group?	Amount in Rs.
104	What are the factors, which motivated you to join the group?	To earn profit 1 To improve subistence 2 To have a social standing 3 To become part of community 4 Others 8
105	What expectations (in terms of services) you had from the group when you joined?	Credit/ loans 1 Savings 2 Linkage to livelihood activity 3 Linkage to Government 4 Programs/ Schemes 5 Any Other 8
106	Did you had some specific monetary expectations when you joined the group?	Yes 1 No 2 → 108
107	If yes, what was the moneatry expectation (monthly) ?	Rs. 50-100 1 Rs. 100-200 2 Rs. 200-300 3 Rs 300-400 4 Rs 400 5 Other 8
108	What are the objective you have in mind , when you joined the group?	To be able to contribute to household income 1 To be able to spend more on myself 2 To be able to spend more on child education 3 To be able to spend more on family health 4 Other 8
109	Who approached you/ or who did you approach to join the group?	NGO workers 1 Other group members 2 Group's president/secretary 3 Government Official (ANM/ Patwari/ Panchayat Secretary etc.) 4 Any Other (Specify) 8
110	Who all did you consult before joining the group?	Self 1 Husband 2 Head of Household 3 Mother-in law 4 Father-in-law 5 Friends/realative 6 Others 8

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111	Who finally decided that you should join the group?	Self 1 Husband 2 Head of Household 3 Mother-in law 4 Father-in-law 5 Friends/realative 6 Others 8	
112	Please specify whether internal lending has increased or decreased?	Yes 1 No 2	
113	Have more groups been formed in your village since you have joined the group?	Yes 1 No 2 → 201	
114	If yes , How many?	When you joined Now	
115	What has been the reason for the formation of such new groups?	Success of our group 1 Initiative taken by NGOs 2 Efforts by community 3 Support of Panchayats 4 Initiative on own 5 Others 8	

Section IV Group meetings/records

401	What is the frequency of group meeting?	Once in every week 1 Once in a fortnight 2 Once in a month 3 Once in two month 4 Once in six month 5 Whenever needed 6 Others 8	
402	When did you have your last meeting? Or how may days back?	months back	
403	How many members participated in the last meeting?		
404	What are the issues usally discussed in such meetings?	Credit lending decision 1 Saving issues 2 Repayment issues 3 Defaluters issue 4 Enterprise realted issue 5 social issue 6 Others 8	
405	Who decides when to have meetings?	Group President 1 Group secretary 2 Other group member 3 Not specific 4 Pre decided group norm 5 Others 8	

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406	When do you come to know about meetings?	A day in advance 1 A week in advance 2 On same day 3 Pre decided 4 Others 8	
407	When do you come to know if there is a change in the meeting date?	A day in advance 1 A week in advance 2 On same day 3 Pre decided 4 Others 8	
408	Has there been any change in members in the group, since you joined the group?	Yes gk; 1 No ugha 2 → 412	
409	If yes how many members dropped out since you joined the group?		
410	How many new members have dropped?		
411	What do you think is the reason for their dropout?	Couldnt repay the loan 1 Have problems with group members 2 Family Problems 3 Community problems 4 Members were not sincere 5 Others 8	
412	What are the records that are managed in your groups?	Attendance Book 1 Minutes Register 2 Cash Book 3 Ledger 4 Individual Member Passbook 5 Stock Register 6 Any Other 8	
413	Who maintains the records?	External facilitator 1 Local boy or girl 2 One of the members 3 Other 8	
414	Does the group pay the member/accountant for his/ her services?	Yes 1 No a 2	
415	If yes, How much?	Rs.	
416	Can you get the information related to records whenever wanted?	Yes 1 No 2	

Guidelines for Data Collection

Participatory methods in poverty and vulnerability assessment are most commonly associated with the spread of diagramming and visual techniques which began to be developed in the 1970s. These originated in a number of scientific disciplines interested in analysis of complex systems: biological science, ecology, agricultural economics and geography. It became increasingly important to work with farmers to develop more sophisticated models to explain their responses to development programmes. The increasing influence of applied anthropology in development agencies from the 1980s also led to greater awareness of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, social processes and grassroots perspectives on development. By the end of the 1980s diagramming techniques bringing together the insights from these different disciplines were combined into a flexible methodology commonly referred to as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA).

By the mid 1990s it had become increasingly evident that the mechanical application of these techniques was often failing to really reach and capture the views of poor people, particularly women, children and socially excluded. There was renewed interest in methodologies for participation drawing on earlier traditions of participatory action research which had been long established as an integral part of many grassroots organisations in the South. In India for example SEWA and other women's organisations based their programmes on the findings of focus group discussions in the 1970s and 1980s.

Initially the term PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) was used to describe the bringing together of RRA and activist research. It was emphasized that the most important aspect was not the diagramming tools but their flexible application based on a number of underlying principles:

- Embracing complexity and seeking to understand it rather than oversimplifying reality in accordance with predetermined categories and theories
- Recognition of multiple realities to be taken into account in analysis or action.
- Prioritizing the realities of the poor and most disadvantaged as equal partners in knowledge creation and problem analysis.
- Grassroots empowerment i.e. aiming not only to gather information, but to make the assessment process itself a contribution to empowerment through linking grassroots learning and networking into policy-making.

More recently the term Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) has become preferred because it more effectively incorporates the underlying human rights tradition through emphasizing the importance of:

'changing from appraisal to learning and hence moving away from the use of participatory methods as an extractive process by outsiders to a sustainable learning process involving different stakeholders as equal partners. The importance of relating learning to action incorporating programme and policy improvement as an integral part of the learning process.'

Participatory methods are therefore a diverse and flexible set of techniques for representation and stakeholder involvement characterized by a set of underlying ethical principles. There is no one set of techniques to be mechanically applied in all contexts for all participants. There is on the one hand a set of visual tools to be flexibly applied to assist the synthesis and analysis of information, which can be used in group settings and also as part of individual interviews. On the other hand are a set of guidelines for facilitating participation and negotiation in focus group discussions and workshops bringing together different stakeholders. These may or may not make substantial use of visual techniques. Generally

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both visual techniques and participatory facilitation are combined in different ways. The emphasis is on innovation and creativity in adapting previous practice to new contexts and needs.

Participatory methods have the potential to bring together information from a diversity of sources more rapidly and cost effectively than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. A particularly important contribution of participatory methods is their role in capacity building of the different stakeholders. Where sufficient attention is paid to this participatory methods have the potential to build up the necessary information resources and networks for a learning process which will be sustainable beyond the term of the one particular impact assessment. This can include group-level learning, participatory monitoring and evaluation and multi-stakeholder networks for policy assessment. Thus the costs of integrating participatory methods can be seen as a contribution to development in themselves, leading to much longer term benefits. These benefits have included reducing the costs of project administration, reducing default in micro-finance programmes, making training programmes more attractive to clients prepared to pay for services. This is therefore also a contribution to longer term financial sustainability of interventions.

Participatory data collection methods have a number of potential key contributions in increasing:

- Stakeholder representation
- Reliability of understanding of development processes
- Credibility of practical inference
- Relevance of impact goals and indicators

However participatory methods also face a number of inherent challenges that need to be taken into account. Some of these are common to many methodologies, some are due to the visual tools and some to the participatory process. The degree to which participatory methods realize their potential contribution depends critically on how carefully they are used and in what context. As noted above, participatory methods are not a fixed set of mechanistic tools but a diverse range of possible techniques which need to be flexibly adapted to particular situations and needs. In some cases problems can be resolved through innovation in the methods themselves. Sometimes limitations can only be addressed through triangulation with other quantitative and qualitative methods. Some of the most significant challenges faced in using participatory methods are outlined below:

- **Standardization:** Because of the emphasis on locally identified indicators there are added challenges for comparative assessment. It is however possible to agree on common impact goals to be applied across contexts and then weigh locally specific indicators by which they are to be measured.
- **Sensitive information:** It cannot be assumed that the participatory process will necessarily yield in-depth information on sensitive issues. Including techniques like role-play has been found useful in highlighting dimensions of power relations. In other contexts this sort of sensitive information may require in-depth investigation by qualitative methods.
- **Emphasis on consensus** may serve to privilege dominant views and further marginalize the most disadvantaged through giving the appearance of participation. Explicit attempts are needed to include the very poor, women and socially excluded and also to ensure that they are not only present, but also their voices are heard.
- **Skills, contextual knowledge and experience** required to meaningfully record and analyze the visual outputs and participatory process is probably the greatest challenge of all for participatory methods. When badly conducted and recorded the outputs often appear arbitrary and meaningless, albeit rather quaint, to people who were not present during the meetings. This may seriously jeopardize their reliability and credibility. Interviewer

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subjectivity inevitably influences the recording and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative information. In using participatory methods to some extent interviewer bias can be countered by the greater numerical strength of those interviewed and crossed checked by them. It is nevertheless crucial when using participatory methods to keep detailed notes on the process of investigation, how the findings compare with information from other sources, who participates and who does not and how particular diagrams are generated.

Guidelines for conducting Household Surveys

Preparation for household survey starts by orientation of professionals through internal meetings and workshops where all professionals associated with the project are briefed on the objectives, methodology, research techniques to be followed, study instruments and the guidelines for the training of field staff. This creates a common understanding among all professionals. These guidelines present in a step-by-step form, the activities to be done by a core team of professionals lead by a Project Coordinator before, during and after a survey

Recruitment of field staff

The Project Coordinator in association with the core team members may look after the recruitment of field staff. The recruitment should be made against the desired qualification and experience in conducting surveys. Most surveys take in people at two levels i.e. Supervisors and Investigators depending upon the scale, geography and sample size. Each Supervisor heads a team of 3-8 investigators during the fieldwork for data collection. However, the core team members can also take up this role in smaller surveys. It is advisable to recruit in excess (about 20 percent) to account for the attrition at various stages of the field work.

It is important to point here that supervisors and investigators should be recruited based on their educational qualifications as well as the ability to spend long duration in the field and their prior experience with similar kind of surveys. It is advisable to conduct another round of interviews for final selection of supervisors and field investigators after completion of training and prior to initiating the data collection.

Translation of tools in local language

While translating survey items one must consider three dimensions of the problem: semantic equivalence, conceptual equivalence, and normative equivalence of items (Behling and Law, 2000). Among these semantic equivalence is the most widely used. It is sought through the translation/ back translation method, having independent translators translate from one language to another, and then back again, to see if the original and re-translated item remains the same. It is quintessential to ensure that translated schedule is available before training starts.

Training Investigators and Supervisors

The professionals involved in the study should brief the recruited field staff about interviewing technique, procedures for filling survey forms, time schedule and each item in the questionnaire followed by mock exercise between the participants. Such training sessions for the survey team including investigators, supervisors and other executives involved in the survey may also discuss sampling design and expected data quality. Following are a few points that may be followed at the time of briefing/ trainings to improve effectiveness of such surveys:

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- **Grading:** Investigators may be graded (even screened out, in certain cases) based on skill shown during training and this should be kept in mind for deciding composition of survey teams.
- **Field-testing:** Field-testing exercises aim to acquaint investigators and supervisors to the field situation. It is advisable that field-testing be done in a few non-selected large villages where all tools can be tested with the target respondents in quick time.
- **Debriefing:** This helps minimize interviewer bias by making questions simpler and clear. It tries to assess whether interviewer has understood the question correctly. Trainers along with supervisors should be present during debriefing sessions to sort out problems encountered in canvassing schedules, questionnaires and other instruments. Field testing and debriefing also serves as a medium for screening out investigators.

Field Work

The fieldwork for the study should be initiated immediately after training of field staff is completed. To prepare for fieldwork, the field executive shall:

- Ensure field plan for main survey is ready keeping in mind the scheduled time
- Ensure that all supervisors have requisite number of schedules and material

Also, prior to initiating the fieldwork, an appropriate sample of respondent categories must be selected using the sampling technique specified in the methodology. The Project Coordinator and core team members may take the responsibility for this exercise.

During the fieldwork, assigning work to individual supervisors and interviewers should take into account the linguistic competence of individuals and ensure that there is an equitable distribution of the workload. Supervisors may assign more work an investigator can actually do in one day to account for the respondents who may not be available at the time of the investigator's visit.

Monitoring Quality of data collected

Controlling the quality of the data collected is an important function of the supervisors and the core team. This can be done by observing interviews and carrying out field editing. By studying the filled up survey instruments regularly it can be ensured that the quality of the data collected remains satisfactory throughout the survey. It may be necessary to observe the interviewers more frequently at the beginning of the survey and again toward the end. In the beginning, the interviewers may make errors due to lack of experience or lack of familiarity with the tool; these can be corrected with additional training as the survey progresses. Toward the end of the survey interviewers may become fatigued in anticipation of the end of fieldwork.

The core team members and supervisors should expect to spend considerable time monitoring and helping investigators at the start of fieldwork. If it is felt that the data quality is not up to the desired standards, further data collection may be stopped until all issues and problems have been fully resolved. In some cases, an investigator may fail to improve and will have to be replaced.

Collection of high-quality data is crucial to the success of the survey. Supervisors may adopt one or more of the methods such as editing, spot checks, back checks and re-interviews to ensure data quality. This is especially important during the initial phases of fieldwork, when it is possible to eliminate interviewer error patterns before they become habits.

Minimizing non-response

One of the most frequently encountered problems in most sample surveys is non-response i.e. failure to obtain information from respondents selected in the sampling plan. Non-

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response is generally classified into some basic types as mentioned in below. Various ways of dealing with these types of non-response are also outlined.

- The interviewer is unable to locate the selected respondent such as household or person
- Respondent is temporarily absent at the time of call
- Respondent refuses to be interviewed

It is suggested that multiple (at least 2-3) visits be made to locate the respondent. Sometimes it may be necessary to visit at mealtime, early morning, evening, weekend depending upon the availability and convenience of the respondent. The procedure for callbacks may also be followed.

Monitoring the number of refusals reported by each investigator may also help understand the issues in non-response. If an investigator reports an unusually high number of refusals, it may indicate that she/ he gives up too easily or explains the survey inadequately. Refusals may stem from misconceptions about the survey or other prejudices. The surveyor must consider the respondent's point of view, adapt to it, and reassure her/ him.

Guidelines for conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs are semi-structured group meetings during which participants contribute to the generation of data on specific questions of concern to communities, stakeholders, projects or policies. The meetings can serve as a forum to address a particular issue, can build community consensus about implementation plans and also provide an opportunity to cross check information with a large number of people in a short period of time. An FGD is a group discussion of approximately 6 - 12 persons guided by a facilitator, during which group members talk freely and spontaneously about a certain topic. An FGD is a qualitative research method to obtain in-depth information on concepts, perceptions and ideas of a group. An FGD aims to be more than a question-answer interaction. The idea is that group members discuss the topic among themselves, with guidance from the facilitator.

FGDs can be a powerful research tool which provide valuable information in a short period of time and at relatively low cost. Implementation of FGDs is an iterative process. Each focus group discussion builds on the previous one, with a slightly elaborated or better-focused set of themes for discussion. Provided the groups have been well chosen, in terms of composition and number. One of the preemptive conditions in most cases is homogeneity of group. Homogeneity among group members means that they have common concerns. But it is the similarity of participants' orientation toward the issue at hand which allows for information to be shared freely and for deeper insight into the issue to be raised.

FGD should not be used for quantitative purposes, such as the testing of hypotheses or the generalisation of findings for larger areas, which would require more elaborate surveys.

There are different roles in an FGD such as organizer (leads planning and developing questions), recruiter (invites participants), moderator, recorder/ reporter and an analyst (to summarize the data and prepare reports). FGDs can be conducted better with at least two researchers wherein one of the members of the research team acts as a 'facilitator' or 'moderator' while the other serves as a 'recorder'. The facilitator should preferably be as close as possible to the participants in their characteristics. Any FGD requires the facilitator to have good understanding of local conditions. Communities are seldom homogeneous. There are always differences between community members, for example in education, political power, gender, economic status and ethnicities. These differences get reflected in their perceptions

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of the problems they suffer from and possible solutions. A researcher must be aware of these differences, and should select group members accordingly.

Following are the steps and considerations in conducting FGDs:

Recruitment of participants

- Individuals who have the characteristics, experience or knowledge to provide rich information on the topic may be invited for the FGD.
- It is advisable to limit the size of the group to 6-8 members. It may be noted that an FGD must have enough people to generate diverse ideas but not so many that they do not get a chance to share.
- Power differentials among participants must be avoided and all participants should feel comfortable talking with one another.

Physical arrangements

- FGDs are best held in familiar and neutral settings to encourage participants to freely express their views.
- Sitting in a circle ensures mutual visibility facilitates freer exchange of ideas.
- The facilitator must also make sure that there are minimal disturbances, sufficient quietness, adequate lighting, etc.

Skills required for facilitating an FGD

- Moderators must be good at listening and make the participants feel comfortable. For groups of people who are used to being in powerful positions, the moderator must keep the group on track and control dominant participants.
- The moderator should be prepared to ask a set of predetermined questions designed to derive the information needed.
- The moderator must create an open environment to assure participants that it will be safe to talk in the focus group.

Functions of the facilitator

Introducing the session

The first few moments in a focus group discussion are critical. In a brief time the moderator must create a thoughtful receptive atmosphere, provide ground rules and set the tone of the discussion. Much of the success of the moderator can be attributed to creating an open environment.

The recommended pattern for introducing the group discussion includes a welcome, an overview of the topic, the ground rules and the first question. Self-introduction by the moderator and the recorder followed by explaining the kind of information needed and the purpose for which it will be used may help put the participants at ease.

Encouraging discussion

The moderator needs to be enthusiastic, lively and show interest in the groups' ideas. Asking the right questions in the right way can encourage participants to express their views. Most of the questions in FGDs are open-ended or non-directive. These questions deliberately give the participants as much latitude as possible to express their responses. The moderator must avoid asking question that can be answered in one word such as a 'yes' or 'no' as this may limit the desired detail. Another type of questions that may be avoided during FGDs are 'why' questions as they may make the participants defensive. Techniques such as 'think back' questions may be used to obtain information based on experience.

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Sometimes new and unanticipated questions may occur to the moderator. There is a risk these questions during the focus groups, as they might interrupt the sequence of the planned questions and throw participants off topic. The moderator must save such unplanned questions and ask them at the end of the discussion.

Encouraging involvement

Facilitators should show involvement and should keep track of way in which discussion is progressing. In case dealing with a dominant participant, avoiding eye contact or turning slightly away to discourage the person from speaking, or thanking the person and changing the subject. Further while dealing with a reluctant participant, using the person's name, requesting his/her opinion, making more frequent eye contact to encourage his/her participation.

A focus group is working well when the participants begin to talk to one another and build on one another's comments rather than continually responding directly to the moderator. Ideally, participants become engaged, and the focus group becomes a forum for their own discussion. The moderator should begin to play a less central role as participants share experiences, debate ideas and offer opinions. Some groups arrive at this point quickly while others take longer to reach it.

The moderator must also avoid being an expert when asked for ideas or views by a respondent. It must always be remembered that the role of a moderator is not to educate or inform the participants.

Controlling the rhythm of the meeting, but in an unobtrusive way

The moderator's job is not to make sure everyone speaks the same amount in a group. However, everyone should have the opportunity to share. Participants speaking more must be allowed to continue if they are adding new and useful information. The moderator must listen carefully, and move the discussion from topic to topic. He/ she must also control dominant talkers by thanking them for their input and asking for others to share. The quiet participants must also be called on as they may be reflective thinkers and have ideas to offer. Small pauses can also be used to draw out more responses.

The moderator should also avoid giving verbal or non-verbal clues of approval or disapproval. For example, it is often tempting for the moderator to give a broad smile and nod his/ her head when hearing certain comments. Participants can quickly spot this behaviour and assume that more of such 'approved' comments are wanted.

Concluding the discussion

At the end of an FGD the reporter needs to summarize the key points of discussion and ask for confirmation. It is advisable not to summarize the entire focus group but instead 3-5 of the most important points. The moderator may review the purpose of the FGD and ask participants if any point may have been missed before thanking them and concluding the session.

There are no standard time limits but a typical focus group discussion session may last between 1-2 hours depending upon the group and issues discussed. Generally the first session with a particular type of group is longer than the following ones because all of the information is new. Thereafter, if it becomes clear that all the groups have a similar opinion on particular topics, the facilitator may be able to move the discussion along more quickly to other topics which still elicit new points of view.

Capturing the data

Thought must be given to capturing the comments of the focus group participants. Multiple methods are recommended, as no single method is perfect. The resources available and circumstances should determine the researchers' choice of methods. An examination of the alternative methods of capturing data is as follows:

- Memory is the most fallible. Memories of the moderator and recorder fade quickly and can be prone to distortion. This is always one of the methods used but it should not be the only method.
- Filed notes can capture meaning quotes plus the content of the discussion. The field notes of the recorder should capture details of the group, whereas the field notes of the moderator may be sketchy.
- Audio tape recording can also be done wherever possible as it is low cost and reliable.
- Video cameras can prove to be useful in some circumstances but researchers need to be cautious as there may be a tendency among people to be apprehensive and less candid on video.
- Laptop computers used by a fast typist can be used to capture a nearly complete transcript in real time.

Analysis of data

The analysis of FGD data needs to be systematic and as per a protocol that follows a predetermined and verifiable set of steps. There is no single 'best' systematic process. One of the skills that an analyst must have is to match the level of analysis to the problem at hand. A complex study such as one in which researchers are trying to understand how different types of people think or feel about a cultural practice may require transcript based analysis. However, if a research is trying to understand simpler issues such as which out of a few sets of educational material is more appealing, analysis based on notes may be all that is required. No matter what level of analysis is selected, breaking analysis into manageable chunks keeps the material from becoming overwhelming. The analysts must look for the major themes that cut across groups as well as a key insight that might have been shared by only one person. In order to do this effectively, the analysts must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the study.

When analyzing FGD data, the analysts need to consider many different aspects of the focus group and its participants' responses. Some of these are mentioned below:

Words

The analysis needs to consider both the actual words used by the participants as well as the meaning of those words. Different participants may have used different words and the analyst may need to determine the degree of similarity among these responses.

Context

A participant's response may have been triggered by a stimulus such as a question asked by the moderator or a comment from another participant. It is imperative to examine the context by finding the triggering stimulus and then interpreting the comment with its environment in mind. The response should be interpreted in light of both the preceding discussion and the tone and intensity of the oral comment.

Internal Consistency

- Participants in FGDs may sometimes change, even reverse, their positions after interactions with others. This phenomenon occurs rarely in individual interviews due to a lack of interaction with other participants. When there is a shift in opinion, the researcher may need to trace the flow of the conversation to find clues that might explain the change.

Frequency

Frequency is a measure of how often a comment was made although it alone does not tell us how many different people made this comment. The analysts should not assume that frequency is an indicator of importance. It may not be necessarily true that items that are discussed most often are most important.

Extensiveness

Extensiveness is the measure of how many different people made a particular comment. This measure gives the analyst a sense of the degree of agreement on an issue. However, it is not possible to determine extensiveness using only the transcript unless names are attached to comments. In FGD analysis, extensiveness is as useful as frequency.

Intensity

In FGDs, the participants may occasionally talk about a topic with a special intensity or depth of feeling. They may sometimes use words that connote intensity or tell the moderator directly about their strength of feeling. Intensity may be difficult to gauge with transcripts alone because the voice tone, speed and emphasis on certain words are key to communicating emotion. In the analysis, it is important to pay attention to what is said with passion or intensity.

Specificity

Responses that are specific and are based on experiences may be given more weight in the analysis than responses that are vague and impersonal. Greater attention needs to be placed on responses that are in the first person than those that are in the hypothetical third person. The specificity of any comment can be gauged by the degree to which the respondent can provide details during a follow-up probe.

Finding big ideas

One of the traps of analysis of FGD data is focusing so much on the detail that the analyst misses the big ideas. To facilitate this, the researchers may need to step back from the discussions by allowing extra time for big ideas to percolate. For example, after finishing the analysis, the moderator might set the report aside for a brief period and then jot down a few of the most important findings. The reporter and others in the research team can help verify the 'big ideas'.

Guidelines for conducting In-depth Individual Interviews

In-depth interviews include both one to one interviews as well as group interviews. This could be community group meetings, which are somewhat larger and less homogeneous than focus groups but follow a similar format. In-depth interviewing is characterized by its length, depth and structure (Ticehurst and Veal 1999). They are longer in duration than quantitative based interviews typically lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. In-depth interviews also allow the interviewer to probe more deeply into the question at hand, getting the respondent to explain their answers and obtain greater meaning and insight. In-depth interviewing, also known as unstructured interviewing, is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation. This type of interview involves asking informants open-ended questions, and probing wherever necessary to obtain data deemed useful by the researcher. As in-depth interviewing often involves qualitative data, it is also called qualitative interviewing.

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In depth interviews differ from direct observation primarily in the nature of the interaction. In such interviews it is assumed that there is a questioner and one or more interviewees. The purpose of the interview is to probe the ideas of the interviewees about the phenomenon of interest. Following are a few strengths and limitation of this tool.

Strengths

- Flexibility to explore responses through probing
- Ability to observe body language
- Ability to control questions
- Ability to tackle more complex topics

Limitations

- Time consuming
- Potential for interviewer bias in interpretation
- Findings may be subject to circumstances at the time of interview
- Accessibility of respondents

Organizing In-depth Interviews

Free association style allows for unconstrained responses from the respondent. The interviewer's job is to start the ball rolling on a general topic and thereafter keep the conversation progressing with gestures of agreement.

Applying an unstructured style of questions places more restriction on the respondent. It places a greater constraint on the subject matter but leaves the responses within the subject matter up to the respondent. The interviewer here has to introduce the topic and keep discussions around the subject matter. This style improves the reliability and replication of the data.

Use of semi-structured questions constrains the subject topics and places an additional constraint on responses by using a range of pre planned subject areas which are used to reveal hoped for data and responses. Questions are still open ended but interviewers must constrain the conversation to the topic and subject areas. Probes can still be used but become more directive in nature.

The next thing to do is to assemble questions into logical topic groupings. This will assist the researcher and respondent concentrate on the question at hand and keep the discussions focused, as well as having some benefit in the analysis phase. Having a balance of hard and easy questions around a topic area enables an adept interviewer to be able to dive in and out of these questions as the situation dictates.

Skill required in conducting In-depth Individual Interviews

Listening

Interviewers need to concentrate on what respondents are saying and what they are not. Not only does the interviewer need to listen but they also need to watch. A respondent's body language can give some hidden clues to their feelings.

Probing

Interviewers will be required to ask multiple sub questions often having to restate or rephrase these until the true meaning is uncovered.

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Silence

In order to elicit more information from a respondent the interviewer simply needs to remain quiet at the end of a response. Most people feel uncomfortable when there is a long silence, the way they resolve this nervousness is to continue talking.

Questioning techniques for In-depth Individual Interviews

Individuals vary in their ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas. With good questioning techniques, researchers may be more able to better facilitate the subjects' accounts and to obtain quality data from them. Current literature suggests some questioning techniques, summarised in the following points:

Asking clear questions

It is important to use words that make sense to the interviewees, words that are sensitive to the respondent's context and worldview. To enhance their comprehensibility to the interviewees, questions should be easy to understand, short, and devoid of jargon (Kvale 1996:130).

Asking single questions

Patton (1987:124) points out that interviewers often put several questions together and ask them all as one. He suggests that researchers should ask one thing at a time. This will eliminate any unnecessary burden of interpretation on the interviewees.

Sequencing the questions

This refers to using a special kind of questioning technique called 'Funnelling', which means asking from general to specific, from broad to narrow. It is also useful to ask questions about experience or behaviour before asking questions about opinions or feelings as this helps establish a context for the informants to express the latter. For example, asking "What happened?" before "How do you feel now?"

Probing and follow-up questions

The purpose of probing is to deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained, and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired. This can be done through direct questioning of what has just been said, for example, "Could you say something more about that?"; "Can you give a more detailed description of what happened?"; "Do you have further examples of this?" Alternatively, a mere nod, or "mm," or just a pause can indicate to the subject to go on with the description. Repeating significant words of an answer can lead to further elaboration (Kvale 1996:133).

Interpreting questions

Throughout the interview, the researchers should clarify and extend the meanings of the interviewee's statements to avoid misinterpretations on their part. Researchers may use questions like "Is it correct that you feel that.....?"; "Does the expression..... cover what you have just expressed?" to allow the interviewees to confirm or disconfirm what has been interpreted by the researchers.

Encouraging a free rein while maintaining control

The researchers should be prepared to let the interviewees 'travel' wherever they like, but a rough checklist of ideas or areas the former want to explore is useful. Palmer (1928:171) suggests that proficient interviewers should be always in control of a conversation which they guide and bend to the service of their research interest.

Establishing rapport

This can be achieved by, for example, respecting the informants' opinions, supporting their feelings, or recognising their responses. This can also be shown by the researchers' tone of voice, expressions or even gestures. A good contact is established by attentive listening, with the interviewer showing interest, understanding, and respect for what the subjects say. A good interview allows subjects to finish what they are saying and lets them proceed at their own rate of thinking and speaking.

At the meeting, the interviewer should brief the respondent as to the nature or purpose of the interview being as candid as possible without biasing responses and attempt to make the respondent feel at ease. S/He should explain the manner in which he will be recording responses, and if he plans to tape record, he should get the respondent's assent. Whenever possible and with the consent of the respondent it is best to tape-record the interview. This ensures the depth and breadth of data is obtained, and allows researchers to understand not just what people say, but the way in which they say it. At all times, an interviewer must remember that he is a data collection instrument and try not to let his own biases, opinions, or curiosity affect his behaviour.

Once the interview is completed, it is best to sit and reflect on the past hour. Notes should be taken on how the interview progressed, where the interview took place, any other feelings about the interview and the setting. Observations should not be confined to the interview alone, adept interviewers take note of the surroundings and inter office behaviours between interviews.

It is the only measure of central tendency for nominal (or qualitative) variables.
Example: Find the mode for the following data sets

1	73	74	75	75	76
2	82	73	75	75	84
3	4	5			
4	73	75			

Median

The median is a number in a data set that divides it so ordered data that half the data is below it and half is above it. The median is the middle value of a data set. The goal here is to determine the precise midpoint of the data distribution.

1. When number of observations (N) is an odd number, the median is the middle-most number in the ordered data set.

3 5 7 9 11 Median is 7 since 2 numbers below it and 2 above it

200 250 300 350 400 450 500 550 600 650 700 750 800 850 900 950 (median is 300)

2. When N is an even number, the median is the average of the two middle-most numbers.

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$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{3 + 7 + 4 + 6}{4} = \frac{20}{4} = 5$$

For the data set A & B example

A	73	74	75	75	78
B	68	73	75	75	84
Mean	A	B			
	75	75			

Choosing a Measure of Central Tendency

How do you decide which measure of central tendency to use? Often it is best to calculate more than one measure since each tells us something different, although all refer to the center of the data. To most accurately present the data, if the data departs from normality, then one should generally present more than one measure of central tendency so that the data is better described (this also means that it is not a normal distribution since the values are different)

Generally, the mean is the most preferred measure of central tendency because it uses every score in the distribution. (Remember the goal is to use one score to best represent the entire data set). However, it is not always the best.

When the Mode is best: Since the mean has to use interval or ratio data, often the mode is best in nominal or ordinal data (it can be used for all types though). It is very easy to use, since no calculations are necessary.

When the Median is Preferred over the Mean: There are several times when the median is the preferred statistic:

- (1) When there are extreme scores: An extreme score pulls the mean toward that score (an extreme high score pulls the mean higher and an extreme low score pulls the mean lower).
- (2) If some scores are missing
- (3) If the distribution is open-ended
- (4) If you have ordinal data: Since this data is discrete, the mean is not generally not used.

MEASURE OF VARIABILITY: DEVIATION AND VARIANCE

To more fully understand a data distribution, a measure of central tendency alone does not tell the story. Variability is fundamental to research since we are trying to determine what causes the variability!

Unlike measures of central tendency which capture similarities, a measure of variability is a measure of the dispersion of the scores around the mean; how spread out the data is, how different the data is. The fact that the actual scores deviate from the average score or the mean indicates that there is variability. The goal here is to determine how much variability is in the data set or the distribution.

Measures of variability have 3 main purposes:

- (1) To describe the distributions (how disperse or variable they are)
- (2) It gives an idea of how accurately the mean describes the distribution
- (3) It gives an indication of how well a sample represents the entire population (distribution)

Going back to our practice data sets:

A	73	74	75	75	78
B	68	73	75	75	84
Summary	A			B	
Mean	75			75	
Median	75			75	
Mode	75			75	

The two sets look identical if only measures of central tendencies are looked at. Let's look at the variability measures.

Range

The range is the difference between the highest and lowest score in the distribution. It is expressed as a single number, the result of the following formula:

$$\text{Range} = \text{highest score} - \text{lowest score}$$

For example, with scores of 3, 7, 12, 8, 5 and 10; Range = $12 - 3 = 9$

The range is very straight-forward and can be a good initial check on the data. In reality, however, people usually list the minimum and maximum rather than the single number range.

The range is not a very good measure of variability in that it only takes two numbers of the entire data set into account: the largest and the smallest. The range has two primary limitations: (1) it is affected easily by extreme scores since it only uses the highest and lowest (therefore unstable) and (2) it says nothing about what happens between the highest and lowest. What is better is a measure that is responsive to every data point in the distribution (like the mean is for central tendency).

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For our example data sets:

A	73	74	75	75	78
B	68	73	75	75	84

The range for A is 5

The range for B is 16

The range, then, in this case does tell us more about the variability than does either of the measures of central tendency (which are identical), but is it still the best measure?

Variance

The variance, s^2 , is the mean of the squared deviations:

$$s^2 = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2}{N} \text{ or } \frac{SS}{N}$$

where SS = sum of squares, which refers to the sum of squared deviations from the mean $\sum (x - \bar{x})^2$

The variance will detect differences that the range will not detect because it uses all of the data points in the calculation, not just the minimum and maximum.

The key to variance is the SS since if the SS is large, the variance is large, etc.

The variance is very useful in more sophisticated inferential statistics, but its use in descriptive statistics has one major flaw: the calculated value is expressed in *squared* units of measurement! Because of this, it is very seldom used for interpreting descriptive variance.

Standard Deviation

The remedy to this major flaw with using the variance is simple! To get back to original units, take the square root

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{n}} \quad \text{or} \quad \sqrt{\frac{SS}{n}}$$

This is the **standard deviation**. The standard deviation is the most commonly used measure of variability. It is frequently cited with the mean as the main piece of information about a distribution.

It takes into account every piece of data in the distribution (as does the mean) as it measures, on the average, how much each piece of data deviates from the mean.

This is done in several steps:

- Measure the deviation of each score from the mean $X - \bar{X}$
(*note the sign can be - or +)

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- b. Calculate the mean or average of all of these deviations by adding up each deviation and dividing by N
For scores 8,1,3 and 0;

N=4, $\bar{X}=3$	$\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})}{N}$	
	8 - 3	+5
	1 - 3	-2
	3 - 3	0
	0 - 3	-3
	$\sum (X - \bar{X})$	= 0 !!!

This is always true!!!
 $\sum (X - \bar{X}) = 0$

Since we want a summary score (one value) that represents the average deviation, we are in a dilemma since we cannot divide zero by anything!

- c. Square the deviations to get rid of the (-) signs and the sum will not be zero

X	$X - \bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$	
8	+5	25	
1	-2	4	
3	0	0	
0	-3	9	
	$\sum (X - \bar{X})$	$\sum (X - \bar{X})^2$	
	=0	=38	

$\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N} = \frac{38}{4} = 9.5$
9.5 is the variance

Even though variance does provide some idea of deviation and it can be used to compare one distribution to another, it still has a problem. Squaring the numbers magnifies the numbers considerably and the units are NOT in their original form (now in a squared form).

- d. Therefore, we take the square root of the variance, and that takes us back to our original units; it makes the correction for having squared the distances from the mean (the deviations) and gives us the standard deviation.

$$\text{standard deviation} = \sqrt{\text{variance}}$$

To find the standard deviation, we need to use the sum of the squared deviations in the formula: there are two ways to do that

$$\text{definitional formula, } \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{n}} \quad \text{or} \quad \sqrt{\frac{SS}{n}}$$

X	$X - \bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$
8	+5	25
1	-2	4
3	0	0
0	-3	9
	$\sum (X - \bar{X})$	$\sum (X - \bar{X})^2$
	=0	=38

Plugging the numbers in the formula gives you $\sqrt{38 / 4} = 3.08$

The standard deviation (and the variance) is very sensitive to extreme scores (as is the mean). Therefore be very careful in interpreting the standard deviation or the variance for a distribution that is *markedly skewed* or contains even a few *very extreme* scores.

So what does this tell us? It gives an idea of how much dispersion around the mean there is in a particular distribution. It gives us that overall notion of dispersion in a distribution that we need to complete our description of the distribution!

The standard deviation is a critical statistical value and one needs to come to terms with its meaning. One should think of it as the "average dispersion" in a distribution; the average distance of any one point from its mean.

The Standard Deviation and the Normal Distribution

Not only does thinking of the standard deviation as the average dispersion in a distribution assist in understanding it, it also helps to know how it works under various conditions.

It is very useful in looking at its use as a *distance measure* in normal distributions.

$\bar{X} \pm 1 \sigma$ contains about 68% of the data points

$\bar{X} \pm 2 \sigma$ contains about 95% of the data points

$\bar{X} \pm 3 \sigma$ contains about 99% of the data points

Although this applies to normal distributions, even in skewed distributions one can safely state that $\bar{X} \pm 1 \sigma$ picks up the majority of the cases, $\bar{X} \pm \sigma$ picks up even more, and $\bar{X} \pm 2 \sigma$ picks up all but a very few data points.

CORRELATION AND REGRESSION

Correlation

Correlation is one of the most widely used measures of association between two or more variables. In its simplest form it signifies the relationship between two variables i.e. whether an increase in one variable results in increase of other variable. In a way measure of correlation are employed to explore presence or absence of correlation that is whether or not there is correlation between variables in equation. Correlation coefficient also describes direction of correlation i.e. whether it is positive or negative and strength of correlation whether an existing correlation is strong or weak.

Though there are various measures of correlation between nominal or ordinal data, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of linear association between two interval-ratio variables. The measure, represented by letter r , varies from -1 to +1. A zero correlation indicates that there is no correlation between the variable.

A correlation coefficient indicates both type of correlation as well as strength of relationship. Coefficient value determines the strength whereas sign indicates whether variables change in same direction or in opposite direction. A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases other variable also increases in similar way. A negative correlation signified by a negative sign indicates that there is an inverse relationship between two variables i.e. an increase in one variable is associated with decrease in other variable. A zero correlation suggests that there is no systematic relationship between the two variables and any change in one variable is not associated with change in other variable.

Regression

Regression is one of the most frequently used techniques in social research. It is used in estimating the value of one variable based on the value of other variable. It does so by finding a line of best-fit using ordinary least square method. The relation between variables could be linear or non-linear and thus regression equation could also be linear or non-linear.

Regression analysis extends correlation by asserting a direction of causality (from explanatory/independent variable to explained/dependent/endogenous one) and measuring the influence of the explanatory variable(s) on the explained variable.

By convention we use Y for the dependent variable, X for the explanatory.

The aim is to find the 'line of best-fit' to the data. Initially we define the relationship between Y and X as a linear one.

$$Y=a+bX$$

In regression equation, a is defined as intercept and b is known as regression coefficient. The value of b indicates the change in dependent variable for every unit change in independent variable.

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Regression coefficient is another widely used measure of association between two interval-ratio variables. Regression coefficient is an asymmetric measure of association and that's why regression coefficient of dependent variable on independent variable is different from the regression coefficient of independent variable on dependent variable. Further, whether one should use an asymmetric measure of association or a symmetric measure, it depends on the application of regression method. In case when one is trying to predict one variable by other variable, then an asymmetric measure is preferred.

PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION: OVERVIEW OF TOOLS¹

ACCESS AND CONTROL

This is a tool used during stakeholder analysis where people are asked who has access over resources and who makes the decision on the use and disposal of these resources. An example is in the field of gender and development where we try to determine the degree of access and control over resources of women as compared to that of men.

ACTION PLANNING

Purpose: To identify the specific tasks, resources, timetables and responsibilities required to achieve a particular objective.

Description: Develop a table with tasks, resources, due date and responsible persons across the top and then complete the details for all the tasks that will be required to achieve a particular project objective.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. 	1. 	1. 	1. 
2. 	2. 	2. 	2. 
3. 	3. 	3. 	3. 
4. 	4. 	4. 	4. 
5. 	5. 	5. 	5. 
6. 	6. 	6. 	6. 
7. 	7. 	7. 	7. 
8. 	8. 	8. 	8. 
9. 	9. 	9. 	9. 

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Description: An after action review (AAR) is a discussion of a project or an activity, to enable the individuals involved to learn for themselves what happened, why it happened, what went well, what needs improvement and what lessons can be learned from the experience. It is not a performance assessment but rather a way to learn from experience.

Benefits

- can be applied in different stages of a project or activity
- can be applied with different numbers of people
- duration is variable
- can be formal, informal and personal

¹ <http://portals.wi.wur.nl/ppme/>

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How to do it

1. A formal AAR meeting should be conducted as soon as possible after the event. Invite team members and maybe some external people.
2. Create a climate of trust, openness and commitment to learning. The purpose is the purpose is to help future projects run more smoothly by identifying the learning points from this project
3. Appoint a facilitator that is to help the team to learn by drawing out answers, insights and previously unspoken issues; to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute; and to help create the right climate and ensure that blame is not brought in. The facilitator should be someone who was not closely involved in the project, so that they can remain objective
4. Revisit the objectives and deliverables of the project. Ask 'what did we set out to do?' and 'what did we actually achieve?'
5. Ask 'what went well?'. Find out why, and share learning advice for the future
6. Ask 'what could have gone better?'. Find out what the problems were, and share learning advice for the future
7. Ensure that everyone feels fully heard before leaving the meeting
8. Record the AAR in order to effectively share that learning with others. Include things like: lessons and guidelines for the future; some background information about the project to help put these guidelines into a meaningful context; the names of the people involved for future reference; and any key documents such as project plans or reports.
9. Share the learning with others.

BRAINSTORMING

Purpose: To quickly gain a lot of ideas from a group without getting caught up in detailed discussion.

Description:

1. Begin by asking the group to think of as many ideas as they can about the topic in question. You can give them several minutes for this.
2. Go around the group asking each person to briefly state his/her idea. The ideas can be captured using rich pictures, nominal group technique, mindmapping or card techniques. Everybody's ideas should be treated equally at this stage. Do not let people start debating each other's ideas.
3. Once all of the ideas have been noted somewhere visible to everyone (e.g., on a flip chart or chalkboard), then there can be some analysis.
4. The emerging issues, topics and questions can later be grouped, sorted and prioritised.

Advantages & Disadvantages

It's a quick and enjoyable process. It stimulates involvement and cross-fertilisation of ideas. However, most ideas are contributed from a few quick-thinking people.

Tips:

- Note that this method does not, on its own, suffice as a data gathering or analysis method
- The method can work with small or larger groups and can take as little as five minutes, depending on the subject, detail needed and number of people. A brainstorming session should not take very long, as it really is only meant to get out ideas that can be discussed in detail later.

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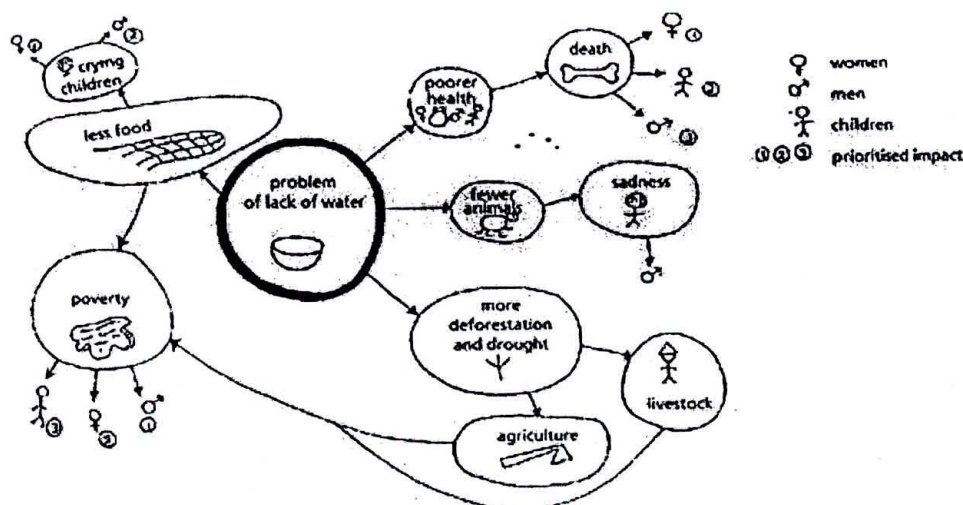
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- People find it very difficult not to comment or evaluate when ideas are generated in a brainstorm. Set a rule at the beginning that all judgements made during the brainstorm will be ruled out until a later discussion. As with most group discussion methods, some participants may dominate. To avoid this problem, you can distribute cards to all individuals on which they brainstorm their thoughts or ask them to brainstorm in sub-groups.
- To avoid the problem of only a few people getting involved, you can include some individual thinking time before the brainstorming session starts.
- This method is commonly used in combination with other methods, for example, to start a focus group session.

CAUSE AND EFFECT MAPPING

Purpose: To understand the contributing causes or reasons for a particular problem or issue, or to identify effects or impacts of a particular change.

Description: Start by putting the topic – with a symbol, photograph or in words – in the centre of a group (on the ground or a large flip chart). To work well, the topic must be specific. Ask what happened as a result of that activity (or trend/event), both positive and negative. These consequences are noted as symbols or with words and placed on the diagram to show how cause and effect are linked, with arrows or lines. If quantitative information is needed, then questions can be asked about the amounts related to each impact that has been identified. You can also ask if the impact has been the same for everyone and symbolise that on the map, with different groups having their own symbols. Repeat the exercise with an agreed frequency. You can use past diagrams for comparison to generate a discussion on why changes might be occurring and how the rate of change is progressing. If several flow diagrams are made with different groups and aggregation is required, they can be compiled into a single diagram, which then forms the basis of discussion.



CONCEPTUAL MODELING

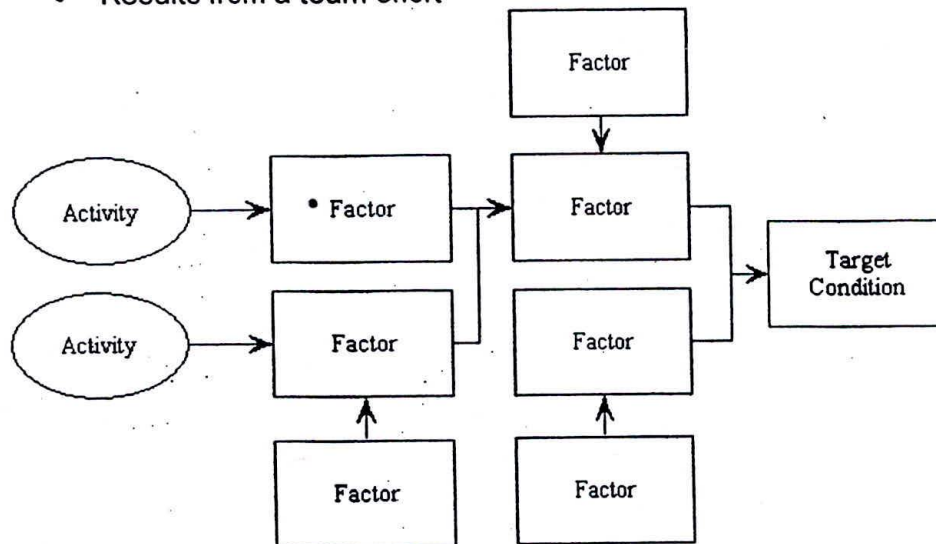
Purpose: a conceptual model is a diagram of a set of relationships between certain factors that are believed to impact or lead to a target condition.

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A good Conceptual Model:

- Presents a picture of the situation at the project site
- Shows assumed linkages between factors affecting the target condition
- Shows major direct and indirect threats affecting the target condition
- Presents only relevant factors
- Is based on sound data and information
- Results from a team effort



Description. Constructing your Conceptual Model:

1. Construct an Initial Conceptual Model that shows the situation before the start of a project or intervention. What is the target condition, what are factors and relationships?
2. Add on the planned activities to carry out goals and objectives for the project or intervention. The result is a (Project) Conceptual Model that shows how you think your project or intervention will influence the baseline situation at the project site.
3. Write the Conceptual Model down in words.

DECISION MATRIX

Also called multi-criteria analysis.

Purpose: make a good decision by scoring different strategies or scenarios.

Description:

- Broadly discuss content of clusters, strategies or scenarios
- Develop scoring / selection criteria.
- Indicate order of priority of criteria (column 1).
- Make a decision matrix of alternative approaches / strategies by criteria
- Mark approaches (each strategy in another column): the more positive, the higher the score
- Identify (combination of) key approaches / strategies

Example:

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Selection criteria	Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3	Strategy 4
Relevance	4	1	2	3
Cost	1	3	2	4
Sustainability	2	4	1	3
Subtotal	7	8	5	10
Feasibility in time	3	2	4	1
Participation by stakeholders	1	4	2	3
Availability of technical capacity	1	4	3	2
TOTAL	12	18	14	16

An advantage is that in a quick overview the best options are appearing in the table. A disadvantage may be that it does really not take into account that some criteria may be more important than others.

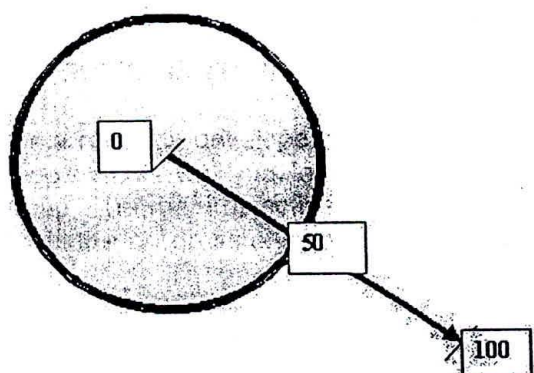
EMPOWERMENT CIRCLE

It is a recently developed participatory tool to understand the empowerment situation of people. This tool can easily be applied with illiterate people either individual or in a group. The main objective of the tool is to generate information from the targeted people about the progress of their empowerment situation after project intervention.

Application Process:

- Draw a big circle and then draw a line from the centre of the circle measuring 50 percent inside and 50 percent out side.
- Explain to the people how to mark in the circle of their situation from the centre (0 %) going outside the circle towards the 100% mark..
- Ask them what their situation was before the project and where they are now. They can mark 10 % intervals.

Example:



EVALUATION WHEEL

Purpose: Evaluate different aspects in a visual way

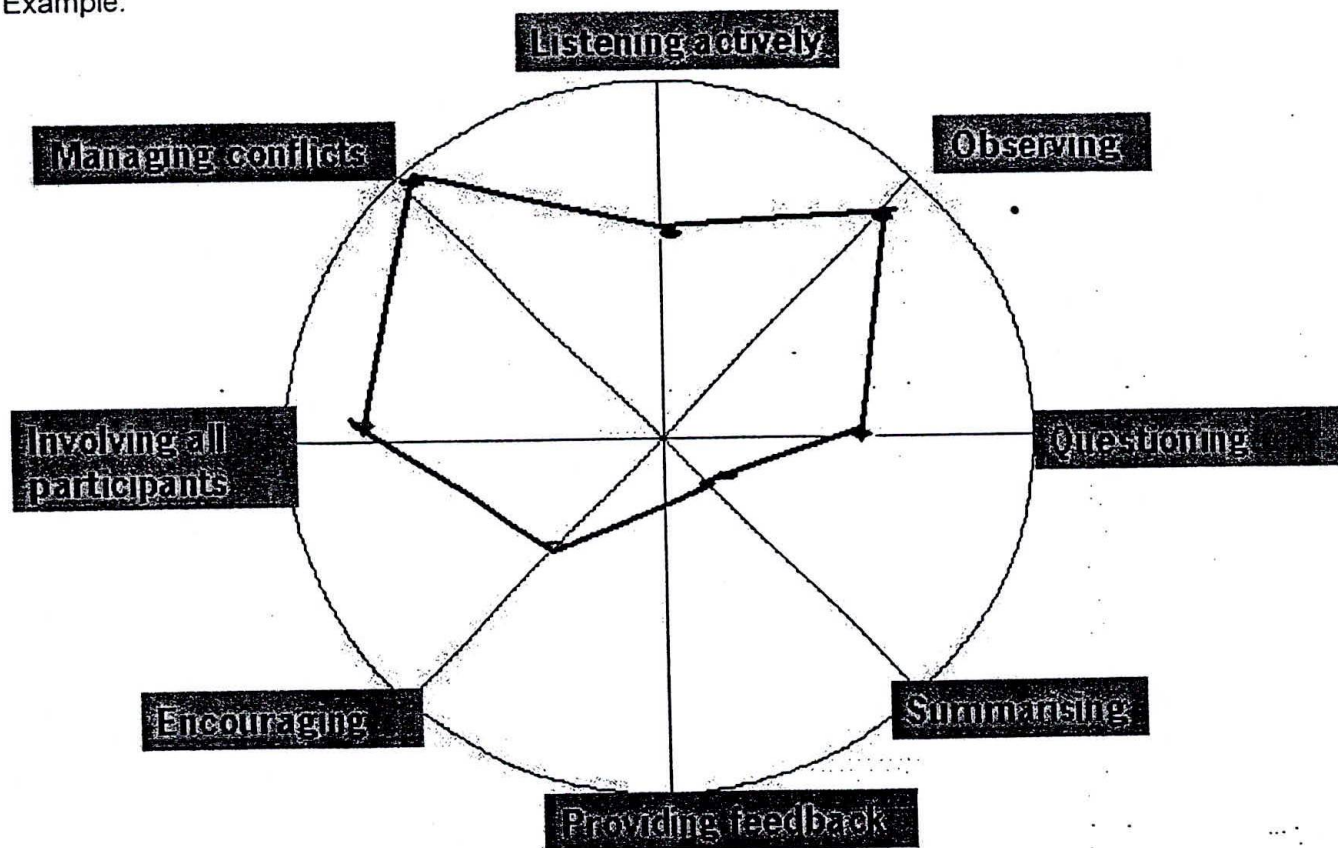
Description:

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- Decide upon criteria for evaluating (not too many)
- Ask each individual to draw a wheel with the same number of spokes as criteria chosen. The spokes should be marked with the various criteria. The spokes represent a scale with low or zero at the centre and high or 10 at the edge. Individuals should assess the process according to the various criteria and score each criterion by marking the spoke at the right point along the scale.

Example:



FISHBONE ANALYSIS

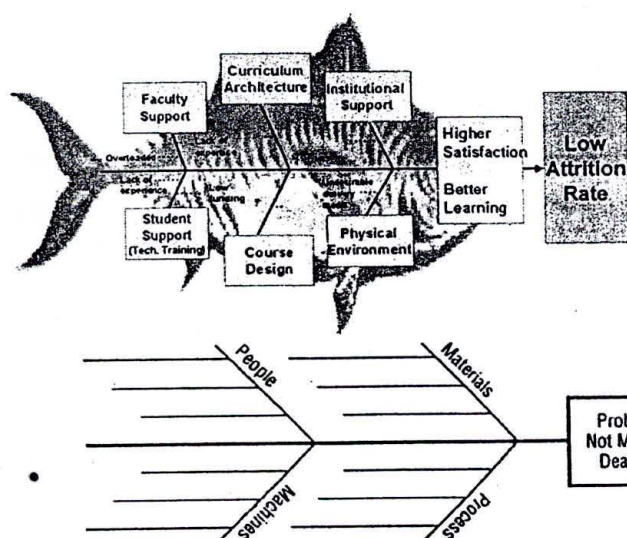
Purpose: Identify possible causes of problems with more than one possible solution.
Tool for situation analysis.

Description:

- Draw a horizontal line (central spine) near the centre of a page. Label one end with the problem or goal.
- Collect information from the participants on aspects of the situation. For the main aspects, draw lines off the central spine. Aspects related to a particular main spine are then drawn off that spine.
- Set priorities. Select the most important main spine then rank the items drawn off that spine. Continue this process with the other main spines.
- If the top priority spine has no branches, use this aspect of the situation for the next step in problem solving.

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Advantages and disadvantages

It can show much of a situation's structure. It can however become messy for large situations. Positive and negative aspects of the situation are not being distinguished.

Source: Khanya- Managing Rural Change CC. 2001. Manual for community-based planning, draft 1.

FLOW DIAGRAMS

Purpose: To illustrate and analyse the consequences (positive and negative) of particular issues or actions using diagrams.

Description: Take the action to be considered, for example, the employment of a property management planning coordinator, and map out the steps that need to be taken and the factors that need to be taken into account.

FOCUS GROUPS

Purpose: To collect general information about an issue from a small group of selected people through group discussion.

Description: A broad question, for example, 'What impact do you think the landcare group has had in achieving sustainable land use?' is given to a group of about eight to discuss for one or two hours. There is minimal intervention by the focus group facilitator other than to make sure everybody has a say. The discussion is either recorded or detailed notes are taken and then later analysed. Focus groups should be conducted in pairs: one person to facilitate the discussion and the other for note-taking.



Tips:

- If facilitated well, this method can bring out detailed information. It generally stimulates rich responses and also provides a valuable opportunity to observe discussions and to gain insights into behaviours, attitudes, language and feelings.
- However, facilitation of a focus group requires considerable skill – both in moderating the group and in adequately recording the responses. Group dynamics, due to individuals being too shy, dominating; disruptive, etc. can hamper the discussion.
- This method can be used to obtain a consensus view. However, a small group of people cannot represent all views held by, for example, an organisation or community. On the other hand, if the group is not homogeneous enough, there can be great disagreement. So think carefully about the composition of the group.
- This method can generate focused insights more quickly and generally more cheaply than through a series of key informants or formal social surveys.

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

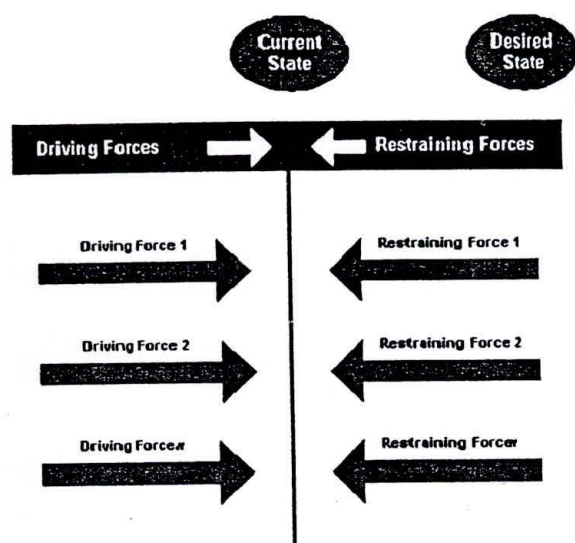
Purpose: Force Field Analysis is a tool for systematically analysing the driving and restraining forces in a situation.

Description:

- Define the problem or situation as a common goal. Note: the goal is a situation that requires analysis and not a solution that requires implementation.
- List all the driving forces that help achieve the goal (e.g. by brainstorming)
- Rate each driving force according to their strength and importance from 1 to 10
- List all the restraining forces that hinder achieving the goal and rate them as well
- Discuss how each of the most important restraining goals can be reduced and how driving forces can be enhanced.

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Tip: the list of most important driving forces (opportunities) and restraining forces (constraints / threats) can be used to make a SWOT analysis.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Purpose: To understand the history and background to a situation or project. It is a valuable way of exploring how change has occurred, why things are the way they are and why different groups or individuals hold the views they do.

Description: Set up a large sheet of butchers paper with rows and columns. Put dates down the side and beside them put topics such as key local events, key external events, influence of local personalities/groups, major changes (social, environmental, economic) and key trends. With a group, fill in the table that has been created. It is usually best to complete the trends for each time period as a way of rounding off the exercise. This takes from one to several hours and can be effective with quite large groups.

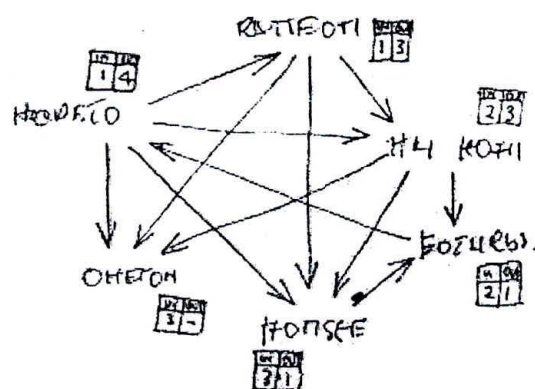
YEAR	
1985	_____
1991	_____
1995	_____
1998	_____

INTERRELATIONSHIP DIAGRAMS

Purpose: To identify which out of a series of contributing causes are the most important and how they relate to each other.

Description: On a whiteboard or butchers paper, write down in a circle between five and 20 factors contributing to, or causing, a problem or issue. Examine each factor in relation to each of the other factors and ask, 'Is it caused by or a cause of the other factor'. If it is caused by the other factor, draw a line with an inward arrow between the pair, if it is the cause of the other item, draw a line with an outward arrow between the pair. Draw the arrow only in the direction of the strongest effect, do not have two-way arrows. If there is no interrelationship do not draw a line between them at all. When you are finished, the factors with the most outward arrows will show up as the drivers. These will generally be the factors that will drive change; focus attention on them.

This technique can be used to stimulate discussion in a group, analyse information and determine priorities.



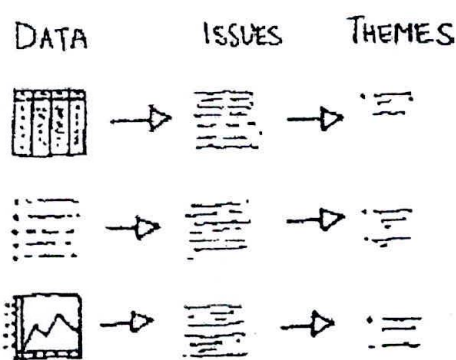
ISSUE ANALYSIS

Purpose: To identify the major issues that have been raised by people from a range of other tools, such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews, and then to group these into major themes. This process is important in making sense of a lot of qualitative information.

Description: Go through the notes or recordings of the particular activity and identify the major issues that a group or individual has raised. Common issues from a range of activities, individuals and groups are then grouped and the underlying theme that links the issues together is identified. It is possible to measure the number of times a particular issue emerges and hence provide some quantified results from qualitative information.

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LLPPA

Local level participation planning approach (LLPPA) is a kind of participatory planning approach we developed and used to prepare local level plans and implement them. The ideas generated by communities will be enriched by additional simple biophysical and socio-economic surveys. Expert knowledge to facilitate community ideas and extract needs and sometimes assisting them to concretize their need in more systematic way plays vital role.

The approach has the following procedures:

1. Site selection
2. First consultation with representatives (formal and informal) of communities
3. Second consultation and detailed discussions with representatives
4. Discussion with communities about the general intention of the project, if agreed elect planning team
5. Planning team should composed of representatives from different wealth groups, geographical locations and gender. In some places two communities are allowed when women are socially not comfortable to sit with man and discuss issues.
6. The planning team with the assistance of the extension agent appraise major problems and set in a priority order. The agent will assist them with different mechanisms to deepen their thought in addressing major constraints within the community.
7. A tentative development option is suggested for the different problems according to the priority order.
8. The problems identified and the options suggested will be indicated on simple baseline and development plan map.
9. Community assembly will be called by the planning team and the identified problems and suggested development options presented to communities. The communities will discuss on problems, priorities and suggested development options. IT can be amended, accepted or rejected.
10. Once the plan is accepted by communities it will get its final shape by the agent together with the planning team and some baseline data will be incorporated. A copy of the plan will be given to the planning team, community leader, the agent and one copy will be sent to the district officer.
11. Implementations started as per activity plan.
12. Reporting done by the extension agent
13. Monitoring is also done by district officer and upper level experts.

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Limitations:

- Outspoken people within the community can dominate ideas and influence priority setting.
- The quality of the plan depends on the facilitation capacity of the agent. Getting genuine thrust from communities is very important.
- The M&E part is a bit weak and not very much participatory

Strengths:

- Simple with very little and less complicated procedure.
- It addresses the needs of the different community groups.
- It has good baseline data for impact monitoring.
- The ownership feeling of communities for the plan is high.
- If properly handled doesn't raise expectations.
- It combined both expert knowledge and ideas of communities
- It was developed and revised together with field staff based on field observations.

History:

- Watershed Management Plan (1984-88)
- Minimum Planning (1989-1993)
- LLPPA (I, II, III, IV) (1994-upto present)

Assistance and application:

The development of the approach was started by the assistance of FAO to the Ministry Of Agriculture at the early stage but the final refinement was supported by World Food Programme Development Section in Ethiopia. The approach is extensively used in the country especially in WFP assisted districts by project name called MERET. This project covers 72 Districts in the country.

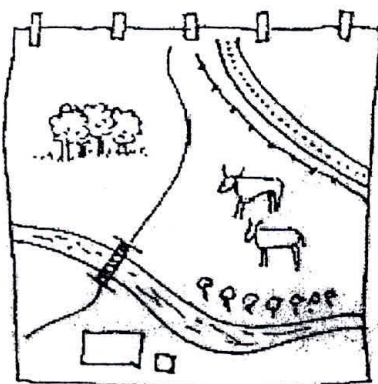
LOCALITY MAPPING

Purpose: To draw on the knowledge of local people to develop a map of the local area. This is a good way, for example, of identifying who is undertaking land conservation activities, where land degradation problems are and where improvements have been noticed.

Description: Using large sheets of butchers paper, draw the outline of the local area, for example, roads, towns, rivers and property boundaries. This can be done by projecting an overhead map onto butchers paper and tracing the required information. Having prepared the map, which could be as large as a whole wall, people can then add their information either directly or by using sticky notes.

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LOGFRAME

A logical framework (logframe) is a matrix that summarizes what a project intends to do and how, what the key assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated. The logframe is the product of the Logical Framework Approach. The first column of the logframe is the objective hierarchy. A logframe outline used in the IFAD Guide to M&E is this:

Goal	Performance and Indicators	Questions	Monitoring mechanism and Information sources	Assumptions
Component Purpose	...		...	...
Output	...		...	...
Activity	...		...	...

The vertical logic identifies what the project intends to do, clarifies the causal relationships, and specifies the important assumptions and uncertainties beyond the project manager's control (columns 1 and 4). The horizontal logic defines how project objectives specified in the project description will be measured, and the means by which the measurement will be verified (columns 2 and 3). This provides the framework for project monitoring and evaluation.

In most projects, the once-made logframe serves as a rigid means of assessing whether the project has achieved what it should. We think it would be better for learning and creating real impact of a project, when the logframe is considered as a more flexible document.

MATRIX ANALYSIS

Purpose: Rank the value of a particular activity or item according to a range of criteria.

Description: First decide what it is that you want to compare, then determine what criteria will be used. Then each item can be scored against the criteria. If some criteria are deemed more important they can be given extra weight. The totals can be added to show which is the most beneficial item.

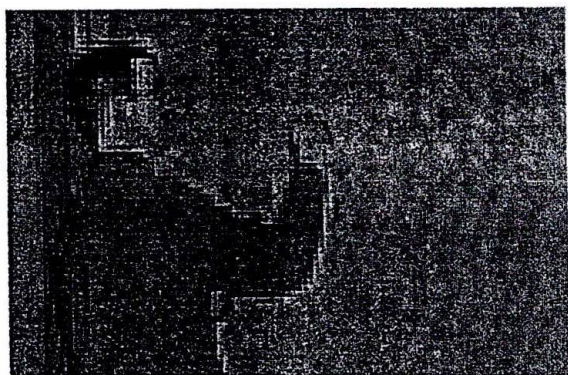
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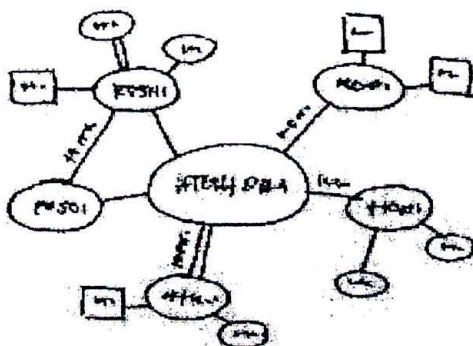
CRITERIA	ITEM		
	1	2	3
1	100	100	100
2	100	100	100
3	100	100	100
4	100	100	100
5	100	100	100
6	100	100	100
7	100	100	100

MINDMAPPING

Purpose: To cluster similar ideas, to see links between them and to pick out the most important issues when discussing or brainstorming. As in rich picturing, this is a good way of making sure all aspects of a situation have been considered.



Description: On butchers paper or a whiteboard, start with the central issue or question and then build a dendrogram (like a tree) of ideas from the central question. You can put down the most important or higher order things first and then build on these.



NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

Purpose: To enable a group to quickly develop a ranked list of problems, issues or actions.

Description: Develop a list of the problems, issues or actions that need to be ranked. Express each as clearly as possible to avoid confusion. Each person then ranks the statements according to what they see as the priorities. Each person should give the highest number (if there are six statements the highest number will be six) to their highest ranked statement and the next highest number to their next highest priority and so on through the list. The rankings from each person are added up. The total scores for each statement will enable them to be put in order of importance. This can be done in small or large groups and can take from 15 minutes to an hour depending on the size of the group and how much debate there is over the initial statements.

ISSUE	SCORES						TOTAL SCORES	RANK
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	5
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	2
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	1
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	6
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	4
~~~~~	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	3

This tool can support other methods or tools. It can help, for example, to generate a list of priority performance questions or indicators, to prioritise stakeholders during a stakeholder analysis and to follow up on impact flow diagrams to prioritise impacts.

PROBLEM TREE

The problem tree is a core tool in the Logical Framework Approach.

Purpose: Identify the main problems and establish the cause and effect relationships between these problems (so that these are sufficiently addressed in a project design). Perform this exercise with a group of different stakeholders.

- Brainstorm all problems in the situation and put each on a card
- Identify a common agreed the core problem (linked to most other problems), and write a precise definition on a card.
- Divide the other cards into causes and effects of the core problem; put then respectively below and above the core problem. Some cards may also turn out to be overall constraints (move to the side of the core problem).
- Try to find all cause and effect relations and move the cards accordingly. There can be more causes to one effect or more effects to one cause.
- Review the result, check the logic and revise if necessary
- Draw vertical links to show cause-effect relationships, and horizontal links to show joint causes and combined effects.
- Copy the diagram on a sheet of paper

OBJECTIVES TREE

An objectives tree is a hierarchical flowchart of objectives. Within the Logical Framework Approach, this is the positive opposite of the problem tree.

Description:

1. Taking the problem tree as your base, invert all the problems in order to make them into objectives. This process then leads into an "objectives tree" with the central objective simply being the inverse of the central problem.
2. Ask participants then to look at these objectives and discuss which of these can be tackled by the project.
3. The problem and objectives trees are a first step towards producing a logical framework matrix

Tips on use:

The problem and objectives tree provide a comprehensive though simplified view of cause and effect relationships. In this way, the process of creating a logical framework can become more accessible to primary (and other) stakeholders, making it easier to involve them in revising the project design or developing their own activities. Linkages are represented with lines or arrows. If arrows are to be used, make sure that everyone is clear about what arrows mean as they are not a universally understood symbol.

TIMELINE

Timeline is a widely used participatory tool to understand a kind of history of a community. It gives a quick impression of the community how it is moving forward or what history has been carried by the community. It generates information of the major events (e.g. earthquake, epidemic, landslide, flood, new school building, electricity, new road built, new technology etc) of the community which has a certain impact in the society.

This tool is useful to build rapport in the community as well. Without good rapport building there is not possible to apply participatory tool in the communities. It is a very easy tool to apply and makes the key informant happy to tell about their story/history which helps to build rapport.

This tool is also very useful to understand and analyse the conflict situation on how the conflict evolved and came to the present situation. It generates information from the conflicting parties that according to them what happened in different time interval.

Application Process:

- Identify the Key Informant in the community (in many cases old knowledgeable people would be the Key person for the historical events)
- Clarify the objective of using this tool to the community
- Ask them to tell about the past major events happened the community that has certain impact and they still remember it.
- Facilitate to explain about only one event at a time with date so that you can note down the information
- Make a simple format containing columns of Date, Major events, Impact and record the information

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Example

Date	Major Events	Effects/ Impact	Remarks

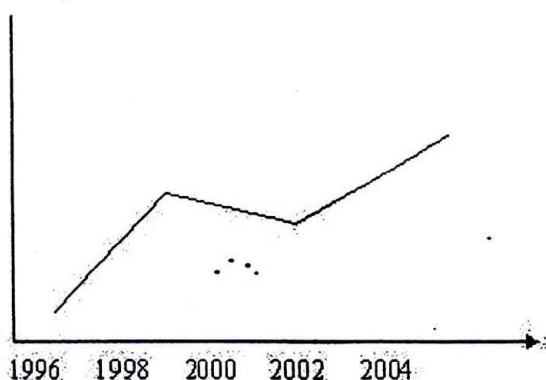
TIME TREND

This is a simple participatory tool to understand the situation of any development intervention such as agriculture production, forestry, livestock, health condition etc etc. It helps to understand and analyze the fluctuation situation of development progress and their reasons during the different time interval.

Application Process:

- Identify the key informants according to the sector that you are going to use it. For example if you are applying it to analyze information of paddy production you have to identify the people who are mostly involve in the sector
- Draw a right angle and below the line write the year since when you are required to get the information (may be past 10-20 years)
- Ask them to point what was the situation of the paddy production in the year 1995 then 1996 or 1998 etc. what time interval (every 1 year or 2 years or 5 years) you required the information
- Draw the line accordingly and if there is major fluctuation why it was happened discuss on it and record the information

Example



TRANSECT WALK

Transect walk is a way of data collection in informal surveys and participatory studies. It is essentially a walk over the transect of an area to observe and document the similarities and differences of socio-economic and bio-physical features. It is usually used in areas where there is spatial diversity.

VENN DIAGRAMS

Also called institutional linkage diagrams or Chapati diagrams

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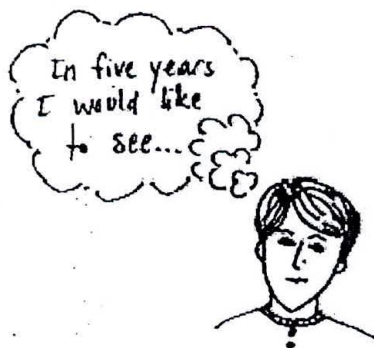
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Purpose: To illustrate the extent to which individuals, organisations, projects or services interact with each other or overlap and the importance of each, and their efforts, to the issue being evaluated.

Description: Each entity is represented by a circle. The larger the circle the more important it is, the closer circles are to each other the more interaction there is. Large circles represent powerful organisations, overlapping circles represent interacting organisations and a small circle within a larger circle represents a component of that organisation. The diagrams may be created using cut out circles or by drawing. The group may combine their diagrams and discuss any differences. Further discussions may tackle issues such as conflict resolution or organisational capacity building.

VISIONING

Purpose: To develop a shared vision of what a group would like the outcome of a project or evaluation exercise to be. This helps people think creatively and let go of immediate problems. It is also a way of finding common ground between conflicting interests.



Description: Ask people to describe how they would like things to be in the future. It is possible to do this in an imaginary way. For example, ask people to imagine they are giving a presentation at a conference at some point in the future describing why their project has been successful. This can be done with from one individual up to a large group and the time taken varies accordingly.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC)

The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole.

Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by 'searching' for project impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact.

What's in a name?

MSC has had several names since it was conceived with each emphasising a different aspect.

Monitoring-without-indicators

MSC does not make use of pre-defined indicators, especially ones that have to be counted and measured.

The 'story' approach

The answers to the central question about change are often in the form of stories of who did what, when and why – and the reasons why the event was important (Dart 1999a, 1999b).

Monitoring

MSC was first developed as a means of monitoring changes in a development aid project (Davies, 1996). We think it can also be used for evaluation purposes.

Impact monitoring

Unlike traditional monitoring techniques that focus largely on monitoring activities and outputs, MSC focuses on monitoring intermediate outcomes and impact.

Evolutionary approach to organisational learning

This was the original name given to the technique by Rick. The name reflects the epistemology that informed the original design. In 2000, we settled on the name **Most Significant Change** technique. This embodies one of the most fundamental aspects of the approach: the collection and systematic analysis of significant changes.

The MSC story

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The most significant change (MSC) technique was invented by Rick Davies in an attempt to meet some of the challenges associated with monitoring and evaluating a complex participatory rural development program in Bangladesh, which had diversity in both implementation and outcomes. The program was run by the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), a Bangladeshi non-government organisation, which in 1996 had over 500 staff and worked with more than 46,000 people in 785 villages. Approximately 80 per cent of the direct beneficiaries were women. The large scale and open-ended nature of the activities posed a major problem for the design of any system intended to monitor process and outcome (Davies, 1996).

Rick developed the MSC technique as part of the fieldwork for his PhD on organisational learning in non-government aid organisations (Davies, 1996). Both the thesis and MSC were informed by an evolutionary epistemology. While you don't need to know this background theory in order to use MSC, you can find out more about it in Chapter 7. It is also worth noting that Jess and others have analysed the use of MSC from different theoretical perspectives to that used by Rick. This flexibility is consistent with the underlying design of MSC.

Overview of implementation steps

MSC is an emerging technique, and many adaptations have already been made that will be discussed throughout this Guide. Before getting into modifications, we present a comprehensive overview of what a 'full' implementation of MSC might look like. We have described this using ten steps.

1. How to start and raise interest
2. Defining the domains of change
3. Defining the reporting period
4. Collecting SC stories
5. Selecting the most significant of the stories
6. Feeding back the results of the selection process
7. Verification of stories
8. Quantification
9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring
10. Revising the system.

The first step in MSC generally involves introducing a range of stakeholders to MSC and fostering interest and commitment to participate. The next step is to identify the domains of change to be monitored. This involves selected stakeholders identifying broad domains—for example, 'changes in people's lives'—that are not precisely defined like performance indicators, but are deliberately left loose, to be defined by the actual users. The third step is to decide how frequently to monitor changes taking place in these domains.

SC stories are collected from those most directly involved, such as participants and field staff. The stories are collected by asking a simple question such as: *'During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?'* It is initially up to respondents to allocate their stories to a domain category. In addition to this, respondents are encouraged to report why they consider a particular change to be the most significant one.

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The stories are then analysed and filtered up through the levels of authority typically found within an organisation or program. Each level of the hierarchy reviews a series of stories sent to them by the level below and selects the single most significant account of change within each of the domains. Each group then sends the selected stories up to the next level of the program hierarchy, and the number of stories is whittled down through a systematic and transparent process. Every time stories are selected, the criteria used to select them are recorded and fed back to all interested stakeholders, so that each subsequent round of story collection and selection is informed by feedback from previous rounds. The organisation is effectively recording and adjusting the direction of its attention – and the criteria it uses for valuing the events it sees there.

After this process has been used for some time, such as a year, a document is produced with all stories selected at the uppermost organisational level over that period in each domain of change. The stories are accompanied by the reasons the stories were selected. The program funders are asked to assess the stories in this document and select those that best represent the sort of outcomes they wish to fund. They are also asked to document the reasons for their choice. This information is fed back to project managers.

The selected stories can then be verified by visiting the sites where the described events took place. The purpose of this is two-fold: to check that stories have been reported accurately and honestly, and to provide an opportunity to gather more detailed information about events seen as especially significant. If conducted some time after the event, a visit also offers a chance to see what has happened since the event was first documented.

The next step is quantification, which can take place at two stages. When an account of change is first described, it is possible to include quantitative information as well as qualitative information. It is also possible to quantify the extent to which the most significant changes identified in one location have taken place in other locations within a specific period. The next step after quantification is monitoring the monitoring system itself, which can include looking at who participated and how they affected the contents, and analysing how often different types of changes are reported. The final step is to revise the design of the MSC process to take into account what has been learned as a direct result of using it and from analysing its use.

The kernel

The kernel of the MSC process is a question along the lines of:

'Looking back over the last month, what do you think was the most significant change in [particular domain of change]?'

A similar question is posed when the answers to the first question are examined by another group of participants:

'From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?'

This process provides a simple means of making sense of a large amount of complex information collected from many participants across a range of settings.

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Telling each level about the choice of significant changes made at the higher levels is an essential component of the whole process. This helps readjust the focus of searches for significant change in each subsequent reporting period.

The purpose

There are several reasons why a wide range of organisations have found MSC monitoring very useful and these include the following:

1. It is a good means of identifying unexpected changes.
2. It is a good way to clearly identify the values that prevail in an organisation and to have a practical discussion about which of those values are the most important. This happens when people think through and discuss which of the SCs is the most significant. This can happen at all levels of the organisation.
3. It is a participatory form of monitoring that requires no special professional skills. Compared to other monitoring approaches, it is easy to communicate across cultures. There is no need to explain what an indicator is. Everyone can tell stories about events they think were important.
4. It encourages analysis as well as data collection because people have to explain why they believe one change is more important than another.
5. It can build staff capacity in analysing data and conceptualising impact.
6. It can deliver a rich picture of what is happening, rather than an overly simplified picture where organisational, social and economic developments are reduced to a single number.
7. It can be used to monitor and evaluate bottom-up initiatives that do not have predefined outcomes against which to evaluate.

When and when not to use MSC

MSC is better suited to some program contexts than others. In a simple program with easily defined outcomes (such as vaccination, perhaps), quantitative monitoring may be sufficient and would certainly consume less time than MSC. In other program contexts, however, conventional monitoring and evaluation tools may not provide sufficient data to make sense of program impacts and foster learning. The types of programs that are not adequately catered for by orthodox approaches and can gain considerable value from MSC include programs that are:

- complex and produce diverse and emergent outcomes
- large with numerous organisational layers focused on social change
- participatory in ethos
- designed with repeated contact between field staff and participants
- struggling with conventional monitoring systems
- highly customised services to a small number of beneficiaries (such as family counselling).

Monitoring and evaluation in an organisation may serve several purposes. MSC addresses some purposes more than others. In our experience, MSC is suited to monitoring that focuses on **learning** rather than just accountability. It is also an appropriate tool when you are interested in the effect of the intervention on people's lives

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and keen to include the words of non-professionals. In addition, MSC can help staff to improve their capabilities in capturing and analysing the impact of their work.

There are also some instances where the benefits may not justify the cost of MSC. While MSC can be used to address the following, there may be other less time-consuming ways to achieve the same objectives:

- capture expected change
- develop good news stories for public relations (PR)
- conduct retrospective evaluation of a program that is complete
- understand the average experience of participants
- produce an evaluation report for accountability purposes
- complete a quick and cheap evaluation.

Some program contexts are more conducive to the successful implementation of MSC. In our experience, some of the key enablers for MSC are:

- an organisational culture where it is acceptable to discuss things that go wrong as well as success
- champions (i.e. people who can promote the use of MSC) with good facilitation skills
- a willingness to try something different
- time to run several cycles of the approach
- infrastructure to enable regular feedback of the results to stakeholders
- commitment by senior managers.