Monitoring and Evaluation of NGO Capacity Building Interventions in

Conflict Affected Settings

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JSI

A GUIDE TO

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Capacity building for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can foster the development of organizational confidence, creativity, independence, and effectiveness, improving NGO performance and bringing benefits to the communities they serve (Liebler and Ferri 2004).

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Acronyms

CB	Capacity building
CBD	Community based distributor
FP	Family planning
HR	Human resources
INGO	International nongovernmental organization
JD	Job description
JSI	JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MSC	Most significant change
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OD	Organizational development
RH	Reproductive health
RHR	Reproductive Health for Refugees
RHRC	Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium
SMART	(objective) Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Acknowledgments

Foreword

JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), on behalf of the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium,[1] has been working with community-based partners for over 12 years. Since 1996, JSI has managed the Consortium's flagship Astarte Project. As part of the RHRC Consortium's goal to promote the availability of quality, comprehensive reproductive health care for populations in conflict, the Small Grants/Capacity Building Program fosters leadership and institutional strengthening among local NGOs.

To date, the project has granted more than 1,000,000 USD to local NGOs in almost 20 countries. Many of these grants did not exceed 10,000 USD. These recipients have used the small grants to develop innovative and effective strategies to increase access to reproductive health in their respective communities. Recognizing the importance of sustainable, quality services, the small grants program emphasizes not only direct service delivery, but also broader organizational strengthening needs.

Over time JSI has determined that local groups and organizations are well positioned to provide culturally and geographically accessible outreach and services. With focused technical and organizational support and modest financial inputs, local organizations can provide high-quality, comprehensive reproductive health care that can be sustained locally. JSI has witnessed the need for and the benefits of organizational capacity-building, which ultimately aims to improve services. We also recognize the need to document these benefits in a systematic way. Since the beginning of the project, JSI has been working with local NGOs to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation systems for their programs. We wanted to be rigorous and methodical in evaluating the quality of organizational capacity building efforts in addition to assessing health program quality. We found that standard M&E approaches and tools were not entirely appropriate for documenting the organizational changes occurring within local organizations. This *Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of NGO Capacity Building Interventions in Conflict Affected Settings* is intended for both funders and technical providers of capacity building as well as the partners with whom they work. In the development community, the phrase 'capacity building' is used frequently, but few feel comfortable explaining what capacity building entails, much less how to measure it. In JSI's opinion, one of the driving reasons for developing this guide is to demystify capacity building and provide concrete, step by step approaches to measuring capacity building.

Although JSI has prioritized monitoring and evaluating RH programming since the project's conception, an increasing donor emphasis on demonstrating impact is consistent with our own recognition of the need to systematize our M&E efforts for the organizational capacity component of our work with partners. Despite the growing popularity of 'capacity building approaches' in the development and public health communities, we found a lack of information and resources on M&E for capacity building with local NGOs in conflict affected settings.

In developing this guide, JSI aims to fill a gap in the field of M&E of capacity building related to organizations working in conflict affected settings. In sum, this guide is needed because:

- there are limited tools and strategies for measuring capacity building interventions in general, and few are practical for use with small organizations that work in conflict affected settings;
- INGOs, NGOs, and donors working in this field require tools to measure, document, and evaluate capacity building to improve and learn from their work; and
- the increasing trend towards using capacity building as a strategy demands a systematic approach to the M&E of capacity building.

Introduction

Why build organizational capacity in conflict affected settings?

Capacity building for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can foster the development of organizational confidence, creativity, independence, and effectiveness, improving NGO performance and bringing benefits to the communities they serve (Liebler and Ferri 2004). In conflict affected settings, local NGO capacity building helps ensure the availability of critically needed services and represents a sustainable approach to meeting longer-term development needs. As assistance to conflict areas transitions from humanitarian to development, essential services and other social programs are often disrupted or they deteriorate because of three common practices: the rapid withdrawal of human and financial resources by international humanitarian NGOs; poor coordination between international humanitarian NGOs and the international development NGOs that replace them; and inflexibility in donor budgets (Surkhe and Ofstad 2005). This disruption or decline can be minimized by building the capacity of local NGOs and helping them play a leadership role in service provision from the early stages of humanitarian assistance. Capacity building also supports local NGOs in their vital efforts as community advocates and mobilizers, facilitating community participation in peace-building and governance reform processes that are intended to restore peace and stability.

Why monitor and evaluate organizational capacity building interventions?

There are two main reasons to carry out high quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of organizational capacity building interventions with local NGOs. First, M&E provides information that can be used to guide and improve capacity building interventions. Using participatory approaches to M&E allows local and international NGO partners to engage in a productive dialogue about their capacity building partnership and adjust their course of action to optimize results. Over time, M&E contributes to the development of a sound evidence base for capacity building, which informs the design of future interventions and ultimately enables local and international NGOs to meet program goals and objectives more effectively. Second, M&E data can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of capacity building interventions to donors looking for evidence of the benefits of their investments. Donors increasingly seek concrete evidence—both quantitative and qualitative—of the ways in which capacity building interventions make a difference, both to local NGOs and the communities they serve. Investing in M&E is therefore a sound strategy for encouraging donors to support local NGOs in conflict affected settings.

Purpose of the guide

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this guide is to support high quality M&E of capacity building interventions for local NGOs operating in conflict affected settings. In order to meet this objective, the guide outlines a systematic, flexible, and participatory approach for establishing a plan for M&E of capacity building that can be adapted to meet the needs of different organizations. While this guide does not address planning the capacity building intervention itself; ideally the plan for the intervention and the planning for the M&E should occur in parallel. The guide responds to the limited availability of resources for the M&E of capacity building, particularly those that consider the specific challenges faced by local NGOs in conflict affected settings.

AUDIENCE

This guide is primarily intended for *international NGOs* supporting the capacity building of local NGOs in conflict affected settings. *Local NGOs*[2] will also find the guide useful, whether they are participating in or managing capacity building interventions. The guide may also be of interest to *donors* supporting NGO capacity building interventions.

APPLICATIONS

The main application of this guide is to support NGO efforts to plan and implement M&E activities in order to measure the effectiveness of capacity building interventions. The guide introduces an accessible conceptual framework, practical guidelines for M&E of capacity building, and a selection of participatory tools and indicators which NGOs can draw upon and adapt in this process. The guide emphasizes participatory approaches to M&E of capacity building throughout because experience has demonstrated that the meaningful participation of organizational staff and volunteers is critical to the success of capacity building interventions.

During the initial design phase of a capacity building intervention, the guide can assist NGOs to think through the challenges they will face in monitoring and evaluating their activities and develop strategies to address them. The guide can also be used to advocate for greater investment in capacity building for local NGOs in conflict affected settings, by demonstrating that it is possible to meet the informational needs of donor organizations.

Donors may find the guide helpful in developing realistic expectations of the kinds of evidence that international and local NGOs can produce through the M&E of capacity building interventions.

[2] The reference to "local NGOs" in the guide refers to local organizations. These are distinguished from INGOs (international NGOs), whose headquarters, board, leaders, etc. often may be based in an external country. Local NGOs may themselves provide capacity building support to other local NGOs or to INGOs. However, in this guide, for simplicity, local NGOs are referred to more often as the organizations that may be benefiting from capacity building support from INGOs.

The monitoring and evaluation of capacity building is a relatively new field that has not yet come to a consensus around a set of standardized approaches. In many ways, measuring capacity remains an art rather than a science. While the guide aims to provide a conceptually sound outline and clear, practical steps for the M&E of capacity building, users of this guide should expect to actively engage with and adapt it to ensure its appropriateness for their intervention.

This guide also acknowledges the difficulties and limitations of attributing changes at the level of the target population directly to a capacity building intervention. While this guide aims to provide readers with guidance on monitoring the efforts of their capacity building intervention, it requires readers to accept that a direct causal link may not be possible to detect through a proposed M&E system.

Organization of the guide

The guide consists of four sections:

- **Introduction:** outlines the rationale of the guide and provides an overview of its contents.

- **SECTION 1.** Conceptual issues in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of capacity building: provides definitions of key terms referred to throughout the guide, identifies key challenges encountered in M&E of capacity building, and introduces a conceptual framework for M&E of capacity building that moves beyond the traditional log frame approach.

- **SECTION 2.** Practical guidelines for the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building: covers general principles for planning and implementation of M&E of capacity building, provides step-by-step guidelines to developing an M&E plan for a capacity building intervention, and introduces three participatory tools for M&E of capacity building.

- **SECTION 3.** Capacity building indicators: provides a menu of indicators which can be used to measure changes resulting from capacity building interventions.

- The final portion of the guide consists of a series of annexes with tools that can be used or adapted by organizations to develop M&E of capacity building plans.

SECTION 1. Conceptual issues in the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building

Organizational capacity building interventions for local organizations operating in conflict affected settings are widespread, but systematic M&E of capacity building is rare. The field of M&E of capacity building is in an early stage of development and no standard set of tools and approaches currently exists. This remains particularly true in conflict affected settings, where M&E has not been a priority due to the urgency of meeting immediate social needs. This section defines key terms and concepts, details challenges to M&E of capacity building, and introduces an accessible conceptual framework for M&E of capacity building suitable for local NGOs. The guide provides adequate background information for users who are operational in humanitarian settings to inform the practical application of M&E of capacity building.

Defining key terms

Before introducing the conceptual framework, it is helpful to define some essential terms used in the field of capacity measurement.

Capacity building: An explicit effort to improve an organization's ability to perform in relation to its purpose, context, resources, and viability. Capacity building may require new skills or changes in individual behavior or changes to an organization's structure, systems, procedures, culture, and or strategies and decision-making processes. Capacity building includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills, and access to information, knowledge, and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- Organizational development, the improvement and streamlining of management structures, processes, and procedures, not only within organizations but also between and among both organizations and sectors (e.g. private, public, and nonprofit).

Performance: A set of results that represent productivity and competence related to an established objective, goal, or standard. An organization's performance is influenced by its capacity, by its internal environment, and by the external environment in which it operates.

Sustainability: Capacity building should empower people and organizations to realize their potential, utilize their capabilities, and take ownership of the development process, therefore contributing to their sustainability. When one organization assists another to build capacity, the aim is usually to maintain gains in performance with gradually reduced levels of external support.

Plausible association: In the absence of a methodology to produce quantitative evidence of attribution of a causal link between intervention *a* leading to outcome or impact *b* or *c*, accepting that it is plausible that the intervention has led in some part to changes at the outcome or impact level (James 2002).

Organizational capacity building: The purpose of organizational capacity building interventions is to strengthen organizational capacity, which can be defined as an organization's "potential to perform" (Lavergne 2005) or its "ability to carry out stated objectives" (Goodman et al. 1998). Normally when we monitor and evaluate programs, we focus on measuring performance. However, capacity building also emphasizes *the processes* that precede and contribute to the outcome of improved organizational performance. M&E of capacity building therefore requires a more complex approach to traditional monitoring and evaluation, since it must capture changes in organizational structure and behavior, as well as the outcomes or the impact of an organization's programs.

Monitoring and evaluation (M & E): M&E is a systematic process that facilitates the collection of information and feedback needed to measure whether an intervention or a program is having an effect. It is important because it helps determine to what degree desired outcomes are being achieved.

Capacity monitoring: Capacity monitoring involves measuring the "effectiveness and efficiency of capacity building interventions during implementation" (LaFond and Brown 2001). Capacity monitoring asks: Is capacity being enhanced in response to capacity building activities? Are the resources allocated for capacity building sufficient? Capacity monitoring should form an integral part of the management of capacity building interventions, informing decision-making throughout the implementation process. Capacity monitoring data should therefore be collected on a regular basis during implementation.

Capacity evaluation: Capacity evaluation measures the "relationship between capacity building interventions and capacity outcomes…" (LaFond and Brown 2001). Capacity evaluation asks: Did unintended capacity outcomes result from the intervention? And, in some cases: Did changes in capacity result in changes in performance? Capacity evaluation is usually more complex than capacity monitoring because it takes an in-depth look at the linkages between the capacity building intervention and capacity outcomes. Capacity evaluation is usually conducted on a periodic basis.

Capacity assessment: Capacity assessment is distinct from M&E of capacity building. It is usually carried out to determine the focus of a capacity building intervention rather than to measure its success. Capacity assessment therefore establishes the "gap between actual and desired performance" (LaFond and Brown

2001) at a particular moment in time, often through a one-time appraisal, rather than measuring changes in capacity over time through ongoing measurement. Analogous to a situational assessment, a capacity assessment provides a framework for thinking about capacity rather than a specific analysis of the relationship between a targeted capacity building intervention and its outcomes. Capacity assessment provides a useful entry point for capacity building by introducing new concepts and identifying broad areas of capacity that require strengthening. These 'target' areas of capacity form the basis on which to define a capacity building plan, which should include a plan for systematic M&E.

Organizational capacity assessment tools: Capacity assessments often employ one of a number of different organizational capacity assessment tools developed to assess the capacity of diverse organizations working in different development sectors. These tools vary widely in the degree of participatory involvement of the members of the organization being assessed and the rigor of capacity measurement employed. In this guide, the Spider Tool SCORE Card is presented as one useful capacity assessment tool for initiating the process of M&E of capacity building with local NGOs in conflict affected settings. For some organizations, capacity building will involve new concepts, and a simple capacity assessment tool such as the Spider Tool SCORE Card offers an engaging way of introducing this material. Appendix A contains a list of other capacity assessment tool references.[3]

Organizational development: Organizational development is a deliberate effort, organization-wide, to improve an organization's effectiveness through planned interventions. Organizational development is similar to the concept of capacity building (in fact some authors use the terms interchangeably). In this guide, capacity building emphasizes the process of developing an organization's skills and abilities that may be required in the process of undergoing changes associated with organizational development.

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[1] The Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium (RHRC) promotes sustained access to comprehensive, high quality reproductive health programs in emergencies and advocates for policies that support the reproductive health of persons affected by armed conflict. Members include American Refugee Committee (ARC), CARE, Columbia University's Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health in the Mailman School of Public Health, International Rescue Committee (IRC), JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), Marie Stopes International (MSI), and Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Identifying challenges to M&E of capacity building

There are several common challenges to monitoring and evaluating capacity building interventions which should be taken into account when developing an M&E plan. For each challenge, we provide a particular example that relates to conflict affected settings.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND CAPACITY BUILDING MEASUREMENT ARE HIGHLY COMPLEX

Organizational capacity is multi-dimensional, dynamic, and highly influenced by contextual factors. Because of the range of possible interactions that affect organizational capacity, both within an organization and between an organization and its environment, it is often difficult to trace a direct causal link between a capacity building intervention and outcomes reflecting organizational strengthening. For example, the renewal of conflict, the departure of a key staff member, or the loss of a major donor will challenge an organization's capacity to respond effectively, obscuring the links between the capacity building intervention and changes in capacity. Control groups strengthen evaluation because they provide a comparison to help ascertain whether any change resulting from the intervention is not actually a result of other factors unrelated to the intervention. Unfortunately, it is not often possible to use control groups when carrying out M&E of capacity building interventions.

Rick James (2001) argues that 'plausible association' is a realistic aim for M&E of capacity building, rather than precise measurement of cause and effect. While it would be scientifically stronger to have quantitative evidence of attribution of the given intervention leading to change at the level of the target population, direct attribution is not well suited for M&E of capacity building. While the issue of attribution can not be resolved completely, many in the field of capacity measurement agree that 'plausible association' is an acceptable assumption from which to work.

■ *Conflict affected specifics:* When a capacity building intervention is undertaken in an area characterized by long standing instability and insecurity, organizational capacity is severely threatened by loss of staff, lack of access to resources, and lack of continuity in programming, among other challenges. The complexity of the conflict affected environment and the challenges it presents are likely to make it even more difficult to demonstrate 'plausible association' between a capacity building intervention and its outcomes. Under such circumstances, it will be particularly important to pay significant attention to the role of contextual factors in any analysis of organizational change.

CAPACITY BUILDING IS GRADUAL

Capacity building experts agree that capacity building is a long-term process, with some estimating that it may take as long as ten years before real results are achieved (James 2001). It is important to be realistic about the kinds of changes that might take place within the timeframe of the capacity building intervention, and to time data collection appropriately. For example, clarifying an organization's mission or establishing a strategic vision is not likely to happen meaningfully in one instance and could take several months or more. The process may require a number of incremental changes, consultation, and buy-in from multiple levels of stakeholders.

- *Conflict affected specifics:* In conflict affected settings, unstable or newly (re)instated governments and donors are often under pressure to demonstrate tangible and relatively rapid results. At the community level, activities which produce concrete outputs with clear or concrete results, such as the reconstruction of schools and health facilities, may seem more appealing rather than the often intangible results of capacity building interventions. For this reason, M&E of capacity building in conflict affected settings plays a particularly important role in building a case for long-term investment in local NGO capacity.

CAPACITY BUILDING IS POLITICAL

"…capacity building is concerned with social and political relationships. It cannot, therefore, be viewed in isolation from the wider social, economic and political environment—governments, markets and the private sector as well as CBOs, NGOs and other institutions, right down to the community, household and personal level." (Eade 1997, p. 23)

Capacity building often requires that an organization delve into its internal affairs and address the power dynamics within the organization. The presence of an external capacity builder can be perceived as intrusive and power struggles among an organization's staff often surface during the capacity-building process. The political nature of capacity building presents challenges for measurement as well as implementation of capacity building activities. For example, the M&E process could be 'captured' by one set of stakeholders, reflecting only their perceptions of capacity development. Table 1 provides an illustrative example of common differences among stakeholder perspectives related to capacity building.

Alternatively, participants in a capacity building process may conceal organizational challenges for fear of a reduction of donor support or other negative consequences. Such tensions can be minimized through the use of carefully facilitated participatory approaches and through sensitivity, acceptance, and acknowledgement of existing differences and potential issues of confrontation within an organization.

- *Conflict affected specifics:* Conflict disrupts community life, exacerbating existing ethnic or class tensions and it breeds mistrust of those beyond an individual's inner circle. This mistrust and tension is often deeply rooted. Therefore in conflict affected settings it may be particularly difficult to build the trust and commitment required for a successful capacity building intervention. INGOs supporting capacity building interventions should ensure that they are aware of social divisions resulting from conflict and develop strategies to manage them during the M&E process.

Table 1

Illustrative example of differential stakeholder perspectives on
capacity building component of a health intervention

	Local NGO	International NGO	Donor	Program target population
Available inputs	• Immediately accessible human resources • In-depth knowledge and understanding of the local culture, history, and context	• Potential to mobilize human, material, and financial resources • Knowledge and understanding of widely accepted criteria for financial and other systems • Experience of implementation in other contexts	• Financial resources • Experience of support in other contexts	• Human capacity • In-depth knowledge and understanding of the local culture, history, and context
Style	• Use of the in-depth knowledge of staff members, strengthening level of commitment and participation	• May have pressure from funders to achieve quick results	• Results-oriented, seeking demonstrable and timely change	• Pragmatic, concerned about immediate needs
Implicit/ underlying priorities	• Organizational survival	• Efficiency and effectiveness of interventions	• Cost-effectiveness; desire for evidence of impact and money well spent	• Survival, family, community, security
Desired outcomes	• Improve organization's ability to raise funds • Increase organization's sustainability • Improve quality of organization's service delivery	• Increase capacity of local NGOs to serve as effective health implementers • Demonstrate ability to facilitate capacity building interventions, improving ability to raise funds for similar work • Meet accountability requirements of donors	• Improve quality of health services • Achieve meaningful and sustainable involvement of local NGOs in health provision • Meet accountability requirements of constituencies	• Receive better services from local NGO • Survival, wellbeing
Desired impact	• Reduction in maternal mortality in community x	• Reduction in maternal mortality in country x	• Reduction in maternal mortality worldwide, including country x, community x	• Reduction in maternal mortality in community x

Conceptualizing capacity building

Traditional M&E frameworks normally rely on a log frame approach which connects inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact in a linear causal pathway represented in tabular form. Although this approach can be used for M&E of capacity building , even advocates of such a traditional framework acknowledge that the linear logic of a log frame relies on unconfirmed assumptions about the causal relationships that connect capacity building activities to outcomes and impact (LaFond and Brown 2001). Despite this challenge, it remains important for organizations to base their M&E plans for capacity building on a conceptual framework. The process of developing a tailored conceptual framework enables an organization to think through the complex causal linkages that may connect capacity building activities to capacity outcomes. It focuses the process on the bigger picture question of 'what is the issue' the organization is trying to address or contribute to, and then work backwards to identify what changes in the organization may contribute to that, as well as what contextual factors may be at play as well. The final framework provides a structure for the M&E plan by indicating what data will need to be collected to support a case for plausible association between capacity building intervention and the anticipated outcomes.

Rick James (2001) has developed an alternative model for conceptualizing the changes which result from capacity building: the "ripple" model. The "ripple" model is based on the premise that a capacity building intervention is like a drop of rain landing in water: it initiates a series of ripples that flow outwards, creating change. The simplest form of the model (see figure 1) identifies three main ripples: the capacity building process, internal organizational changes within the local NGO, and external changes in programs at the level of the target population. A full evaluation should examine all three levels as well as the role played by context, which is critical in determining the size and the direction of the ripples. The ripple metaphor is intended to communicate the difficulty in specifying exact causal pathways for capacity building interventions: one ripple moves outwards to cause another in an unpredictable fashion and the causal relationships between specific changes at each level are not articulated. Just as a drop of rain that lands in water is harder and harder to see as it moves outward, it is most difficult to draw the direct causal link to the outer rings of the ripple model.

Figure 1

The ripple model

THE CONTEXT

External changes in
programs with target population

Internal organizational
changes within the local NGO

Capacity building process

RIPPLE ONE: CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS

The first ripple focuses on the capacity building intervention itself. M&E that examines the process of implementing a capacity building intervention should address both the quantity and quality of capacity-building activities. Indicators should be developed through cooperation between the INGO and local NGO. As the facilitator of capacity building activities, the INGO bears significant responsibility for the results achieved within the first ripple.

- *Conflict affected specifics:* In an emergency phase INGOs may not have resources (time, financial, human) to dedicate to participatory methods. INGOs moving from a humanitarian phase to a development phase may need to shift to a more participatory approach to M&E capacity building than was used in the immediate post conflict period. If strong working relationships with local NGOs have not been established during the humanitarian phase, INGOs will need to work hard to gain local NGOs' trust as they make this transition.

RIPPLE TWO: INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN THE LOCAL NGO

M&E of internal organizational changes often focuses on particular domains that are considered to be important to the health of an organization, such as leadership, financial management, or relationships with stakeholders. Domains of interest, specific objectives, and indicators should be developed through cooperation between the INGO and the local NGO. Although the INGO may play a significant role at this level, ultimate responsibility for change rests with the local NGO.

■ *Conflict affected specifics:* As their country emerges from a period of conflict, local NGOs are likely to face a wide variety of capacity challenges that cannot be tackled all at once. It will be important to focus capacity building interventions and M&E on the most critical capacity challenges.

RIPPLE THREE: CHANGES IN PROGRAMS WITH TARGET POPULATION

A fuller evaluation may attempt to look at the ultimate impact of the capacity building intervention at the level of the target population. However, at this level, the timeframe for carrying out the evaluation is likely to be far longer and it will be more challenging to demonstrate plausible association in relationship to the desired outcomes of the target population. For this reason, most M&E systems may not be able to adequately detect improvements in the lives of the target population, despite the fact that this is of course the ultimate goal of interventions. Measurement experts have to make a 'leap of faith,' tracing an assumed pathway between changes in internal organizational capacity, recognizable changes in the organization's interactions with target population, and ultimately improvements in health status and other such indicators. It is not appropriate to evaluate change at this level in every case and particularly not in the case of small-scale or short-term capacity-building interventions.

■ *Conflict affected specifics:* Stakeholders are likely to be anxious to see measurable changes in the lives of conflict affected target populations as soon as possible. It will be important to engage in dialogue with stakeholders to foster realistic expectations of the capacity building intervention. In addition to the capacity challenges faced by local NGOs in conflict affected environments, it may also take time to re-establish household and community systems which influence the ability of target population to accept local NGO services. Stakeholders should understand that capacity building is a long-term and sometimes indirect approach to achieving changes in the target population's lives, such as improved health or educational status.

Capacity building experts agree that context exercises significant influence over capacity building interventions and outcomes. For this reason, contextual analysis should be used to inform the design of capacity building interventions and the effects of contextual factors should be considered throughout the M&E process.

■ *Conflict affected specifics:* The role of context when working in conflict affected settings should not be underestimated. Conflict settings are usually characterized by long- standing political instability, poor security arrangements and inadequate provision of public services, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and residual social tensions from the period of conflict, among other social challenges. Local NGOs often confront significant setbacks that undermine progress made through capacity building, most notably the renewal of conflict and the changing political agendas of new local leadership, which can sometimes shut down operations altogether. The local infrastructure may become a serious contextual consideration as capacity building plans are designed. While it is usually not possible to plan for these kinds of setbacks, a certain amount of flexibility must be built into the M&E plan. It is also critical to address the role played by contextual factors when analyzing the results achieved by a capacity building intervention.

The "ripple" model offers several advantages. First, the "ripple" metaphor captures the challenges of M&E of capacity building. The free-flowing ripple communicates the difficulty in tracing the precise causal pathway from the capacity building intervention to the desired outcome. Just as a ripple becomes more difficult to see as it moves further outwards, it is more difficult to link the capacity building process to change at the target population level. Second, the ripple model also communicates the importance of context to the success of the capacity building intervention and the gradual process through which change is achieved. Third, it is a clear and simple model which can be used when working with local NGOs whose experience with M&E is limited. Finally, the model is adaptable and can be tailored to different capacity building interventions.

An example of a customized ripple model for a local health NGO in Sierra Leone, Family Planning Society, is presented below. This fictional example draws on JSI's experience of conducting capacity building with local reproductive health organizations in conflict affected and transitional settings in Africa and Asia.

Figure 2

Customized ripple model for Family Planning Society

Ripple three,
External changes in programs with the target population: Family Planning Society retained a higher volume of continuing clients, a change plausibly associated with increased staff retention, increased services and recipients, and the number of contraceptives distributed.

Ripple two,
Internal organizational changes: Family Planning Society introduced a program of incentives to increase retention of community-based distributors of contraceptives. The retention rate improved by ten percent during the first year.

Ripple one,
Capacity building process: A capacity building plan was developed to improve the management of human resources (HR). Two key activities included an HR workshop and working group meetings for the development of a staff retention strategy.

THE CONTEXT

Family Planning Society operates in a war-affected district in Eastern Province. The security situation is generally stable, although many former fighters are resdent in the district. Contraceptive prevalence is low and maternal mortality rates among the highest in the world. Health infrastructure is very limited and many residents cannot access clinical health services due to travel distance or cost. During the heaviest part of the rainy season from July to September, the supply of contraceptives is often disrupted.

Practical guidelines for the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building

This section provides guidance on how to develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan based on the conceptual framework outlined above. As capacity building interventions vary widely in their focus and core activities, there is no "one-size-fits-all" M&E strategy that can be applied in every case. This section is intended to serve as a resource for the development and implementation of a tailored M&E plan. The guide identifies some general principles for the planning and implementation of M&E of capacity building, outlines a step-by-step guide to developing an M&E plan based on the ripple model, and introduces three data collection tools for participatory M&E.

General principles for the planning and implementation of M&E of capacity building

ADOPT A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Planning for M&E of capacity building is often more successful when it involves broad based participation from throughout the organization. Their full commitment to the M&E process is required to gather valuable information about the kinds of organizational change taking place, and to ensure that M&E findings are used to improve the quality and outcomes of the capacity building intervention. Given that there are few standard indicators of capacity, the organization itself is tasked with identifying what is reasonable to measure and how to measure them. The process of defining standard measures of progress together helps gain commitment from all parties to the capacity building goals. It is vital to avoid an "audit" approach to M&E, which can make NGO staff feel threatened and reluctant to share information about their organization. By fostering organizational ownership of the M&E process, the capacity builder can deepen understanding of and commitment to the capacity building intervention overall, increasing its sustainability.

- *Conflict affected specifics:* Local NGOs in conflict affected settings are often particularly vulnerable due to severe internal capacity challenges and reliance on limited sources of funding. INGOs should therefore engage local NGOs with sensitivity to the power relations that influence their partnership. It is also important to engage members of the NGO from all levels.

BE SYSTEMATIC

Using a participatory approach to M&E does not mean that anything goes. It is very important to be systematic in developing and implementing an M&E plan. Strategies which help ensure a systematic approach include: basing the M&E plan on a sound conceptual framework; documenting the M&E plan, including a timeline and specific roles and responsibilities; conducting data collection and analysis according to methodological guidelines; and fully documenting the findings pre- and post-intervention. Using standard indicators over time enables comparisons.

While a systematic approach is important, you should also retain flexibility so that the M&E process can evolve over time in response to changes in the intervention or the environment.

- ■ *Conflict affected specifics:* Conflict affected settings are often subject to unexpected change, such as renewed violence, political reforms, and delays in restoring infrastructure and services. Consider carrying out contingency planning to think through how to adapt both the capacity building intervention and the M&E plan should disruptive changes occur.

INTEGRATE M&E WITHIN OVERALL PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

It is far more effective and efficient to consider M&E of capacity building as one integrated component of the capacity building intervention, rather than a separate activity carried out alongside it. One of the main purposes of M&E of capacity building is to inform decision-making about the capacity building intervention. Thus it is good practice to include discussions about M&E during program planning meetings. In fact it is advisable for a single M&E plan to encompass both capacity building related to organizational systems and the M&E plan for programming. The focus of M&E of capacity building will be determined by the main priorities of the intervention overall, so it is important that these priorities are fully understood by those responsible for data collection and analysis. The organizational M&E of capacity building should be integrated within the project's overall M&E system. Smaller organizations with limited human, financial, and other resources and capacity may find it more feasible to incorporate an organizational M&E of capacity building plan into their programmatic M&E plan.

- ■ *Conflict affected specifics:* In complex conflict affected interventions that address multiple sectors and/or themes, it is particularly important to integrate M&E of capacity building into the relevant project components. If capacity building is treated as a separate sphere of activity, the links between the intervention and its intended impact are broken, and it is likely to lose its relevance.

CHOOSE DATA COLLECTION METHODS CAREFULLY AND MINIMIZE BIAS

When collecting information about changes in organizational capacity, biases can occur that require careful management. For example, measures based on self-reporting can be unreliable due to respondents' desire to present their organization in a particular light. They may exaggerate achievements or challenges in order to secure additional funding. An external consultant's perspective may be colored by too close an involvement with the local organization, which makes it difficult to maintain intellectual independence, or the consultant may have too distant of an

involvement, which results in lack of insight into the workings of the organization. The consultant may also fail to grasp the conflict related issues that affect the organization and its growth.

It is important to remain aware of potential biases that may occur during data collection and analysis and to minimize their influence as much as possible. Recognized strategies for minimizing bias include:
- combining quantitative and qualitative data;
- disseminate results from M&E to a wider group to validate findings; and
- 'triangulating' methods and data sources, which involves examining results collected through a variety of data-collection methods and sources to capture diverse perspectives and to determine whether they concur or differ (LaFond and Brown 2003; James 2001).

Conflict affected specifics: Further challenges that commonly affect data collection in traditional development settings are usually exacerbated by the conflict affected setting. This includes challenges due to insecurity or unexpected disruptions to data collection and lack of availability of data from public sources, such as records of public services provided. It is important to take such challenges into account when selecting data collection methods and to think creatively about alternatives to standard M&E approaches when desired data are not available.

Step-by-step guidelines for developing an M&E plan

Note to INGO: Work through the following steps with the local NGO and document them in an M&E plan. Work together with the local NGO at each step, keeping in mind that you should play a facilitating and advisory role. Enable the local NGO to guide and own the M&E plan and the capacity building intervention. It is important to maintain a broad perspective throughout the process; the M&E plan should reflect the organization's priority capacity building activities.

1. NEGOTIATE THE PURPOSE OF YOUR M&E PLAN WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

There are normally at least four main groups of stakeholders involved in a capacity building intervention: the local NGO, the INGO, the local NGO's target population, and its donors. Each of these groups is likely to have different priorities for the M&E of the capacity building intervention. These differences in perspective should be addressed upfront by talking to each group of stakeholders about their informational needs, and negotiating an agreement about the focus of the M&E plan. It may not be possible to satisfy all stakeholders fully, but an open conversa-

tion during the design and planning of the intervention increases the chances of meeting stakeholder needs and developing mutual understanding. If stakeholders will also be responsible for data collection, take this opportunity to discuss and agree upon the contributions each stakeholder will make.

2. CUSTOMIZE THE 'RIPPLE' MODEL OR OTHER CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO FIT YOUR PROGRAM

It is important to create a customized conceptual framework to guide the M&E of your capacity building intervention. If you are using the ripple model, determine which ripples you will include in your M&E plan and then determine a specific focus for each ripple. For example, for a year-long capacity building intervention with community-based reproductive health organizations, you might choose to focus on the first two ripples: the capacity building process and the changes in the local NGO. In the first ripple, you might focus on the quality of training and mentoring provided in financial management and monitoring and evaluation. In the second ripple, you might look at changes in organizational attitudes and practices in these two domains. The organization should still define the third ripple so that all stakeholders know what they are working towards. You should also pay attention to the context within which the intervention takes place and identify factors that may facilitate or hinder implementation.

3. 'RIPPLE' ONE: THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS

One approach to determining M&E priorities for the capacity building process is to review the activity plan for the capacity building intervention and identify the most significant activities. The M&E plan should be developed along with a capacity building implementation plan. As a complement to this plan, an organizational capacity assessment may facilitate the process for identifying M&E priorities as well as baseline indicators for the capacity building intervention. It is essential that the M&E plan is tailored to the specific objectives and activities that define the capacity building intervention. Once the priorities have been agreed upon, the team can define one or more objectives for this ripple. Appendix B provides guidance on developing objectives. Following this step, the team can define indicators for these objectives and determine data collection methods and frequency of data collection. Section D provides a compilation of indicators that may be useful in this process.

4. 'RIPPLE' TWO: INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES OF THE LOCAL NGO

The most obvious approach to choosing M&E priorities for the second ripple is to focus on distinct domains of organizational activity or distinct organizational functions such as financial management or human resources. The indicators in Section D describe aspects of such an approach. Once priorities have been determined, objectives and indicators can be developed as outlined above.

5. 'RIPPLE' THREE: CHANGES IN PROGRAMS WITH TARGET POPULATION

If a decision is reached to collect data on changes at the level of the third ripple, it is important to consider carefully which aspects of the program are most likely to be affected by the capacity building intervention, and focus M&E efforts there. It is difficult to measure 'plausible association' between the capacity building intervention and changes at the level of the target population, particularly for short-term interventions because so many other factors are contributing or hindering change at that level. Many of the changes at the ripple three take a long time to appear and the investment may not be cost effective to measure at the target population level. If you decide that it is important to investigate how your capacity building intervention contributes to change at this level, make sure that you consider how the data you collect will support a claim of plausible association. For example, if the project has been successful in its focus on staff retention, the turnover rate of staff may decline. Increasing the period of employment per staff member may improve motivation, training, and advancement opportunities for staff. These organizational changes need to be documented in relation to any programmatic outcomes such as an increase in the use of contraceptives. You should also remain aware of the constraints you will face in collecting the data you need from the target population living in communities affected by conflict.

6. CONTEXT

Now that the main structure of the M&E plan is in place, it is wise to think through the key contextual factors both inside and outside of the organization that could influence the capacity building intervention. There are some critical contextual factors specifically related to conflict affected settings that may be relevant, for example, the resurgence of conflict, a government undergoing rapid transformation, rapid funding cycles, or weak economic growth. These factors may hinder the development of capacity regardless of the strength of the intervention. You may choose indicators to track changes in some of the most critical contextual factors which could influence the intended outcomes of the intervention. These data may be helpful as you analyze the 'plausible association' between the capacity building intervention and its outcomes.[4]

7: DISSEMINATION

Decide on a dissemination strategy for your M&E results. With whom will you share the data? What methods will you use to communicate the findings of your M&E efforts? It is usually valuable to take an inclusive approach to dissemination and provide information about your findings to all major stakeholder groups.

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[4] Such indicators are not found in this guide but can easily be found in MEASURE Evaluation compendiums and other M&E reference manuals (see www.cpc.measure.edu).

Common dissemination strategies include producing summaries of results and reports, holding community workshops, and making presentations at conferences and other events. You should adapt your dissemination strategy to fit the needs of your audience.

Conclude your planning session by developing an overall timeline for all M&E activities. Revisit this timeline regularly and update as needed to keep your proposed activities on track. See Appendix D for a template of an M&E plan.

Three participatory tools for M&E of capacity building

There are many excellent tools available that can be used to support a participatory approach to M&E of capacity building. This guide introduces three participatory tools: the Spider Tool SCORE Card, the organizational timeline, and the "Most Significant Change" (MSC) storytelling technique. These tools vary in their applications and complexity. The Spider Tool SCORE Card is primarily useful for capacity assessment, the organizational timeline is best suited to evaluation, and the MSC technique can be used for both monitoring and evaluation. While the Spider Tool SCORE Card and the organizational timeline are most relevant for measuring internal changes in the local NGO (ripple two), the MSC technique can be used to examine progress made within all three ripples. These participatory tools are not intended to serve as the sole means of monitoring and evaluating your capacity building intervention. Rather, they each provide one means to ensure active stakeholder participation in the M&E process and generate relevant data about the local NGO's capacity. Depending on the CB intervention, a program can   develop either quantitative or qualitative indicators to be measured using these tools and incorporate them into the overall M&E of capacity building plan.

These tools have been adapted according to input provided by several local NGOs during the field testing of this document. Lessons from the field also have been incorporated into the case studies. While the field testing indicates that they are easily implemented, facilitators will note that this guide complements a comprehensive CB plan. The theory and terminology used in this guide may be new for some of the NGOs using this guide. Facilitators will need to gauge the familiarity of these terms, and it may be necessary to incorporate concrete examples or additional case studies of local experiences to make the document more accessible to a wide range of audiences.

THE SPIDER TOOL SCORE CARD

Summary: The Spider Tool SCORE Card is an accessible self-assessment tool that enables organizations to generate scores for selected areas of organizational capacity and visually represent their capacity by mapping capacity scores onto a diagram of a spider web.

Source: The Spider Tool SCORE Card was first developed by CARE/Nepal and has since been adapted by JSI and Save the Children, among other INGOs.

Use: The Spider Tool SCORE Card has been chosen as an example of an accessible capacity assessment tool that can be used as an entry-point to capacity building, as well as a monitoring tool that can be used to track the organization's changing perceptions of its capacity over time.

Implementation: The following instructions for implementation are based on JSI's experience with the Spider Tool SCORE Card. The INGO facilitating the exercise invites a representative group of staff from the local NGO to participate in the self-assessment. The local NGO works through the following steps with support from the facilitators.

- Determine the areas of organizational capacity to be measured and represented on the spider web. In its work with small, reproductive health organizations in conflict affected settings, JSI has used the following five categories: 1) vision, mission, values; 2) management; 3) finance; 4) human resources; and 5) external relations. However, other relevant capacity categories could also be used. These areas of capacity should be determined by or developed in consultation with the local NGO.

- Decide how you will measure each area of capacity. JSI has used a supplementary tool called the SCORE Card, which uses five indicators scored on a four-point scale for each area of capacity. The full SCORE Card can be found in Appendix E.

- Work together to determine scores for each area of capacity. Determine the scores through a process of facilitated discussion using a moderator or a workshop format using small groups. After determining each area, map these scores onto the spider web diagram. Discuss the overall picture of organizational capacity that emerges: what are your organization's strengths and weaknesses? Why?

- If you would like to map changing perceptions of organizational capacity, repeat this process at regular intervals: quarterly, biannually, or annually, depending on the intensity and length of the capacity building intervention.

Strengths:
- The Spider Tool SCORE Card is accessible to organizations of all levels. It provides a helpful introduction to key concepts in capacity building for those new to the field.

- As a self-assessment tool, the Spider Tool SCORE Card stimulates users to think about organizational capacity and to define their own strategies for organizational strengthening.

- The Spider Tool SCORE Card can be used to generate a visual history of organizational change over time.

Weaknesses:
- Self-assessment can introduce bias if the local NGO wishes to be perceived in a particular light.

- The five indicators per area used by the SCORE tool may not provide the best measure of organizational capacity depending on the organization.

- There is no specified strategy for managing differing views among the representatives of the local NGO in determining the scores on each indicator and for each area. It is likely that the perspectives of staff higher up in the organizational hierarchy will dominate.

Case study:
JSI used the Spider Tool SCORE Card as a means to introduce organizational development to local NGO partners in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The tool was used on the first day of a four-day organizational development workshop. The main objective of the workshop was to strengthen participants' understanding of the concept of organizational development and enable them to identify priority areas for capacity building. During the workshop, five key domains of organizational activity that affect an organization's ability to achieve its objectives were discussed:

- Vision, mission, values
- Management
- Finances
- Human resources
- External relations

JSI introduced participants to the SCORE Card (Appendix E) as a means of assessing their current capacity needs in each area. The participants broke into pairs[5] by organization and carried out their self-assessments. This process involved significant discussion among pairs before the group came back to discuss the

exercise and the findings together. After tallying the points agreed upon by the pairs, an average score could be calculated for each of the five domains. Organizational scores were as follows:

Table 2

Sample organizational capacity scores from a JSI training using the SCORE Card[6]

Organization	Vision, mission, values	Management	Finances	Human resources	External relations
Better Future	2.7	2	1.6	2	1.5
Family Planning Society	3.2	3.0	3.6	3.1	3.3
Community Youth Association	3.0	2.5	3.1	3.0	3.9
Women against the War	2.0	3.0	3.8	2.5	2.7

Each of the organizations then mapped their scores visually using the Spider Tool. Better Future's spider diagram is shown below (figure 3). By working through this process, JSI generated significant interest and discussion about organizational development. One representative remarked to the facilitator that she was excited about the opportunity to focus on some of her organization's own challenges, while another mentioned that breaking down his organization's work into different domains helped him identify some particular areas that needed work. The organizational scores and spider diagrams were used in a subsequent session to develop tailored capacity building plans, including plans for M&E. As was expected, the organization chose to focus most capacity building efforts around the areas with the lower scores. In the case of Better Future, external relations (with a score of 1.5) and finances (score 1.6) were identified as the two priorities, as they were given the lowest scores on the spider diagram (see below). The organization scored themselves highest in terms of a strong, well articulated vision, mission, and values. This area is mapped furthest out in the web with a score of 2.7 (see below). The spider tool does not alone constitute an M&E plan but it does provide an easy to use, visual display that helps situate the organization in terms of its priority areas for intervention. The group decided to do the SCORE card again to reassess the organization's priorities.

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[5] This strategy reduces the potential for dominance by particularly vocal members of the group.
[6] This case is based on JSI's experience using the Spider Tool SCORE Card with local reproductive health organizations in West Africa, but all organizational names and descriptions included are fictional.

Figure 3

Better Future's spider diagram
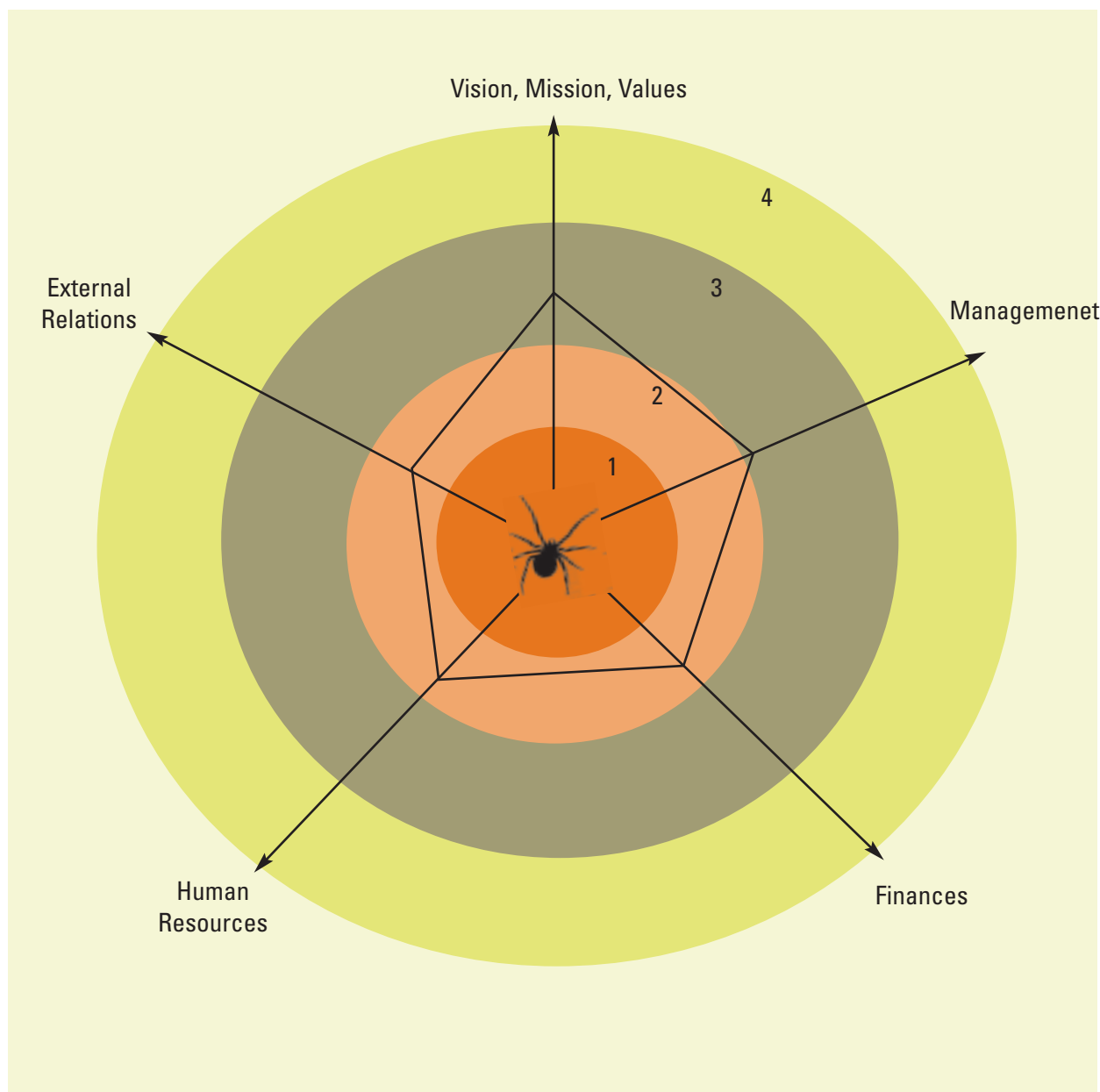
ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE

Summary: An organizational timeline is a retrospective exercise useful for identifying key organizational changes that have taken place before, during, and following a capacity building intervention.

Source: INTRAC (James 2001).

Use: The organizational timeline is useful for conducting periodic evaluations of a capacity building intervention. It could be used during a mid-term and/or final project evaluation to assess key changes in an organization's development.

Implementation: The INGO facilitating the exercise invites a representative group of staff from the local NGO to come together in a workshop setting. The local NGO works through the following steps with support from the external facilitators.

- Determine the period for which the timeline should be created. This will depend on the length of the intervention itself and the time that has passed since its completion. It is usually valuable to include the period of time leading up to the capacity building intervention (at least a year) in order to identify trends in the organization's development before the intervention took place.

- Thinking about each year chronologically, brain storm a list of all the significant changes that have taken place in the organization and write them on a flipchart. Group these changes into positive and negative changes. Note down the approximate dates when each change occurred. Prompt not only explicitly internal changes, but changes that occurred in the organization's environment and/or context if such changes could have affected organizational change.

- Brainstorm a list of key capacity building activities that have taken place during the intervention and the dates when they occurred.

- Create an organizational timeline that documents these key activities and organizational changes in chronological order on your flipchart.

Strengths:
- The timeline is accessible to organizations of all levels.
- The timeline can be used to establish 'plausible association' between the intervention and increased organizational capacity by determining whether any of the positive changes have obvious linkages to the intervention activities.
- The timeline provides a powerful narrative overview of key stages in the organization's development.

- All organizational representatives can make a meaningful contribution by identifying events they consider to be significant.

Weaknesses:
- Self-assessment can introduce bias if the local NGO wishes to be perceived in a particular light.
- Conflicts may arise between staff over which organizational changes are most significant and whether changes are positive or negative. The facilitator can play a role in mediating tensions.
- Requires a knowledgeable and skilled facilitator.
- Does not address how to deal with an event that some view as positive and some view as negative.

Case study:
After more than a year working with an NGO partner in West Africa, JSI integrated an organizational timeline into an evaluation meeting with an organization called Healthy Children. While Healthy Children preferred to have all staff present at the meeting, due to time and budgetary constraints it was agreed that representatives from each department and each field office would attend the meeting. The meeting was facilitated by JSI but the NGO participants were actively engaged in determining each of the key elements for the timeline, including the period for which the timeline would be created. Because Healthy Children had never engaged in such an exercise, the JSI facilitator scheduled sufficient time for explanation, discussion, and clarification. The discussion was important, because it facilitated the inclusion of the ideas of the more junior staff members.[7]

The exercise was broken into **three stages**. The **first** stage was for the NGO to define the parameters for the timeline itself. Because a number of key changes had occurred in the previous month (including filling several key positions) several people suggested making the timeline four months long. From experience, they knew that looking back only four months would make it very difficult to capture those longer term processes and activities that may have had an impact on the organization. After some debate the group settled on a year long timeline. Raising the point that the NGO had only been engaged in the capacity building intervention with JSI for 9 months, one of the staff members questioned why the group should be considering the prior 3 months.

[7] JSI had used the timeline previously when staff did not have enough time to complete the discussion. As a result senior and more vocal staff members responded to questions first, asserting that there was not sufficient time for further discussion.

The *second* stage involved brainstorming a list of all the significant changes that took place in the organization over the year. These were listed on a flip chart. The staff members were encouraged to raise everything they thought might have been significant, regardless of whether it was positive or negative. They were prompted to think about significant events and decisions within the organization and in their local environment. Following the presentations, JSI facilitated a brainstorming session with the group to list the key activities, events, and changes that occurred over the year. All of the staff members were not able to participate, but those who did participate represented a broad mix, including field staff and senior management. The facilitator, sensitive to the potentially stifling effect of power dynamics made sure that everyone felt comfortable making a contribution. Because the JSI facilitator had worked for more than a year with the group, she was able to ask questions that could generate discussion and ideas. At the same time, as a facilitator it was important not to suggest any specific item be included on the list because the list was intended to reflect the groups' priorities.

After reaching consensus on the list of what was most significant, a date and a (+) or (-) valence sign was assigned to each of the points, then each was placed on the timeline. In this use of the timeline all members participating in the activity agreed whether events were positive or negative.[8] The positive changes (+) were listed on the right while the negative changes (-) were listed on the left. This visual display was useful as a reference for the discussion.

The *third* and final stage of the exercise was to identify any relationships between activities and changes in the organization. This step was not very well understood at first. The initial feedback from the NGO staff was to insist that consecutive events were automatically related. This of course was not always the case. In many instances the relationships were not linear or at least they were not immediate. For example, several staff members resigned immediately following the creation of job descriptions. However, with some probing by the facilitator, the group explained that in fact the staff members who resigned were from a region of the country that had recently stabilized. They had all decided to go back 'home' at around the same time, because new formal employment opportunities had opened up in that region; and this was also the time for planting new crops.
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A key challenge for this exercise was that many of the staff members present during the exercise had not been working at the organization for the entire year. High turnover of staff is common in conflict affected settings and with newly formed organizations. This situation proved to be both an advantage and a disadvantage in terms of the exercise. While new members may lack understanding of organizational history, they may be better placed than long-standing staff to comment objectively on current decisions or events.

[8]   A facilitator should be comfortable talking through events that may have participants split. Sometimes it is not possible to reach agreement.

A segment of the timeline for Healthy Children is pictured below.

Figure 4

Organizational Timline for Organization Heatlhy Children

–			**+**
			9.06 Grant writing workshop with JSI
			2.07 Financial procedures were finalized and documented in a finance manual.
4.07 Rebel attack on the project area; project was forced to move to a new site			**5.07** Proposal was accepted by JSI's small grants
6.07 Main office was broken into; petty cash stolen; NGO mopeds were stolen			**7.07** Job descriptions were created
			9.07 Three difficult staff members left the organization
10.07 8 staff members left the organization			**10.07** Accounting system was put into place
11.07 Lost proposal for program X			
			12.07 Personnel policies were developed
1.08 Did not succeed in obtaining scholarship for leadership training			
			2.08 Ten new staff members were hired

STORYTELLING: 'MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE' TECHNIQUE

Summary: A demanding but rewarding technique for conducting participatory M&E that uses the power of storytelling to generate information about an intervention's intended and unintended outcomes.

Source: Originally developed by Rick Davies and later expanded with the assistance of Jess Dart (Davies and Dart 2005).

Use: The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) technique provides a powerful means of monitoring and evaluating a capacity building intervention. Stories about the program collected on a monthly basis can be used to monitor ongoing progress, while a final selection of stories can be analyzed as part of a final program evaluation.

Implementation: The MSC technique is implemented through two main stages. In the first stage, stories about organizational change are collected from the local NGO's relevant stakeholders on a rolling basis. In the second stage, those stories considered to be most significant are identified through a process of hierarchical selection. The INGO can contribute to the process by helping the local NGO work through the following steps:

Stage one: collecting MSC stories

- Choose the domains or areas of interest for the intervention. For a capacity building intervention, these might include the different ripples from the ripple diagram, e.g. changes within the local NGO (ripple two), or priority areas of capacity addressed by the intervention within particular ripples, such as financial management, similar to the way the spider tool or other capacity assessment tools divide thematic areas.

- Determine whose perspectives to incorporate during the process of storytelling. Members of the local NGO, the INGO, target population, and donors may all have relevant stories to tell about changes they have observed in organizational capacity and performance.

- Collect stories about significant changes within the domains selected. At regular intervals (monthly or weekly is a good starting point) ask the stakeholder groups selected to tell stories about the most significant changes they have noted in each of the domains selected. This story collecting is done through a "question and answer" approach. For example, participants might be asked: "Looking back over the last three months, what do you think was the most significant change in the organization's leadership and management practices?"

Stories can be collected through one-on-one interviews, group discussion, or self-reported in writing. The following information should be recorded for each story collected: details of who collected the story and when the events occurred, a description of the story, the significance (to the storyteller) of the events described in the story. Each story should be approximately one or two pages in length. See Appendix F for a sample story reporting form.

Stage two: selecting MSC stories

- Determine how many levels of story selection are needed. The hierarchy for story selection within the local NGO can be based on the existing organizational structure, or new structures created specifically for this purpose. The advantages of using the existing organizational structure are increased efficiency and the possibility of opening up debate about the organization's values by bringing staff from different levels into conversation with one another. Creating new structures can be a good way to bring staff together who are drawn from different levels of an organization, and can be useful for emphasizing the perspectives of different stakeholder groups such as the program's target population (Davies 2005). In a small organization, fewer levels of selection will be required.

- Form selection committees at each level to select stories. It is often valuable to choose selection committee members who play different roles within the organization and bring different perspectives to the selection process.

- On a monthly or quarterly basis (or whichever periodicity is decided upon), have each selection committee choose stories to forward on to the next level in the selection process. There are four key ingredients to choosing stories within a selection committee: all members must read the stories, the committee holds a discussion about which stories should be selected, the committee decides which stories are most significant, and members must document the reasons for their final choices. The decision about which stories to select can be made in a variety of ways, such as majority rule, independent scoring, or secret ballot. Ensure that feedback is provided to the previous selection level each time a new selection is made.

- After six months to a year, compile the stories into a single document and share with program donors and other stakeholders. Donors are asked to provide feedback on which stories represented the most desirable outcomes from their perspective and why.

Strengths:
- The MSC technique generates interesting and wide-ranging findings about the outcomes of a capacity building intervention, both intended and unintended. Unintended outcomes are common in capacity building interventions.
- Storytelling is common to all cultures and therefore this technique is accessible to stakeholders from a range of cultural backgrounds.
- The selection process facilitates a debate between different stakeholders within an organization about the values they represent.
- MSC produces rich, detailed qualitative data about the outcomes of capacity building interventions, which can stand alone or complement traditional quantitative indicator data.

Weaknesses:
- MSC is a complex, demanding technique in terms of staff time and commitment.
- MSC requires a skilled facilitator to train staff involved in the method.
- MSC is difficult to standardize and is inherently biased due to the nature of storytelling.
- MSC is open-ended and story selection depends on the interests and priorities of the selection committees. It may not be suitable for focused measurement of progress made about specific objectives.

Case study:
JSI started the MSC process with Better Future during monthly visits to the main administrative office in the capital city and subsequent visits to the field office. Better Future wanted to enhance the NGO's capacity in the areas of leadership and management. After some discussion about the merits and disadvantages of a number of approaches for M&E, Better Future and JSI determined that MSC would be most suitable. Better Future recognized that MSC would be a relatively time intensive method for monitoring organizational change, but were enthusiastic to implement the method. In particular, the Better Future management team wanted to ensure that the entire Better Future team, including a large group of peer educators, could identify with the results. Storytelling was appealing for this reason.

Stories were collected on a rolling basis in the form of one-to-one interviews with management and staff in the main office and representatives from the main donor organization. These were followed by one-to-one interviews with staff, donors, partners, and members of the target population in the field. The stories collected focused on management within Better Future, as this topic was identified early on as a necessary focus of capacity building. It was important to determine in advance the point of view that the stories should reflect. For example, Better Future's perspective of management changes was understood to be slightly different than the perspectives of its two key donors and JSI. The teams decided that it

would be ideal to incorporate a mix of perspectives, although Better Future's perspective would be emphasized.

Each month, at least one or two stories were collected. JSI initiated the collection of the stories, but Better Future gradually adopted the technique for eliciting stories from within the organization and from other stakeholders. The use of probing questions facilitated the process. For example, the interviewer might ask the storyteller to consider the previous month and describe what s/he thought was the most significant change in the organization's leadership and management practices. After a couple of months, the Better Future staff realized that it was not going to be feasible to continue collecting all of the stories in person. They decided that a few key staff, representing a cross section of positions and working in the different geographic and programmatic areas of the project, would document the stories. When stories were self-reported, they made certain to identify the name of the recorder, the events, and the relevance of the particular event (to that individual).

In one instance, staff members wrote about a new policy that had been instituted by management and targeted staff retention. The MSC stories told by field staff revealed that many staff members appreciated the new annual bonus that had been put in place. Surprisingly, the management attributed a perception of increased motivation and retention of field staff to the new HR policy (which provided yearly incremental increases in staff salaries); while the field staff spoke enthusiastically about the new policy for providing increased training opportunities field workers.

The second stage in the process of collecting MSC stories was to select and share the stories in a systematic way. JSI worked with Better Future to determine how stories would be selected. Two selection committees were formed: a group of three Better Future staff from among the field teams and three staff from the administrative office. They considered inviting one of the key collaborators from the county health team (and another from the MOH in the capital city) but reached a consensus that this step was not feasible due to the time commitment required. On the other hand, one of the youth leaders in the community where Better Future operated was keen to be involved in the process. She was added to the selection committee in the field office. This team was trained on how to collect, select, and synthesize common themes in a systematic way.

Quarterly, the selection committee met and read each of the stories. They then discussed and agreed on the most significant stories and provided a rationale for their decisions. In the case of Better Future, most decisions were made through consensus as was the story selection. This process took more time than using a majority vote to make decisions, but the team preferred a consensus based approach to decision making. After the team had determined which stories to forward to the committee in the main office, the process was repeated at the

central level. Better Future often did not like to take a traditional and hierarchical approach to decision making. So they decided to swap stories and reach a consensus in a different way. After six months, key stories were selected, compiled, and sent to Better Future's two donors. Better Futures was interested in learning which stories were more significant in the eyes of the donors.

Currently, Better Futures has experienced an increase in staff retention, although the issue continues to be a priority focus. In fact, the organization's donors also considered this an area of key concern, since other organizations funded by the same donor were also experiencing problems of staff retention. Below is an excerpt of a story from one of the Better Future field staff persons, who was asked to describe the most significant change in the organization's leadership and management practices.

Most Significant Change Story Example from Better Future

For me as a community supervisor for Better Future, the most important change this past quarter was the fact that I was granted a new opportunity for further training in the capital city. This training opportunity comes as a result of the new policy for being allowed to take one week leave per month in order to pursue further training related to the job …The working area that I cover is very rural, and I find it so difficult to maintain the right number of staff. I end up filling in for any gaps, just to make the work go on well. This has become to so tiresome – that's one of the reasons so many of my colleagues left. We have no motorcycles, no cars…in fact no bicycles even to carry on our house visits. With fewer staff, we end up having a bigger work load and have to cover more ground. This has been a major hardship. This past month, in the regional meeting with our supervisor, when we learned that Better Future will start a new collaborative effort with the University in the city, I was overjoyed about the new training incentive scheme for long term employees. Being able to leave my post for one week during a month, without losing my salary for that week means I can continue my training while working. Finding jobs in the city is very difficult, and it is very expensive living in the city. The Better Future management decision to create this opportunity has been the most significant change for me this year.

SECTION 3. Capacity building indicators

This section of the guide provides a menu of indicators that can be used to measure changes that could result from a capacity building intervention. The guide includes indicators for each level of the ripple model, but this section focuses mainly on indicators for ripple two: internal organizational change. There are two reasons for this: first, this guide is intended to provide readers with additional tools by which to measure capacity building interventions; examining results at ripple two (internal organization change) is a critical step in this process. Second, there are fewer indicator guides currently available which focus on internal organizational change as opposed to changes at the level of the target population (ripple three). The M&E plan detailed in this guide can easily be integrated or complemented by focusing on the changes at the target population level. Indicators for ripple two have been divided into categories that reflect distinct domains or areas of organizational activity.

This guide offers a menu of robust, sound, and useful capacity building indicators that combine newly developed indicators with those drawn from a review of existing sources. Because the field of capacity measurement is in its early stages of development, these indicators are not considered standard indicators such as those that have been in use for 20 or more years in large-scale health and economic development programs.[9] It will take some time for capacity measurement to reach this level of maturity through application, revision, and assessment of indicators.

This menu of indicators can be used as a resource when an organization develops its M&E plan to assess the progress and effectiveness of a capacity building intervention. There are a few rules of thumb to keep in mind when reviewing, selecting, and tailoring indicators:

- The indicators are written in a broad, generalized way in order and serve as templates to be adapted to program needs. In almost all cases, program staff should tailor the indicators to make them more specific to the intervention.
- Whenever possible, an M&E plan should include a mix of both qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- Each category within ripple two has a handful of indicators from which to choose. It is highly unlikely that all indicators listed under a heading would be applicable to the capacity building intervention being studied. It is important to choose appropriate indicators based on the desired outcomes of the capacity building intervention.
- This menu of indicators is intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive. It may be necessary supplement these indicators with those of your own creation or with those drawn from other sources.
- As always, assess the appropriateness of each indicator given the post conflict context.

[9] For example, the MEASURE Evaluation Compendium of Indicators, which can be found at http://www.cpc.measure.edu

Ripple one: capacity building process

It is important to monitor the capacity building process because the quantity and quality of capacity building activities affects the outcomes of the capacity building intervention and therefore impacts the desired outcome of the target population. This guide recommends using a small number of appropriately targeted indicators to track the capacity building process (ripple one). However, the main focus of M&E of capacity building should remain on the outcomes themselves (ripple two).

EXAMPLES (SEE APPENDIX B FOR INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEETS):

1. Percent of staff who report that the capacity building plan is appropriately targeted to the needs required to carry out daily tasks essential for the effective functioning of the organization

2. Percent of planned capacity building activities completed or underway in a specified time period

3. Percent of participants who participated in a capacity building activity and considered the activity to be of high quality

4. Percent of staff who perceive a sense of ownership over the capacity building process

5. The organization has developed and implemented an M&E plan for the capacity building intervention that includes SMART objectives and relevant indicators

Ripple two: internal organizational changes of local NGO

Ripple two is a critical level for monitoring and evaluation of all organizational capacity building interventions. It includes the expected short- and long-term changes in organizational structure and behavior. This guide provides examples of indicators for seven organizational domains or areas of activity: 1) mission, vision, and values; 2) governance, leadership, and management; 3) financial systems; 4) human resources; 5) program management; 6) monitoring and evaluation; and 7) external relations. Below is a short description of each domain as well as a list of illustrative indicators.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

An NGO's mission statement and accompanying vision and values should reflect the organization's overarching purpose, as well as guide the organization during organizational planning and program implementation. A mission statement also serves as a communications tool, which enables the organization to communicate its purpose succinctly and powerfully to its primary audiences and stakeholders. Organizations that were established before or during a period of conflict may need to refocus their mission during a post-conflict or transitional period in response to significant changes in their social and political environments and changes in the focus of their work.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):
1. The organization has a well developed mission statement

2. Percent of programs whose stated program goals are aligned with the organization's mission statement

3. Percent of staff who can accurately describe the organization's mission

4. Percent of staff who agree that the organization's mission is reflected clearly in the organization's work

5. Among the target population who have accessed services from the organization, percent who are aware of the organization's mission statement.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance refers to the structures, systems, and policies that guide an organization. One common system of NGO governance is to establish a board of directors that provides oversight over the legal, financial, and programmatic dimensions of an organization's work and advises on overall strategic direction. For NGOs, *leadership* usually refers to the ability of senior managers within the organization to develop an influential vision for the organization, make sound strategic decisions, and foster organizational unity and commitment. Participatory decision making processes can facilitate buy-in to the organization's vision and help build organizational cohesion. *Managers* play a role at different levels within a local NGO, from directing the organization, to managing a department, to overseeing a particular project or group of staff. One of their main responsibilities is to establish and oversee systems that ensure the effective delivery of programs and/or services. Local NGOs in crisis settings are often small, with only a single layer of management with varying skill levels in leadership and governance.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):
1. The organization's legal status is in order

2. The organization has a board of directors that meets regularly

3. Percent of staff who believe that the organization's leaders are moving the organization in the right direction

4. The organization has developed a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan to guide program activities

5. The organization's strategic plan is being used to guide program activities

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial managers are responsible for financial planning to ensure adequate cash flow, monitoring financial resources and controlling expenditures to ensure appropriate use of funds, and providing program managers with timely access to funds and information about expenditure, among other tasks. In conflict affected settings, donors monitor very closely the ability of local NGO partners to manage funds. Whether they are mature, high capacity or nascent NGOs emerging during or just after the conflict, all organizations will be expected by the donor to maintain financial records in accordance with the donor's standards.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):
1. An annual budgeting exercise took place to identify the full costs of running the organization

2. Number of revenue sources that support organizational operation

3. The organization has a written policy outlining expense procedures

4. Percent of months where the balance in the cashbook is reconciled with the balance on the bank statement for every bank account

5. Percent of major financial transactions that have the necessary supporting documentation

6. Annual internal audits are conducted

7. Percent of months during which program managers receive budget reports within two weeks of the end of the month

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources (HR) management describes the processes of recruitment, performance management, staff development, and staff retention. In conflict affected settings, where access to education has been disrupted and many skilled workers have fled during the conflict, it can be difficult for local NGOs to recruit staff with the appropriate skills. In this context, staff development and staff retention become particularly important.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):

1. Written personnel policies are in place and distributed to all employees

2. Percent of staff who have a specific and tailored job description (JD)

3. Percent of staff who feel that annual reviews of performance are conducted in a timely and fair manner

4. The organization has clear guidelines to guide job promotion

5. A staff development plan is in place to meet future human resource needs of the organization

6. Percent of staff who have left the organization in the past year

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program managers are responsible for establishing and overseeing the systems necessary to ensure the effective implementation of programs, including the management of resources to achieve program objectives. Development programs often focus either on service delivery or on advocating for policy change. Organizations operating in conflicted areas are often faced with diverse and fluctuating needs in their communities. As a result, they face the challenge of regularly re-assessing the focus of the programs they implement as well as the systems in place to support their implementation.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):

1. Organization's target population is aligned with organization's mission

2. Well established communication mechanism exists between the target population/clients and the organization

3. Percent of program reports submitted to donors on time

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring is a continuous assessment of program activities to ensure that the program is functioning as intended. Evaluation is a periodic assessment of a program to determine whether it is achieving its intended objectives. In conflict affected settings, monitoring and evaluation is often neglected for a number reasons, which include the prioritization of immediate service delivery to the exclusion of all other activities, the difficulties faced in collecting appropriate data, and the lack of skilled staff available to conduct specialized M&E related tasks.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):
1. Percentage of programs for which sufficient resources have been allocated for M&E

2. Percentage of programs with a written M&E plan

3. Percent of programs for which basic information systems are in place to collect and store data for decision making purposes

4. Number of instances where information from the M&E system was used to contribute to program decision making

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

External relations describes an NGO's relationships with its main stakeholders, which include program target population, NGOs, and other partner organizations with whom they collaborate, government, and donors. As countries transition from humanitarian assistance to development, local NGOs often find that the stakeholder landscape shifts rapidly. It is critical for local NGOs to strategize effectively in the area of external relations in order to adapt effectively to these shifts.

Examples (see Appendix C for indicator reference sheets):
1. Percent of the target population surveyed who view the organization in a positive light

2. Number of partnerships with organizations working in the same field

3. Percent of organization's donors who perceive the organization to be a good partner

Ripple three: external changes in programs with the target population

When evaluating the outcomes of a capacity building intervention at the level of the target population, the type of indicators used will vary widely. Capacity building interventions are often integrated into broader development programs in diverse fields such as agriculture, education, health, and governance. Furthermore, capacity building interventions often focus on different organizational domains and will therefore affect a program's target population in different ways. This guide provides illustrative examples of ripple three indicators for two of the case studies presented in the preceding chapters. *No indicator reference sheets are included for these indicators because they are specific to these particular interventions, not to the capacity building intervention itself.*

Case 1: Family Planning Society's initiative to increase staff retention
Family Planning Society (FPS) introduced a program of incentives to retain community-based distributors (CBDs) of contraceptives, which resulted in an increased field staff retention rate of ten percent. This change was plausibly associated with improved performance of three of the major program indicators:

1. Number of continuing clients served
2. Contraceptive prevalence in service area
3. Incidence of pregnancies among school-aged girls

The continuity of CBDs enabled FPS to retain more clients. As a result, they were able to distribute more commodities and increase the number of couple years protection (CYP) generated. It is plausible that there was a small increase in contraceptive prevalence within the community (due to fewer drop-outs), which increased by a greater margin during the current project cycle than former cycles (see figure x below).

Case 2: Community Youth Association's initiative to improve financial management
Community Youth Association (CYA) reformed its financial management system to introduce tighter controls on staff expenditures and better record-keeping practices. These reforms reduced wastage of project resources and were an important factor in attracting funding from a new donor. These changes are plausibly associated with improved performance of two of the major program indicators:

1. Knowledge of HIV/AIDS among secondary school youth
2. Percent of girls enrolled in primary school in the coverage area

CYA was able to expand its activities with youth in three project communities because of the increased resources available for programming. One of its main activities was HIV/AIDS education sessions with increased exposure for youth in secondary school. The frequency of the sessions was increased from monthly to biweekly during school terms. Youth in this cohort achieved greater gains in knowledge scores than youth in previous years. In addition, CYA used extra funds to support small grants for girls attending primary school to cover the cost of fees and materials. A small increase in the percent of girls enrolled in primary school in project communities was plausibly associated with improved knowledge through the availability of these small grants.

Ripple three,
changes at level of target population: increased number of clients served; contraceptive prevalence increases; declining incidence of school-aged pregnancies decline

Ripple two,
internal organizational changes: Organization adopts staff incentive system; staff retention increases

Ripple one,
capacity building process: Human resource training on incentives and other systems for increasing employee motivation and retention

Appendices

APPENDIX A: List of Capacity Assessment Tools for NGOs

The spider score card capacity assessment tool is featured as a simple and useful capacity assessment tool in section C. As stated in the text before, there are numerous capacity assessment tools that vary in degrees of complexity and thematic areas. This appendix provides a list of other capacity assessment tools that local NGOs may find more appropriate for their capacity assessment needs. As with all the tools featured in this guide, they can all be adapted to best suit NGOs' needs and reality.

Name: Up to the Roots
Institution: World Neighbors
Tool type: Field guide
Theme: Organizational Capacity Strengthening through Guided Self-Assessment
Primary purpose: Help grassroots NGOs and community groups recognize their own potential, identify critical issues for program and organizational development, and decide for themselves what actions to take, in relation to their purpose, context, and resources
Other: Available at http://www.mande.co.uk/archives/newdocs22.htm

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Name: OCAT
Institution: ACDI-VOCA
Tool type: Participatory self assessment tool/ consists of a series of statements in six capacities areas (governance, operations and management, human resources, financial management, business services deliveries, and external relations)
Theme: Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
Primary purpose: Assess the capacity of smallholder organizations to provide business services to their members
Other: Available at
http://www.worldbank.org/afr/fertilizer_tk/documentspdf/Organizational_Capacity_Assessment_Tool.pdf

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Name: DOSA
Institution: Education Development Center and Evan Bloom of Pact with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development/ Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (USAID/PVC) and numerous PVO colleagues.
Tool type: Questionnaire that consists of a set of two to four discussion questions about critical facts or events which serve as "discussion anchors"
Theme: Discussion-oriented, organizational self-assessment tool
Primary purpose: Measure and profile organizational capacities and consensus levels in six critical areas and assess, over time, the impact of these activities on organizational capacity (benchmarking)
Other: Available at http://www.edc.org/GLG/CapDev/dosapage.htm

Name: ISR
Institution: Center for International Development Working Paper, Research Triangle
Institute
Tool type: Questionnaire divided into three big categories (institutional formation,
institutional function, and institutional condition)
Theme: Institutional capacity assessment tool
Primary purpose: Help define the systemic assets of an organization which will
be converted into functional outputs and impact
Other: Available at http://www.ngomanager.org/vansantarticle.htm

Name: WWF (World Wildlife Foundation)
Institution: WWF and World Bank
Tool type: System that provides four alternative text answers to each question,
a scoring system, and a harmonized reporting system for protected area assessment
Theme: Institutional Self Reliance tool
Primary purpose: Designed to further track and monitor progress towards worldwide
protected area management effectiveness.
Other: Available at http://www.wwfbrasil.org.br/about_wwf/what_we_do/forests/our_
solutions/protection/tools/tracking_tool/index.cfm

Name: ISA
Institution: Macro International, Inc
Tool type: Questionnaire (consists of a compilation of common areas of institutional
capacity based on a review of sixteen instruments developed in
the 1995-1999 period (including DOSA, OCAT, and OCI))
Theme: Organizational capacity, self-assessment
Primary purpose: Support participatory self-assessment, which CSTS has determined
is preferred by most NGOs over external assessment of institutional capacity
Other: Available at http://www.ngomanager.org/vansantarticle.htm

Name: CADECO
Institution: CADECO
Tool type: Questionnaire using a rating system and based on African proverbs
Theme: Organizational development, self-assessment tool
Primary purpose: Improve organizational performance in a competitive environment
Other: Available at http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/FE/FE0E9926-
409F-4C81-9029-BD472D03E909/CADECO%20assessment%20tool.doc

Name: MCFOCAT
Institution: Marguerite Casey Foundation
Tool Type: Assessment summary table and summary charts. Worksheet for each dimension
of organizational capacity.
Theme: Organizational capacity, self-assessment, organizational development
Primary purpose: Self-assessment instrument that helps nonprofits identify capacity
strengths and challenges and establish capacity building goals. As such, it is primarily
a diagnostic and learning tool.
Other: Excel format. Available via download at
http://www.caseygrants.org/pages/resources/resources_downloadassessment.asp

Name: McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid
Institution: Venture Philanthropy Partners
Tool Type: Diagnostic instrument with grid using a rating system and scoring
by element of organizational capacity.
Theme: Organizational capacity
Primary purpose: To identify particular areas of capacity that are strongest and those that
need improvement; to measure changes in an organization's capacity over time; to draw
out different views within an organization regarding its capacity.
Other: This tool is meant to be a starting point only. Adaptation of the grid to meet own
organization's capacity assessment needs is strongly encouraged. Available at
http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/tlc/docs/SustainabilityLibrary_SectionD_1/McKinseyAssessment.pdf

Name: Simple Capacity Assessment Tool (SCAT)
Institution: Education Development Center and Pact
Tool Type: Rating scale of 1 through 4 for seven organizational categories which are
further broken down into sub-components
Theme: Organizational capacity
Primary purpose: To assess the organizational capacity of potential partners; provide
a process through which relevant, context-specific indicators can be developed in a
collaborative manner
Other: Assessments should be conducted in series of four. Available at
http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/bl-scat.htm

Name: The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool
Institution: Drucker Foundation
Tool Type: Participant workbook and self-assessment guide
Theme: Capacity assessment
Primary purpose: To identify and address key problem areas and diagnose effective
implementation plans.
Other: Process guide and workbook available to order online at
http://www.leadertoleader.org/tools/sat/content.html.

Name: Partner Organizational Capacity Assessment
Institution: Winning Against AIDS
Tool type: Questionnaire and scoring chart (rating scale 1 through 4).
Theme: Capacity assessment
Primary purpose: To identify capacity-building needs of the partner organization, to plan
any technical support needed by the partner organization, and to monitor changes in
organizational capacity.
Other: This tool was adapted from the Core Initiative's "CBO/FBO Capacity Analysis: A
tool for assessing and building capacities for high quality responses to HIV/AIDS."
Available at
http://www.twinningagainstaids.org/twinningtoolkit/forms/Assessment_Tool.pdf.

Name: Organizational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool (OCSAT)
Institution: Academy for Educational Development
Tool type: Discussion questionnaire and rating chart categorized by area of assessment
Theme: Organizational capacity, self-assessment
Primary purpose: To guide an organization through a capacity self-assessment process. The questions listed are discussion questions only and were designed to initiate discussions around topic areas.
Other: This tool was designed with the assumption that a knowledgeable facilitator would lead the discussion and ask follow-up questions depending on answers received for each question. Available at
http://damp.nsk.hr/arhiva/vol1/578/4482/www.aed.hr/en/dokumenti/ocsat.pdf

Name: Organizational Assessment Tool (OAT)
Institution: National Environmental Education Advancement Project
Tool Type: Guide (publication)
Theme: organizational assessment
Primary purpose: Assessment tool which can be used by the leadership of environmental education organizations to increase organizational effectiveness. It is a one-stop organizational assessment resource, intended to provide EE leaders with a tool to comprehensively review the major aspects of internal organizational development. The OAT also serves as an educational tool for individual organizational leaders and members.
Other: Available by order at http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/neeap/publications/oat/orderingoat.htm

Name: Social Venture Partners Capacity Assessment Tool
Institution: McKinsey & Co. and Social Venture Partners (SVP); adopted by several SVP affiliates.
Tool Type: A software tool with ten assessment areas and 71 total questions that are organized by area of organizational capacity.
Theme: Organizational capacity assessment tool
Primary purpose: Primarily a diagnostic and learning tool. Provides a useful framework for measuring growth in organizational capacity over time; serves as a baseline for current skills and knowledge and helps set priorities for improvement projects
Other: Tool available to potential SVP grantees upon request
http://www.svpportland.org/library/SVP%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Tool%20Overview.pdf

APPENDIX B: Ripple One Indicators

1. Percent of staff who report that the capacity building plan is appropriately targeted to needs required to carry out daily tasks essential for the effective functioning of the organization

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of staff who report that the capacity building plan is appropriately targeted to the organization's needs. It is important that the capacity building plan meet the organization's most pressing needs from the perspective of its staff in order to secure their full investment in the capacity building intervention.

Specific definitions

Capacity building plan: The capacity building plan outlines the main components of the capacity building intervention, including the objectives, activities, and timeline. Ideally a capacity building plan is developed with a consultative and consensus-driven manner.

Measurement

Data source and collection: A survey administered to all staff members, either orally or in writing.

Data considerations:
- It will be important to define how the concept of "appropriately targeted" will be measured in your survey. This could be addressed by a single question e.g., "Is the capacity building plan appropriately targeted to your organization's needs?" Alternatively, a cluster of questions could be used to assess staff perceptions of the capacity plan and combined into a composite measure of the plan's appropriateness.
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant.

Method of Calculation:
Numerator: The number of staff members who report that the capacity building plan is appropriately targeted to the organization's needs.
Denominator: The total number of staff members.

Possible disaggregation: By organizational grade (e.g. managers, administrators), department, or length of time working with the organization.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Robust measure of the degree of individual perceptions of staff support for the capacity building plan.
- Easily administered, measured, and tabulated.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:

- Staff may not feel comfortable expressing their true opinion if it is in contradiction with the majority view, or the views of top managers.
- Does not incorporate independent or expert assessments of the appropriateness of the plan.
- Assumes that all the staff knows the capacity building plan. If the staff is not aware of the capacity building plan, he/she should not be counted under this indicator.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Local NGOs operating in conflict affected settings may have a number of new staff members who have not had time to develop a strong opinion of the organization's most pressing needs.

2. *Percent of planned capacity building activities completed or underway in a specified time period*

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of planned capacity building activities that were fully implemented. It is valuable to know what outputs resulted from the capacity building implementation plan and if the implementing organizations were able to adhere to their original capacity building plan.

Specific definitions

Planned capacity building activities: Planned capacity building activities are the activities outlined in the capacity building plan.

Completed or underway: capacity building activities that were completed on time or are currently underway. These activities should be similar to or the same as originally proposed in the plan.

Measurement

Data source and collection: comparison between capacity building plan and program reports (activity reports, trip reports, etc.) or other evidence of implementation.

Data considerations:
- The activities counted should be on a comparable scale, which may require breaking down some major activities into sub-activities, or grouping sub-activities into major activities.
- Those responsible for calculating the indicator will need to make subjective judgments regarding if the activity conducted was the same or similar to the activity proposed/described in the capacity building plan.
- Because organizational change happens in stages, most capacity building plans will have benchmarks for completion of activities. This indicator should be used to measure against those benchmarks to give an indication of progress made.
- This indicator can be collected at a variety of frequencies (annually, quarterly) but the frequency should be decided upon by examining the capacity building plan and determining the most appropriate times to assess activities completed.

Method of calculation:

Numerator: Number of planned capacity building activities completed or underway in time period X.

Denominator: Total number of capacity building activities planned in time period X.

Possible disaggregation: By domain, if multiple domains of organizational capacity are addressed.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Involves a simple count of all capacity building activities implemented or underway.
- Communicates the extent to which the organization was able to implement its original capacity building plan.
- Easily administered and measured.

Weaknesses:
- Does not provide insight into how the volume of activities conducted compares to other capacity building interventions (i.e. the comparative productivity of the intervention).
- Does not provide information about the quality of the intervention.
- Does not measure the impact of these capacity building activities on the organization.
- Some capacity building activities are harder to "count" as discrete activities as they may continue throughout the life of the program.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Planned activities may be disrupted by changes in the political and social environment. This may results in a change in the organization's energies and priorities.

3. Percent of participants who participated in the capacity building activity who considered the activity to be of high quality

Rationale

This indicator measures the percentage of participants who felt/feel the capacity building activity was of high quality. The quality (and perception of quality) of the capacity building activities is an important determinant of the intervention's effectiveness and should lead toward the organization achieving its ultimate development objectives.

Specific definitions

Capacity building activities: The capacity building activities are those activities implemented as part of the capacity building intervention.

Measurement

Data source and collection: A survey administered to all participants of the capacity building activity upon completion of the activity. The survey is given either orally or in writing.

Data considerations:
- It will be important to define how the concept of "high quality" will be measured in your survey. This could be addressed by a single question, e.g., for each activity— would you rate the quality of this activity as poor, acceptable, good, or very good? (Likert scale)   Alternatively, a cluster of questions could be used to assess different dimensions of quality and combined into a composite measure of quality.
- So that results from different capacity building interventions can be compared against each other, the definition of quality should be used consistently.
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: The number of staff that participated in the capacity building activity who considered it to be of high quality.
Denominator: The total number of staff participating in the capacity building activity
Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Measures staff perceptions of the quality of the capacity building intervention.
- Easily administered and measured.

Weaknesses:
- Does not incorporate independent or expert assessments of the quality of capacity building activities.
- Staff may not feel comfortable expressing their true opinion if it is in contradiction with the majority view, or the views of managers.
- Does not address if the intervention was appropriate for the problem it is designed to address.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

The quality of the intervention is dependent on inputs of resources and skilled facilitators, among other factors. It may be challenging to secure these required inputs in some conflict affected settings. For example, security concerns may place constraints on the time available for the facilitator.

4. Percent of staff who perceive a sense of ownership over their organization's capacity building process

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of staff who perceive a sense of ownership over the capacity building process. Ownership of the capacity building intervention is essential and indicates that the process has occurred in a more meaningful, sustainable way. It is also important that it not be perceived as a solely donor driven initiative.

Specific definitions

Ownership over the capacity building process: Ownership of the capacity building process can be defined as a sense of responsibility for and control over the design and implementation of the capacity intervention and subsequent follow-through.

Measurement

Data source and collection: A survey administered to all staff members, either orally or in writing.

Data considerations:
- It will be important to define how the concept of ownership will be measured in your survey. This could be addressed by a single question e.g., how much ownership do you think your organization has over the capacity building intervention: very little, little, a moderate amount, or a great deal? Alternatively, a cluster of questions could be used to assess different dimensions of ownership and combined into a composite measure.
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of staff who report that their organization has ownership over the capacity building process.
Denominator: Total number of staff.

Possible disaggregation: By staff type (e.g. managers, administrators) or department.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Provides a robust measure of staff perceptions of the degree of organizational ownership over the capacity building process.
- Easily administered and measured.

Weaknesses:
- Does not incorporate the perspective of the INGO facilitating the intervention on issues of ownership.
- Staff may not feel comfortable expressing their true opinion if it is in contradiction with the majority view, or the views of top managers.
- Ownership can be a vague and of course highly subjective concept to accurately convey in a survey format.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

It may be particularly difficult to foster ownership over a capacity building intervention in a context where organizations are newly formed and highly dependent on the resources of a single donor.

5. The organization has developed and implemented an M&E plan for the capacity building intervention which includes SMART objectives and relevant indicators

Rationale

This indicator measures whether the organization has conducted M&E of its capacity building intervention in accordance with an M&E plan that adheres to basic standards of good practice. An active M&E strategy indicates that the organization is committed to the intervention and interested in learning from its results.

Specific definitions

M&E plan: An M&E plan outlines the strategy for monitoring and evaluating the capacity building intervention and usually includes information such as objectives, indicators, data collection method, and data collection frequency, etc. It may be incorporated within the overall capacity building plan.
SMART objectives: SMART objectives are specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and time-based. See Appendix E for more details.
Indicators: A variable that measures one aspect of a capacity building intervention and provides information (directly or indirectly) about whether objectives are being achieved.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of M&E plan and program reports that include M&E data, other documentary evidence, or conversations with key personnel that the plan is being implemented.

Data considerations:
- It is important to ensure that the person assessing the plan is sufficiently familiar with M&E concepts to evaluate whether SMART objectives and relevant indicators are included.

Method of calculation: A scale from 0-2
0: No M&E plan exists. 1: The M&E plan exists but does not include SMART objectives and relevant indicators, OR exists but has not been implemented. 2: An M&E plan with SMART objectives and relevant indicators exists AND there is evidence that it has been implemented.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Provides a verifiable measure of the presence of an active M&E system.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem- solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Does not provide any information about the content and quality of the M&E, or how the M&E findings are used by the organization.
- If the plan is being implemented, it may be highly subjective.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

It can be particularly difficult to foster a culture of monitoring and evaluation in conflict affected settings, because meeting immediate social needs is often prioritized over measuring program results, and there is a limited pool of potential recruits with relevant skills.

APPENDIX C: Ripple Two Indicators

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

1. The organization has a well developed mission statement

Rationale

This indicator measures the degree to which the organization has a mission statement that has been thought out and well articulated. A well developed mission statement guides what development activities the organization does or does not undertake.

Specific definitions

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose of an organization. The intention of a mission statement is to keep the staff and other stakeholders aware of the organization's purpose.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Either through a verbal survey of key organization members or through an external review of project documentation, for example proposals or pamphlets describing the goals of each of the organization's programs and its mission. Staff and administrators may verify this information verbally.

Data considerations:
- Person calculating this indicator should be familiar with good mission statements and have some criteria for what constitutes a "well developed" mission statement.
- This indicator does not need to be calculated more than once unless the mission of the organization changes.

Method of calculation:
Score based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no mission statement 1=weak mission statement 2=well developed mission statement

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Fairly straightforward and simple, easily applicable for any organization.

Weaknesses:
- There may be a discrepancy in the ability of the organization to articulate its mission and its ability to carry out the mission; this indicator will not capture that discrepancy.
- The indicator may be too basic, not very useful for more fully developed organizations.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

There may be a need for the organization to change its mission slightly or even drastically based on the movement from conflict to post conflict environment.

2. *Percent of programs whose stated program/project goals are aligned with the organization's mission statement*

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of the organization's programs that have goals well aligned with the mission of the organization. A mission statement describes why the organization was formed and what issue it intends to address with its work. Goals should fit nicely within the overarching mandate of the mission statement but be more specific and tailored than the mission statement.

Specific definitions

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose the organization. The intention of a mission statement is to keep the staff and other stakeholders aware of the organization's purpose. More specific than a mission, goals describe what the organization aims to accomplish.

Goals: All projects should have stated goals that explain what the projects hopes to achieve.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Comparison of project documentation (for example proposals or pamphlets describing the goals of each of the organization's programs) with the organization's mission statement. All current programs/projects should be reviewed.

Data considerations:
Compare written mission statement to key project documents for alignment.
Can be done by an external or internal reviewer, but should be calculated by someone familiar with the context and subject matter.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of programs whose goals are in alignment with organization's mission
Denominator: Total number of programs that the organization has in operation at that time

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Relatively simple to collect.
- Examines the work the organization plans or aspires to do or conduct.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- There may be disagreement over whether goals align or not with the mission.
- If the mission statement itself is not well developed, this will not be a useful indicator.
- Does not examine if these goals are in fact achieved by the organization.
- Assumes that all programs have stated goals. If the program does not have goals, consider counting this as non-aligned with the mission statement.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Funding shifts in conflict affected settings may strongly affect the work the organization conducts and may be out of sync with the mission statement.

3. Percent of staff who can accurately describe the organization's stated mission

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of the organization's staff that can accurately state the organization's mission statement. For an organization with a humanitarian mission, it is important that all staff know, understand, and internalize the mission of the organization. This indicator is important because it can demonstrate that staff understands the end objective of their work.

Specific definitions

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose of the organization. The intention of a mission statement is to keep the staff and other stakeholders aware of the organization's purpose.

Measurement

Data source and collection: A survey either verbal or written; administered to all staff members
Data considerations:
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant.
- Determining if the staff member has correctly described the mission statement is subjective when you do not require the response to be restated word for word. Some parameters should be pre-determined to help the person calculating this indicator better determine if the answer is correct.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of staff that were able to correctly recite or write the organization's mission statement (unprompted, not word for word, but the general idea)
Denominator: Total number of staff

Possible disaggregation: If the organization was big enough it might be useful to disaggregate this indicator by position type (technical versus other, etc.)

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
Easily administered and calculated

Weaknesses:
This indicator does not reflect on the work of the organization or the staff itself, i.e. whether or not it contributes to the realm of the organization's mission.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Mission may reflect the conflict or pre-conflict context; the need for immediate services. A rapidly changing context may compel the organization to reexamine the relevance of its mission. Staff members would need to be kept in the loop in this process and if any changes are made.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

4. Percent of staff who agree that the organization's mission is reflected clearly in the organization's work

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of staff who believe the organization's mission statement is reflected in its work. For an organization with a humanitarian mission, it is important that all staff know, understand, and internalize the mission of the organization. This indicator is important because it gauges staff opinion about whether the organization is in fact working to address its mission.

Specific definitions

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose the organization. The intent of a mission statement is to keep the staff and other stakeholders aware of the organization's purpose. Program activities should not be detached from the mission but should be integrally related.

Measurement

Data source and collection: A survey either verbal or written and administered to all staff members

Data considerations:
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant (to diminish bias).

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of staff who state that the organization's mission is reflected clearly in its work
Denominator: Total number of staff interviewed (should be all staff in the organization)

Possible disaggregation: If the organization was big enough it might be useful to disaggregate this indicator by position type (technical versus other, etc.)

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to measure and calculate
- Presents staff perspective of the organization's work

Weaknesses:
- Staff may be reluctant to report anything negative about the organization.
- Assumes all staff knows the mission statement. If she/he does not know the mission statement, the answer would be counted as 0 under this indicator.
- Does not measure the actual quality of the work the organization does, only staff perception.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Given high turn over rates in conflict affected settings, the staff may be relatively new and therefore may have less knowledge about whether or to what degree the mission is reflected in the organization's work.

> **5.** *Among the target population who have accessed services from the organization, percent who are aware of the organization's mission statement*

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of direct target population members that are aware of the organization's mission statement. The organization's primary stakeholders include the identified target population, which should be aware of the organization's mission.

Specific definitions

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a brief statement of the purpose the organization. The intent of a mission statement is to keep the staff and other stakeholders aware of the organization's purpose. The program activities should not be detached from the mission but should be integrally related.

Measurement

Data source and collection: An entry or exit survey (most likely verbal, depending on the population the local NGO serves) that is administered to members of the target population willing to answer a small set of questions during a specified time period (i.e. a week, one month, at the same time each day, etc.).

Data considerations:
- Identify the **time period** in which you will conduct the survey (1 week, 1 month) and make sure to either survey all of the target population or vary the time of day to ensure that you do not bias the same type of beneficiary that may come at the same time of day
- Pre determine the **key words or phrases** that must be said to count as 'knowing the mission statement." It is unlikely that any non-staff member of the target population will be able to recite the mission statement word for word.
- Keep track of those *who decline to answer* the survey of this specific question. It is important to know the non-response rate.
- Decide what will count as "receiving a service," given the organization's work.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of target population members that were able to correctly recite the organization's mission statement (unprompted, not word for word, but the general idea, i.e. the population it serves or main topic area of interest).
Denominator: Total number of target population members interviewed.

Possible disaggregation: If the organization has a prime target population (youth, women, etc.) but serves other populations, it may be worth disaggregating by prime target group and others.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Fairly easily collected, measured, and analyzed.
- This information can help the organization better gauge if it has communicated its message to primary stakeholders.

Weaknesses:
- This "universe" for this indicator is only those who actually attend the NGO's services, not the entire target population. (selection bias)
- Does not tell us if the target population interviewed are those who would be best served by the organization's mission (selection bias)
- Courtesy and recall bias may result from conducting the exit or entry survey.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

An organization's mission could have shifted during the time of the conflict and the target population might not be aware of this change. A rapidly changing context may compel the organization to re-examine the relevance of its mission. There may be a lag time between the target population's experience of what the organization's mission was previously and the current mission.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1. The organization's legal status is in order

Rationale

In most settings, an organization's legal status facilitates the functioning of the organization. It reflects an official recognition by the government or locality in which it operates. Being officially registered as a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization is often necessary in order to access particular funds.   Also, An NGO's legal status serves to legitimize the organization's accountability to its various stakeholders.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of appropriate legal documentation. This is highly dependent on country context.

Data considerations:
- Multiple documents may be required in order that an NGO's legal status is considered fully "in order." The data collector should be knowledgeable about requirements for legal entities in that country/locality.
- This indicator can also be tailored to be an external relations indicator as a key stakeholder will be the new or re-emerging local or national government.

Method of calculation:
Based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no legal documentation; 1=some, but not all, documentation exists; 2=all needed legal documentation is in order.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Straightforward and easy to understand.

Weaknesses:
- Multiple legal documents and registration procedures may exist; knowledge of these will be required by the person calculating the indicator.
- Post conflict governments and administrative and legal registration systems may not be in place or they may be difficult to access.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Post conflict governments and administrative and legal registration systems may not be in place or they may be difficult to access. The inability to obtain legal documentation in settings where the government may not be fully functional or accountable may have more to do with contextual challenges than with the NGO itself. For example, poorly functioning legal systems, or the failure to pay salaries of government officials may encourage corruption which may in turn make it difficult or costly to obtain official statutes.

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2. The organization has a board of directors that meets regularly

Rationale

Governance refers to the high-level systems and policies that guide an organization. An organization's board of directors typically bears ultimate legal, ethical, and financial responsibility for the organization. The board is responsible for overseeing the organization's performance, including the performance of senior management. Having board meetings does not automatically imply a functioning board but periodic meetings will be at least a prerequisite to an effective board. In conflict affected settings, a board can help provide stability, direction, and overall vision during periods of political transition.

Specific definitions

A **board of directors** is a governing body, required for all corporations regardless of whether they are profit making or not. All boards exist to ensure that the organization is in compliance with rules and regulations, and the board represents the organization to stakeholders. There are a number of models for boards and they can vary in formality.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Verbal report from a board member (or all or a subset of) about the regularity of the meetings or written documentation (e.g. bylaws and minutes of board meetings to confirm how many times the board actually met).

Data considerations:
It is important to pre-determine what is meant by "regularly" and what is appropriate given the circumstances of the local NGO. Ideally, the frequency of board member meetings had been discussed when the board was created and a schedule has been set. This information should be obtainable via senior management.

Method of calculation:
Based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no board of directors; 1=board of directors exists but no regular meetings are scheduled and take place; 2=board of directors exists and meets regularly.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
• Straightforward and simple, objective, easy to measure.

Weaknesses:
• "Regular" will need to be appropriately defined for this indicator to have value.
• Meeting frequency will not reveal anything about the usefulness of the meetings or the appropriateness (membership, discussions, influence, etc.) of the board.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Fledgling organizations may have a short supply of staff. Limited human resources may be devoted to running the organization and its activities. Finding willing and appropriate volunteers to serve on a board with no compensation may be difficult in such circumstances. Moreover, economic constraints or poor infrastructure may present challenges for the board to meet regularly unrelated to the organization itself. Organizations will benefit from having board members that are respected in the community. Organizations should be cautious about engaging board members that want to use the organization for political or other self-interested motives.

3. Percent of staff who believe that the organization's leaders are moving the organization in the right direction

Rationale

Successful leaders will communicate their vision in a way that the entire staff can understand and feel part of. Determining the right direction is inherently subjective; this indicator emphasizes buy-in and the effectiveness of the leadership in achieving that buy-in.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Verbal or written survey administered to staff.

Data considerations:
- Depending on the circumstances, the results of the survey may be more honest if anonymity is assured.
- The survey could be conducted by an appropriate staff member or an external consultant.
- Clear definitions and parameters need to be set around "moving in the right direction" for this indicator to be meaningful.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of staff members surveyed who believe that the organization's leaders are moving the organization in the right direction
Denominator: Total number of staff members who are surveyed

Possible disaggregation: Division within the organization, depending on size

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- This indicator gives important insight into the ability/success of the leadership in getting buy-in for key strategic decisions.
- Easily calculated.

Weaknesses:
- May be difficult to interview all staff members, and those who are more accessible may be closer to the leaders.
- Does not evaluate the feasibility or appropriateness of the leader's vision given context

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Because of challenging economic circumstances including limited job opportunities, staff members may be reluctant to express any dissatisfaction about the leaders' direction. Confidence in the leadership of the organization will be particularly important in conflict affected areas, where trust in governance and social cohesion has been damaged.

4. The organization has developed a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan to guide program activities

Rationale

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it is going to get there, and how it will know if it got there or not. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization. For new or small organizations working in conflict affected areas, this is particularly important because it allows the organization to chart a course for the long term.

Specific definitions

A **strategic plan** describes where the organization is going and how it is going to get there. A strategic plan provides an overarching plan for how an organization will achieve its mission. A comprehensive plan will demonstrate linkages among goals, objectives, key activities, and financial implications.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of organization's strategic plan and accompanying documentation to determine if the multi-year strategic plan is comprehensive.

Data considerations:
- Appropriate documentation must be obtained. This assumes the organization has kept appropriate written records of program activities.
- Person calculating this indicator should be familiar enough with the organization, the context, and the work that the organization does or plans to do to determine if the plan is comprehensive (i.e. make a determination regarding the completeness and quality of the plan).

Method of calculation:
Score is based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no strategic plan; 1=weak strategic plan (i.e. not aligned to goals, objectives, and/or activities, does not match organization's work, etc.); 2=comprehensive strategic plan in place

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to understand.
- Examines comprehensiveness of the plan.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- It may be difficult to obtain records demonstrating that the organization is guided by a plan.
- The determination regarding the comprehensiveness is still subjective.
- Does not examine in depth if the organization is using the strategic plan to guide the work that it undertakes.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

An unstable environment and a crisis-response perspective may lessen the appeal of this indicator. Precarious, short term funding may also make the concept of a multi-year strategic plan seem irrelevant and difficult to use as the guiding document.

5. The organization's strategic plan is being used to guide program activities

Rationale

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it's going to get there, and ensures periodic review of the plan's consistency. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization. Although organizations in conflict affected areas may be pulled in a variety of directions and have a number of competing priorities, it is important that the organization have a strategic document that guides the organization in the direction it wants to go.

Specific definitions

A **strategic plan** describes where the organization is going and how it is going to get there. A strategic plan provides an overarching plan for how an organization will achieve its mission. A comprehensive plan will demonstrate linkages among goals, objectives, key activities, and financial implications.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of the organization's strategic plan and accompanying documentation to demonstrate that the plan has and is guiding program activities. For example, meeting notes, proposal documentation, etc.

Data considerations:
- Appropriate documentation must be obtained. This assumes the organization has kept appropriate written records of program activities.
- The degree to which the plan is being used to guide program activities requires someone familiar with the program, the context, and history of the organization during the time period the indicator is being calculated.
- Assumes there is a strategic plan in place.

Method of calculation:
Score is based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=strategic plan not being used to guide the organization; 1=plan only partially being used to guide the organization's program activities; 2=program activities clearly guided by a strategic plan

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to understand.
- Examines use of the strategic plan in program planning and implementation.
- The data collection **process** for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Does not assess the quality of the plan itself (see previous indicator).
- Can be very subjective determination.
- Does not speak to the quality of the work being implemented.
- It may be difficult to obtain records demonstrating that the organization is guided by a plan.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

An unstable environment and a crisis-response perspective may lessen the appeal of this indicator. Precarious, short term funding may also make the concept of a multi-year strategic plan seem irrelevant and difficult to use as the guiding document.

1. An annual budgeting exercise took place to identify the full costs of running the organization

Rationale

Financial management involves planning, organizing, controlling, and monitoring the financial resources of an organization to achieve objectives. In conflict affected settings, where there are a new set of donors working with often fledgling organizations, this area of organizational development is monitored very closely. Local NGOs are expected to keep financial records at a standard that is on par with organizations that have been dealing with donor funds for much longer. This can be a particularly hard skill to learn. For this reason, among others, it is very important that an organization conducts budgeting exercises and keeps documentation.

Specific definitions

A **budget** is a description of a financial plan. It is a list of estimates of revenues to and expenditures by an agent for a stated period of time. Normally a budget describes a period in the future, not the past.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of annual budget and supporting documentation, preparatory work, summary statements, etc.

Data considerations:
- Documentation of the budgeting exercise must be kept and organized to calculate this indicator correctly.

Method of calculation:
Yes: annual budgeting exercise took place
No: activity did not take place

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
Straightforward, easy to calculate

Weaknesses:
- Provides an indication of the organization's processes, but not an actual picture of the organization's financial status or procedures.
- Does not measure the quality of the budgeting exercise (does it project appropriately, is it comprehensive, etc.)

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Projecting budgets is always a difficult task, but this task can be more difficult in unstable and unpredictable conflict affected environments. Conflict affected areas deal with a tremendous amount of uncertainty that affects their ability to budget and project accurately.

2. Number of revenue sources that support organizational operations

Rationale

This indicator counts the variety of revenue sources that support an organization's operations. It operates under the assumption that reliance on only one revenue source is not sustainable and organizations should continually be exploring additional revenue sources to diversify their funding.

Specific definitions

Revenue sources: For nonprofit organizations, revenue sources may include grants or donations from the public or private sector, foundations, or any other grant making entities. *Revenue* is the total amount of money received by the organization for projects to be implemented, goods sold, or services provided during a certain time period.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of finances to determine the total number of *different* revenue sources (donors, income generation, etc) in a specified time period (calendar year, budget operational year).

Data considerations:
- Identify the *time period* that you will use (calendar year, fiscal year) and be consistent over time.
- Eventually this indicator could be changed to a percent, with the goal of not having one source be more than a certain amount of the overall revenue for the organization.

Method of calculation: Count total number of revenue sources

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Tracking this indicator over time is useful to examining funding trends.

Weaknesses:
- Does not tell you the percent of total revenue for which each funding source is responsible.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Many NGOs in conflict affected settings are born from one funding source and can become heavily reliant on that funding source during the conflict period. It is an adjustment, and often necessitates learning a new skill set, to begin adopting a more business-like approach after operating in a crisis period. This entails diversifying the funding base.

3. The organization has a written policy outlining expense procedures

Rationale

Adherence to standard accounting procedures is a prerequisite for most funders. Having a written policy that describes basic documentation procedures for expenditures provides staff with guidelines that ensure standard procedures as well as checks and balances for ensuring the proper use of funds.

Specific definitions

Expense procedures: A document that explains who, how, and with what documentation staff can authorize expenditures.
Expenditures: A payment, or the promise of a future payment.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of procedural documents, operational procedures manuals, and other such formal documentation.

Data considerations:
The person calculating this indicator (either internal or external) needs to be sufficiently familiar with general finance and particularly expense procedures.

Method of calculation:
Based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no written policy;1= policy exists but is not comprehensive, for example does not provide any clear guidance in terms of the details; 2=comprehensive policy exists and it is possible to ascertain key details including who, how, and with what documentation staff can authorize expenditures

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Straightforward and easy to verify.

Weaknesses:
- Indicator will address what is on paper, which may not necessarily correspond to what happens in practice (actual compliance).

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings, the development of written policies may not be considered a priority until needed to comply with donor requisites. The policy may be on paper only.

4. Percent of months where the balance in the cashbook is reconciled with the balance on the bank statement for every bank account

Rationale

Adherence to standard accounting procedures is a prerequisite for funders. Reconciling the balance on the bank statement is a basic prerequisite for adherence to standard accounting procedures. This may not be occurring with some smaller, local NGOs and should be monitored.

Specific definitions

Cashbook: A record of cash payments and receipts, showing these under various categories.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review and comparison of appropriate finance and accounting documents (compare cashbook to bank statement for each bank account the NGO has) for the specified time period.

Data considerations:
- It is important to emphasize that this data collection exercise is not an audit to NGO staff.
- To correctly calculate this indicator, all financial documentation must be organized and available.
- Person calculating the indicator (external or internal) should be familiar with basic financial principles.
- Time period must be pre-specified.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of months where the balance in the cashbook is reconciled with the balance on the bank statement for every bank account
Denominator: number of months in the specified time period

Possible disaggregation: By different bank account

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Straightforward way to determine actual application of accounting procedures

Weaknesses:
- Indicator needs to be calculated by someone familiar with basic accounting procedures

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected areas, documents may be lost, stolen, or destroyed. Regardless, good reporting should be considered the ideal and all steps possible should be taken to ensure that financial recording is appropriately thorough.

5. Percent of major financial transactions that have the necessary supporting documentation

Rationale

It is considered standard practice to have appropriate documentation for all financial transactions. This is one of the basic "checks and balances" that can help ensure healthy financial processes.

Specific definitions

Financial transaction: any event that involves the transfer of money.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of all records of financial transactions and accompanying documentation for a given time period.

Data considerations:
- The local NGO and INGO can together determine the "gold standard" for "necessary supporting documentation." The donor financial reporting requirements provide a good guideline for this. This has been left intentionally vague so that NGOs can decide what is appropriate given their context, skills level of financial staff, donor and government requirements, etc.
- The appropriate time period must be determined prior to calculating this indicator.
- The definition of "major" financial transaction must be decided upon before indicators can be calculated (over a certain financial amount). This also may be specified by donors. Again this has been left intentionally vague to give NGOs leeway to adapt the indicator to their circumstance.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: Number of "major" financial transactions that have the necessary supporting documentation
Denominator: All "major" financial transactions in x time period (could chose a financial quarter, month, year)

Possible disaggregation: By time period

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Concrete and easy to verify
- Allows for tailoring to NGOs specific circumstance

Weaknesses:
- If financial documentation practices are extremely weak there may be no documentation at all.
- The definitions of major financial transaction and supporting documentation must be appropriately defined to give meaningful information to this indicator.
- Indicator needs to be calculated by someone familiar with basic financial procedures.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected areas, documents may be lost, stolen, or destroyed. Regardless, good reporting should be considered the ideal and all steps possible should be taken to ensure that financial recording is appropriately thorough.

6. Annual internal audits are conducted

Rationale

Audits are a standard way to verify that financial mechanisms are in place and appropriate. Many donors require audits prior to and during (and/or at the end) project. Conducting internal audits allow the NGO to take stock and review procedures and practices and identify areas where they need to improve. Internal audits conducted by the NGO's own staff.

Specific definitions

A *financial audit,* or more accurately, an *audit of financial statements,* is the examination of the financial statements of a company or any other legal entity (including governments), to determine whether or not those financial statements are relevant, accurate, complete, and fairly presented.

Measurement

Data source and collection: through discussion with finance and/or accounting staff, and/or senior management staff verify which records demonstrate the process took place and that there is an end product (report, status report, and set of next steps).

Data considerations:
- External or internal audits should always be documented along with the set of recommendations/changes to be implemented.
- Audits require a skill set the organization may not have internally. The partnering INGO may not have the skills either.

Method of calculation:
Based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0=no annual internal audit took place; 1= annual audit took place but no clear documentation exists; 2=an annual internal audit took place and the organization has a deliverable discussing findings and identifying changes to be implemented.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to calculate.
- Demonstrates that the organization is committed to having strong financial systems and records.

Weaknesses:
- Does not measure the quality of the audit or what actions were taken to address problem areas.
- Audits require a skill set the organization may not have internally.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Audits may be a challenge in conflict affected settings. Arguably however, if a program can manage funds and programs, then it should be able to manage at least an internal audit. Some funders may require annual external auditing.

7. Percent of months during which program managers receive budget reports within two weeks following the end of the month

Rationale

Budget reports will enable program managers to assess project expenditures, and they are useful for decision making if the reporting happens in a timely manner. In conflict affected areas, reporting and other documentation is done in the face of competing service, safety, and other priorities. Although it may be challenging, budget reports must not be seen as supplemental, but rather integral to the financial resources themselves. The importance of budget reports for program management is paramount.

Specific definitions

A **budget** is a description of a financial plan. It is a list of estimates of revenues to and expenditures by an agent for a stated period of time. Normally a budget describes a period in the future not the past.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Interview program managers through a discussion using **historical prompting** to assess if budget reports were received within two weeks following the end of the month.

Data considerations:
- Consider the most useful time period (year, half year, etc.)
- Program managers may not write down the date they received the budget reports and the submission date may not be on the form, therefore a series of questions with appropriate prompts (reference to events in the past, etc.) will need to be used. This is what historical prompting means.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of months that program managers receive budget reports within two weeks following the end of the month
Denominator: twelve months (or however many total months are being included in the monitoring period)

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Concrete and easily measurable.

Weaknesses:
- Does not give any insight into the quality of the financial reporting.
- Does not provide insight into the use of these budget reports for decision making.
- Accuracy of the report received within two weeks may be questionable depending on method of obtaining this information.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Highly unstable environments may make it difficult to operate in an ideal and timely manner. For example, disruptions to security, infrastructure, or a resurgence of conflict may require that all resources are focused on one particular task (such as providing shelter for incoming refugees or displaced persons).

1. Written personnel policies are in place and distributed to all employees

Rationale

Human resource (HR) management is the process through which an NGO identifies, recruits, and hires the most qualified candidates for integration into the organization. HR also addresses staff retention and provides staff development. In conflict affected settings, instability and the resulting mobility of the population may make it difficult to find appropriated skilled human resources. Recruiting and retaining trained staff, already in short supply, may be more challenging due to competition with higher paying organizations (i.e. INGOs). HR policies provide a way of ensuring that staff is treated fairly and professionally. Guidelines and internal regulations provide a systematic way to handle all aspects of staff relations (hiring, firing, compensation, etc.).

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of written personnel policy (see actual electronic or hard copy of the policy with employees)

Data considerations:
- With the local NGO, come to a consensus about what is meant by "personnel policy." If something exists but it is not what the NGO feels is ideal, then document those topics or sections that have been left out.
- The policy may be in one document or in multiple documents. Be sure to obtain all relevant documents.
- Person calculating this indicator (external or internal) should be sufficiently familiar with the human resource field.

Method of calculation:
Based a on scale of 0 to 2; 0= does not exist; 1= exists but incomplete and/or all staff cannot or has not accessed; 2= personnel policies are adequate, in place, and have been distributed to all employees

Possible disaggregation: Distributed to field staff versus home office.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to collect and verify.

Weaknesses:
- Limited to what is on paper, versus what may be used in practice (are the HR policies actually implemented?).
- Does not address quality (relevance, usefulness, appropriateness, etc.) of the policy.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Conflict and post-conflict funding cycles may be very short term, and this may result in a high turnover rate of staff. Organizations operating with extremely lean administrative budgets may find it a greater challenge than larger, better-funded organizations to print and distribute paper copies of policies. Within some organizations, policies may have been developed and may also be easily accessed (for example, one public copy may exist for staff to look at) even if the hard copy of the policy has not been distributed to each individual employee. Policies for NGOs working in conflict areas must address a number of circumstance-specific situations such as safety and security policies, contingency plans, and resource management in the case of having to suspend activities.

2. Percent of staff who have a job description

Rationale

Job descriptions (JDs) guide employees in their work and they give a means by which their performance can be measured against. Specific, tailored job descriptions are also an indicator that managers have thought through the scope of work that each individual needs to accomplish in order for the organization to achieve its objectives and mission.

Specific definitions

A **job description** is a written statement that is specific and tailored that lists the elements of a particular job or occupation, e.g., purpose, duties, equipment used, qualifications, training, physical and mental demands, working conditions, etc.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of all current job descriptions and cross reference with a list of all current staff.

Data considerations:
* Job descriptions should be made available.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of staff who have a job description
Denominator: all staff currently employed

Possible disaggregation: by staff type

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
* Relatively straightforward; easy to verify.

Weaknesses:
* Does not measure if the JD is appropriate.
* Does not measure if the JD guides what the person does and if it is used for performance monitoring.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

The dynamic nature of a conflict-affected environment (both in terms of politics and funding) may require a frequent shift in the NGO's staffing structure. JDs should reflect what the organization needs to do in order to achieve its objectives. Other indicators will need to address these issues.

3. Percent of staff who feel that annual reviews of performance are conducted in a timely and fair manner

Rationale

A performance review can provide an opportunity for employees to get feedback and to give input about his or her work. If it is perceived as fair and constructive, the review will serve as a motivator and will help employees be more effective workers and supervisors. If the review is not considered fair or timely, it may in fact be a de-motivator or at best, a waste of time.

Specific definitions

Performance Review: A mechanism for regular discussion and evaluation of an employee's job performance.

Measurement

Data source and collection: a survey either verbal or written, administered to all staff

Data considerations:
- Confidentiality will need to be emphasized in order for employees to feel like they can answer freely.
- Ideal if calculated by someone external to the NGO to encourage staff to answer honestly.
- The NGO and external person collecting the data and calculating the indicator should put parameters and definitions around "fair and timely." This has been left intentionally vague so that it can be defined by the NGO.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of staff who feel that annual reviews of performance are conducted in a timely and fair manner
Denominator: total number of staff

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Relatively straightforward, easy to collect.
- Reflects how staff members perceive the review process.

Weaknesses:
- There may be an inconsistency in what is perceived as "fair" and "timely." A bias may result if poorly performing staff consistently state that the annual reviews are unfair.
- May be difficult to consult with all staff.
- Does not measure the quality of the review or ways the review translates into changes in performance.
- This indicator is about staff perception, not about the actual quality of the performance review process.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings human resources may be scarce. It can be particularly challenging to recruit and retain good staff. Performance reviews may be considered too time consuming to address amidst so many other urgent and competing priorities. A simple performance review system can be implemented regardless. The time and resource investment will likely pay off in terms of staff retention (and time saved by retaining high performing employees).

4. *The organization has clear guidelines to guide job promotion*

Rationale

Not having clear guidelines for job promotion can be very unsettling and demotivating for employees. Having written guidelines demonstrates a commitment by the senior management that good performance will be rewarded.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of personnel manual, review of promotion documents or other written documentation.

Data considerations:
• Guidelines must be available for review.

Method of calculation: Based on a scale of 0 to 2; 0= guidelines on job promotion do not exist; 1= guidelines exist but are incomplete, weak, or not used; 2= job promotion guidelines are adequate, in place, and used.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
• Easy, quick indicator to calculate.

Weaknesses:
• This indicator does not measure the quality of the guidelines.
• This indicator does not look at job promotion practices.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings human resources may be scarce. It can be particularly challenging to recruit and retain good staff. Performance reviews and job promotion guidelines may be considered too time consuming to address amidst so many urgent and competing priorities. A simple performance review system with promotion guidelines can be implemented regardless. The time and resource investment will likely pay off in terms of staff motivation and retention (and time saved by retaining high performing employees).

> **5. A staff development plan is in place to address the future human resource needs of the organization**

Rationale

A staff development plan maps out the strategy for helping ensure professional development plans for staff. The staff development plan should be geared towards helping the organization meet its stated goals and mission in the community. The staff development plan should be developed in the context of the organization, its mission, values, and goals. It should careful to be strategic to avoid opportunities for unrelated training, etc., but rather stay focused on its overall mission.

Specific definitions

Staff Development: The activities of an organization or supervisor, such as training, providing constructive feedback, job rotation, etc., which are designed to improve the skills, motivation, and qualifications of employees.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of staff development plan and accompanying documentation and discussions with staff regarding future human resource needs.

Data considerations:
- Considering the usefulness of the plan is difficult and highly subjective. For example, an organization may have a plan but it is not useful or does not meet the needs of employees.
- The person calculating this indicator should be familiar with the NGO's goals, needs, and current employee skill set.
- Determining the definition of "meet the needs" should be a discussion between leadership, staff members, and an external facilitator familiar with the organization, strategic planning, and HR.

Method of calculation: Basic scale: 0= no staff development plan in place; 1= staff development plan in place, but not geared to meet future staff needs; 2= a staff development plan is in place to meet future needs of employees and the organization.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to collect and calculate.
- Examines quality of plan in relation to staff and organizational needs.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- While there may be a good plan, it may not actually be implemented.
- Difficult to truly assess the quality of the plan.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings human resources may be scarce. It can be particularly challenging to recruit and retain good staff. The short term nature of typical emergency funded projects may make the concept of something long term seem somewhat of a luxury. It is also quite difficult for organizations used to working in crisis mode to think strategically about the long term.

6. *Percent of staff who have left the organization in the past year*

Rationale

High staff retention levels are desirable, because hiring, orienting, and training takes time and money. Re-hiring many times for the same position creates the risk of having the position unfilled at any given time. Frequent turnover also means that institutional memory is lost. Turnover can affect program quality, as well. Analysis of this indicator assumes that all turnover is negative (which may not always be true). New staff can provide new ideas and new skill sets, while departing staff opens opportunities for other staff members to be promoted. By tracking the number of staff who has left in the past year, the organization can begin to track the scale of the "problem," then more closely identify why staff leave.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of human resources records (personnel files, etc.).

Data considerations:
- If the HR department of the organization has kept comprehensive and accurate records, it will be possible to find out whether staff ended their contract or whether they left mid-contract.
- Need to pre-determine a time frame (the start and end of the year or other time period).

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of staff who have left in the past year
Denominator: number of all staff during that year (or specific timeframe)

Possible disaggregation: May want to disaggregate by a) left before contract ended; b)left at the end of contract

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
Fairly concrete, objective, easy to collect

Weaknesses:
- Some turnover is good; while too much can be costly, disruptive, and de-motivating for the organization. The indicator will not give a clear idea about the causes behind why staff left and it will be important to examine the context within which a high (or low) percentage of staff left during a given time period.
- Accuracy of indicator is somewhat dependent on how the organization manages personnel files.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings, human resources maybe scarce. It can be particularly challenging to recruit and retain good staff. Individuals may move away from the project site in search of greater security, other services, or to return home. These personal reasons may have nothing to do with the organization's effectiveness or its efforts to motivate and retain staff. This indicator brings to light a more serious development issue of donors or INGOs "poaching" good staff from local NGOs.

1. Organization's target population is aligned with organization's mission

Rationale

While a mission statement may spell out the organization's overarching goals, it is important that this be integrated into the organization's program management. The organization should target the population that the organization's mission plans to serve.

Specific definitions

Target population refers to the population intended to benefit from the organization's services or programs. Target population may also be referred to as "clients," "target group or individuals," or "beneficiaries."

Measurement

Data source and collection: Through review of program documents to determine who the organization is targeting and compare with mission statement for alignment.

Data considerations:
- The organization may have multiple target groups, some more appropriate than others depending on the selection of the target groups and the mission of the organization.

Method of calculation:
Yes: target population aligns with organization's mission
No: target population does *not* align with organization's mission

Possible disaggregation: Different programs within the organization may target different populations, so it may be useful to examine this indicator by program in a larger organization.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
Relatively simple, requires limited time to collect

Weaknesses:
- This will not be useful unless the organization already has a clear mission
- Subjectivity in determination of what constitutes beneficiary selection "aligned" with mission.
- Does not speak to the quality of the work with the target population
- Does not measure if the target populations using the services are in fact those the organization has targeted.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

A constrained, short term funding environment may leave the organization feeling that they have no choice but to address a particular target group in order to bridge gap periods in its funding. The target group may not be as easily accessible or trusting of the organization. There also may be political reasons for targeting one group or another.

2. Well established communication mechanism exists between the target population and the organization

Rationale

Feedback from the target population will provide insight into whether or not they perceive that the organization is meeting the needs of the population. It is important to demonstrate responsiveness to clients and being open to change and continuing improvement.

Specific definitions

Target population refers to the population intended to benefit from the organization's services or programs. Target population may also be referred to as "clients," "target group or individuals," or "beneficiaries."
Communication mechanisms: These are ways that the target population can provide feedback to the organization (comment box, question and answer period, meetings, etc.).

Measurement

Data source and collection: Preferably done by an external person reviewing both the mechanism itself and use of the mechanism.

Data considerations:
- Ideal if calculated by someone external to the NGO to encourage staff, members of the target population, or others to answer honestly.
- Requires conversations with staff regarding formal or informal channels of communication with program target population.

Method of calculation:
Basic scale: 0= no communication system in place 1= communication system in place but not used or inappropriate given context; 2= good communication feedback system in place between organization and target population.

Possible disaggregation: May want to assess for each program individually, if the organization is fairly large.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Demonstrates openness and receptiveness to feedback.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem- solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Does not provide information about what changes are made with the feedback received.
- Does not examine use of the communication mechanism in-depth.
- Highly subjective, does not ask target population if this feedback mechanism is appropriate; is the opinion of someone external.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In post conflict settings, the target population may be so overwhelmed with the challenges of daily life and meeting basic needs that they may have little time or interest in providing feedback to programs. Organizations should emphasize easy and simple ways to gain feedback from target populations. Organizations should also encourage and validate target population feedback.

3. Percent of program reports submitted to donors on time

Rationale

Program reporting to donors may often be the only interaction between donors and grantees. Providing reports on time is important because it reflects the willingness and ability of the organization to respond to the request of donor. It speaks to the organization's capacity for meeting deadlines and responsiveness.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of records of report submission and/or verbal indication by staff or donor.

Data considerations:
- The calculation should include total number of donors who receive the program report (if, for example, a program has two or more donors, the indicator would look at both donors).

Method of calculation:
Numerator: the number of program reports submitted to donors on time in the time period
Denominator: The number of all program reports required in the given time period (take into account both the number of donors and the number of reporting periods in the time period specified)

Possible disaggregation: By donor or program area if the portfolio is large enough

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Easy to verify and calculate

Weaknesses:
- Records of report submission may be poor even if the report was indeed submitted on time
- Good quality programming may not translate to good/strong reporting skills. It is important to include other indicators that will provide a more complete picture of the program quality
- Donors may be inaccessible, unwilling, or unable to provide report information

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In cases of active or re-emerging conflict, an organization may face legitimate challenges to reporting. For example in the case of an eruption of violence, staff may be forced to relocate staff or offices. Power, computer access, and/or data for the reports may all be delayed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. *Percentage of programs for which sufficient resources have been allocated for M&E*

Rationale

A standard rule of thumb for M&E resource allocation is 5% to 15% of all resources, but this is not a fixed rule. This indicator reveals perceived adequacy of resources and attention to measurement.

Specific definitions

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring is a continuous assessment of program activities to ensure that the program is functioning as intended. Evaluation is a periodic assessment of a program to determine whether it is achieving its intended objectives.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review of program budgets to identify percent of program funds allocated for M&E activities. May also require follow up with staff about activities and line items in budgets.

Data considerations:
- The local NGO and INGO will have to determine the parameters for sufficient resources. This will be a judgment call, but it should be standard across the programs reviewed.
- Very clear and detailed budgets will be required so that it is clear which activities are M&E related.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: programs for which sufficient resources have been allocated for M&E during a specified time
Denominator: all programs the organization implements during the specified time

Possible disaggregation: By technical area if the NGO has a number of different programs.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Calculating this indicator forces the NGO to think carefully about their budgets and if sufficient resources have been allocated to M&E.
- Demonstrates the degree to which the organization appreciates the importance of an M&E system, at least in terms of budget allocation.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- May be difficult to determine which line items or activities are M&E related depending on the budget (e.g. may be hard to disaggregate resources used for M&E versus other resources).
- May be difficult to determine whether resources are insufficient (consensus of what is considered sufficient between INGO and NGO).
- Does not measure if the resources allocated were appropriately used or the quality of the M&E.
- Resources may be universally inadequate so the indicator may be sufficient *relative* to other constraints. It may be hard to tease out which is the case.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings, available resources may be universally insufficient to meet needs. Staff may be accustomed to operating with insufficient resources, making it difficult to say whether the inadequacy is specific to M&E or not. A "culture of M&E" may not exist.

2. Percentage of programs with a written M&E plan

Rationale

This indicator measures the percent of the local NGO's programs that have an M&E plan in place and being implemented. The assumption is that with an M&E plan in place, the program can collect better information for informed decision making about the project.

Specific definitions

Monitoring and evaluation plan: A monitoring and evaluation plan describes the full mechanism for gaining feedback about the effectiveness of (a program, in this case). The plan describes who, what, when, where, and how data will be collected, used, analyzed, and fed back in order that it be used for changing the program operations as indicated by M&E outcomes.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Review all current projects and review the M&E plan.

Data considerations:
- The NGO must define what will be considered as a valid written M&E plan.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: the number of programs being implemented by the local NGO that have a written M&E plan in the specified time period.
Denominator: the total number of programs being implemented by the NGO in the specified time period.

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Demonstrates the degree to which the organization appreciates the importance of an M&E system.
- Calculating this indicator forces NGOs to review their M&E plans.

Weaknesses:
- Does not measure the quality of the M&E plan.
- Does not measure the quality of implementation of the M&E related activities.
- Does not measure if the information collected from the M&E system is being appropriately used for project management and decision making.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

M&E is one of the most difficult areas to address even during stable times. During a conflict period, the pressure to move quickly into implementation can sometimes leave little time for the long-range, strategic planning involved in designing and implementing an M&E plan. It is important not to be too short-sighted and recognize that even a modest investment in time to develop even a very basic M&E plan can save resources, including time, in the long term. It also takes a long time to develop a "culture of M&E."

> **3. Percent of programs for which information systems are in place to collect and store data for decision making purposes**

Rationale

A viable monitoring and evaluation information system, no matter how basic, will incorporate some system for the collection and storage of data. The system does not have to be highly complex or technical; rather, the point is for it to be useful and functional to the organization and its stakeholders. An information system provides information for tracking and decision making and can give the NGO accurate data about what they have accomplished and where there are problems.

Specific definitions

Information system: An information system is a system of people, data, records, and activities that transfers raw data into useable data.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Through observation and examination of information systems and in discussions with appropriate key program staff to assess the systems' appropriateness.

Data considerations:
- Small organizations may have only one or two programs. These organizations can consider adapting this indicator to a simple yes/no question (Does an information system exist?). Alternatively, they may want to maintain the percentage format in order to leave room for the expansion of more programs.
- Whether the information system is actually in place and functional is somewhat subjective and should be determined by someone with experience in M&E and in conjunction with the staff to determine if the information systems meet their needs.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of programs for which information systems are in place to collect and store data
Denominator: number of all programs the organization implements

Possible disaggregation: None

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Fairly straightforward, easy to verify
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Does not provide any insight about the quality, accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of the information system.
- Does not provide information regarding using the information system for decision making.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflicted affected settings, M&E systems traditionally have been considered a lower priority than the provision of immediate services. Public health experts now assert that basic M&E systems are not a luxury but must be considered *along with* immediate services to inform the program for better decision making. The information system may require a skill set that is in limited supply in conflict affected settings. In conflict affected settings, it may be hard to find the financial and human resources needed to establish and maintain quality.

4. *Number of instances where information from the M&E system was used to contribute to program decision making*

Rationale

The purpose of M&E for public health programming is to indicate how effective the program is in achieving its objectives and to provide information to confirm that the program is going well or indicate that modifications should be made. This indicator measures the organization's ability to use information generated from the M&E system to make programmatic decisions.

Specific definitions

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring is a continuous assessment of program activities to ensure that the program is functioning as intended. Evaluation is a periodic assessment of a program to determine whether it is achieving its intended objectives.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Through group or individual discussions with appropriate staff members.

Data considerations:
- Time period must be identified.
- The facilitator of this data collection activity for this indicator should be well versed in data use for decision making and in leading groups through such discussions (via use of historical prompts, preparatory review of program documentation, etc.).
- The process of collecting data for this indicator is as useful as the result itself; it allows appropriate program staff to review their use of data and how it has informed decision making to improve program execution.

Method of calculation: Number of instances where information from the M&E system was used to contribute to programmatic decision making.

Possible disaggregation: Per program

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Provides a good complement for M&E system-related indicators (i.e. has implications for programs and for M&E).
- Measures if M&E is being translated into decision making.
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Highly subjective indicator.
- There may be discrepancies or disagreement about how to define "contributes to."
- Requires a good facilitator skilled in data use for decision making and leading a group through a discussion about major decisions and information used to make those decisions.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings, the environment may be in constant flux and this may make it difficult to tease out which changes can be directly attributed to actions taken from M&E results. For example, positive changes may have resulted, yet dramatic changes in the environment such as a resurgence of conflict or other dramatic events may have had such a negative impact that the changes are not even noticed. M&E capacity in conflict affected settings is often limited as is the general "culture of M&E:" using M&E for informed decision making.

1. Percent of target population surveyed who view the organization in a positive light

Rationale

The target population consists of the central stakeholders in an NGO. Trust and a positive impression is a critical indicator of the rapport between the organization and the target population. Without trust, arguably, it may be difficult for the organization to maximize its effectiveness. The nature of conflict affected settings increase the risk for organizations being associated with a particular political or ethnic group. Humanitarian principles demand that organizations make all efforts to be neutral and viewed positively by the populations they intend to serve.

Specific definitions

Target population may also be called "clients" or "target groups." They represent the organization's key stakeholders for whom the services are designed.

Measurement

Data source and collection: Sample of target population (a variety of sampling techniques can be employed, to be determined by the organization).

Data considerations:
- The NGO and INGO should discuss carefully how to define the target population and be consistent with the term when selecting them for interviews.
- An appropriate sampling methodology will have to be determined and the pros and cons of technique (snowball sampling, exit interview, population based, etc.).
- The wording of the question to determine if the organization is trusted or viewed in a positive light will have to be carefully chosen to ensure context appropriateness, correct language, etc.
- Respondents need to be assured of confidentiality so that they are not concerned that honest (potentially negative) feedback may jeopardize their access to services.

Method of calculation:
Numerator: number of target population who report that they view the organization in a positive light
Denominator: total sample of selected of target population

Possible disaggregation: None, unless the organization is very large and chooses to disaggregate by region or program area or subtype of target population.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
Provides relatively straightforward input from target population and has important implications for service quality as well as external relations.

Weaknesses:
- Target population may be unavailable or unwilling to share honest feedback.
- Drawbacks inherent in any methodology selected to sample target population (cost, selection bias, etc.).
- Speaks to perception of the target population, but not on the quality or appropriateness of the services provided.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

Active conflict and transitional zones may be occupied by groups that were fighting with one another. Restoring trust in communities will be an ongoing process and it may be difficult for organizations to overcome an assumption of ill will or mistrust. The nature of conflict affected settings increases the risk for organizations being associated with a particular political or ethnic group. Humanitarian principles demand that organizations make all efforts to be neutral and viewed positively by the populations they intend to serve.

2. Number of partnerships with organizations working in the same field

Rationale

Organizations should be aware of other organizations and groups working in the same field. Collaboration is paramount in any context, but certainly in a conflict affected setting. The underlying assumption is that no single organization can meet all of a population's needs. Partnerships can help to address gaps in services, and this will not only benefit clients. At the same time, partnerships can be mutually beneficial for two organizations, as it provides an opportunity to pool expertise, resources, and so forth.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Through consensus discussions and/or free listing with staff facilitated by an internal or external person.

Data considerations:
- Partnerships can be formal or informal. The facilitator will have to probe local NGO staff to list all partnerships.
- Organization may want to define the parameters of what they will consider a partnership to be consistent and appropriate for their context.
- Organization needs to define the parameters of their "field" (i.e. geographic area, thematic area, etc.).
- May be time consuming, but would be ideal to verify the perceived partnership with the other organizations.
- If by chance the NGO is the only organization serving the population in this area, this indicator should not be selected.

Method of calculation: Count of all individual organizations with which they have partnerships.

Possible disaggregation: May want to look at type of partnership (formal, informal, etc.).

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- The data collection *process* for determining this indicator is as useful as the actual value of the indicator. The process allows for the organization to reflect on the issue, problem-solve, assess progress, come to consensus, etc. For capacity building purposes, this is extremely valuable although somewhat intangible.

Weaknesses:
- Indicator does not measure the quality of the partnership.
- Indicator does not measure the appropriateness/relevance of the partnership.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In conflict affected settings, there may be a number of organizations working in a small area. In the worst of cases, organizations may be competitive (for funds) rather than collaborative. Collaborations and partnerships should be valued in any setting, particularly so in more challenging environments where logistics and other issues may be inherently difficult.

3. *Percent of organization's donors who perceive the organization to be a good partner*

Rationale

For nonprofit organizations, donor relations can make or break the financial wellbeing of the organization. Beyond the potential to benefit directly from good donor relations, positive interactions with donors may result in indirect benefits such as broader access to other donors and resources. Being responsive to feedback from donors and being considered a good implementing partner can help lay the foundation for positive subsequent interactions with the donor.

Specific definitions

None

Measurement

Data source and collection: Through direct communication with the *appropriate* person at the donor organization.

Data considerations:
- Best asked by a person external to the organization.
- The organization will need to provide a complete list of all current (or past) donors.
- The "appropriate" person within the organization must be identified.
- A "good implementing partner" must be clearly defined and measured in the same way (Y/N or likert scale).

Method of calculation:

Numerator: number of donors who state that the organization is a good implementing partner
Denominator: total number of all donors (in a specific time period to be decided by the NGO)

Possible disaggregation: Not likely unless the organization is so large that different departments/programs have completely separate sets of funders.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:
- Direct communication with the donors.
- Relatively straightforward, easy to collect and calculate.

Weaknesses:
- Donors may be unwilling or unavailable to provide the information.
- Donors' perception of a good partner is highly subjective and depends heavily on how "in touch" they are with the realities of the organization and context in which they work.

Special considerations for application in conflict-affected settings

In highly insecure environments, NGOs may face very real communication challenges and these may affect the NGOs' ability to respond in a timely fashion to donor feedback. Donors may also not be fully aware of the contextual challenges that implementing partners face in conflict affected areas, thus biasing their responses.

APPENDIX D: Templates for Developing M&E Plans for Local NGOs

Below is a series of templates for developing a functional M&E system for a local NGO. As with the other examples in this guide, these are templates to be used as examples and should be adapted to fit the NGO context and program needs.

These steps should lead to an easy to implement and functional M&E plan. An M&E plan is a document that includes appropriate objectives and indicators for the programs implemented by the NGO. The plan provides details related to indicator measurement and data collection (how the indicator will be measured, who is responsible for data collection, how frequently data will be collected, etc.).

An M&E plan is a document describing a system (the M&E system) that links relevant information (obtained from various data collection systems) to help the organization make decisions about how to improve the programs of the NGO.

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

Objectives are specific statements detailing the desired or expected achievements of a program or project.

Good objectives are **SMART:**
* **Specific**: identifies single, concrete events or actions that will take place.
* **Measurable**: quantifies the amount of resources, activities, or changes to be expended and achieved.
* **Appropriate**: logically relates to the overall problem statement and desired effects of the program.
* **Realistic**: provides a realistic dimension that can be achieved with the available resources and plans for implementation.
* **Time-based**: specifies a time within which the objective will be achieved.

An NGO can use the following generic structure to write the organization's objectives:

To	…outcome or impact-oriented action verb **Improve, increase, strengthen, ensure, etc.** (not activity words like train, build, carry out, produce)
the	…characteristic of interest. **knowledge, attitude, behavior, access, quality, etc.**
Among	… population/sites to be reached **young males, FP clinic users, clinic staff, etc.**
From/by/to	…expected improvement or desired level **x% to y%, to a level of z%, to a desired number, etc.**
by	…time frame. **the end of the project, within three years, etc.**

The template below should be used once the local NGO has selected appropriate objectives and indicators for its capacity building plan. This template allows the local NGO to reflect on the details related to indicator measurement and data collection. By including the capacity objectives, the indicators, and the details related to measurement, the local NGO gains a complete picture of the M&E of capacity building plan.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION OF TERMS AND UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	DISAGGREGATION[10]	DATA COLLECTION (METHOD AND FREQUENCY)	PERSON	TARGET RESPONSIBLE
RIPPLE ONE: CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS					
Objective 1.1:					
1.1.1	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
1.1.2	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
1.1.3	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
RIPPLE TWO: INTERNAL CHANGES IN THE LOCAL NGO					
Objective 2.1:					
2.1.1	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
2.1.2	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
2.1.3	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		

[10] Some indicators may be disaggregated or broken into parts; for example, the same indicator might include the number of male and female staff members if it is disaggregated by sex.

INDICATOR	DEFINITION OF TERMS AND UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	DISAGGREGATION[10]	DATA COLLECTION (METHOD AND FREQUENCY)	PERSON	TARGET RESPONSIBLE
RIPPLE THREE: CHANGES IN PROGRAMS WITH BENEFICIARIES					
Objective 3.1:					
3.1.1	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
3.1.2	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		
3.1.3	Definition of terms: Unit:		Method: Frequency:		

In the initial development of the M&E of capacity building plan, it is important to brainstorm and hypothesize about the external/contextual conditions that potentially influence the outcome of the capacity building intervention. Similarly, the local NGO should list the risks that may jeopardize or hamper the success of the capacity building intervention. This is particularly true in conflict affected settings.

By listing these factors before implementation, the local NGO team is reminded of the need to address or factor in these conditions (to the best of their ability) as well as mitigate risk where possible.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR INTERVENTION:
[Retaining key staff members, gaining community support, securing new funds …]

RISKS:
[Renewal of conflict, lack of political support, delayed implementation of reconstruction plans…]

DISSEMINATION

Prior to implementing the capacity building intervention and accompanying M&E plan, the local NGO should list the key audiences for this particular activity. The audience may be only internal, but most often it will include donors, government counterparts, target population, etc. depending on the focus of the intervention and the partnerships involved.

In addition to listing the various audiences for the plan, the dissemination plan should define specific steps or strategies for communicating key messages to each type of audience. These steps might include information about how the NGO will communicate information (written, meeting, visits, etc.), how frequently, and what are the key messages.

AUDIENCE	DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

TIMELINE

Every M&E plan (capacity building or other) should have a realistic timeline. It is important to involve all key actors in developing the timeline. Each activity and sub activity should have an approximate date or time period attached. This precise planning will help the NGO carry out the plan effectively.

DATE	M&E ACTIVITY

APPENDIX E: SCORE Card Self-Assessment Tool

The Spider Tool SCORE Card is an accessible self-assessment tool that enables organizations to generate scores for selected areas of organizational capacity and visually represent their capacity by mapping capacity scores onto a diagram of a spider web.

Source: The Spider Tool SCORE Card was first developed by CARE/Nepal and has since been adapted by JSI and Save the Children, among other INGOs.

Use: The Spider Tool SCORE Card has been chosen as an example of an accessible capacity assessment tool that can be used as an entry-point to capacity building, as well as a monitoring tool that can be used to track an organization's changing perceptions of its capacity over time.

Below is the complete SCORE Card for use and reference.

Key Determinant 1: Vision, Mission, Values	1	2	3	4
Does the organization have a written V,M,V statement?	V,M,V statement does not exist.	A written V,M,V statement does not exist but most staff can voice the organization's V,M,V.	A written V,M,V statement exists, is known by most staff, and guides most activities.	A written V,M,V statement exists, is familiar to all staff, and guides all activities.
Is the V,M,V statement connected to project activities?	Project activities are often unrelated to V,M,V.	Some activities connected to V,M,V, but others are not.	Most activities are connected to V,M,V.	The V,M,V are the basis of all project activities.
Do staff understand and believe in the organization's V,M,V?	V,M,V is not understood by any organization members.	V,M,V understood only by organization founders.	Most organization members understand and believe in the V,M,V.	All organization staff understand and believe in the V,M,V.
Does the organization's V,M,V statement reflect the community's expressed needs?	Community member needs were not known or not considered when the organization created its V,M,V statement.	The community's needs were assumed by the organization when the V,M,V statement was created.	The organization's V,M,V statement was developed with the community's input.	The organization collaborated with community members to develop a V,M,V statement that reflects their expressed needs.
Is the organization familiar with the human rights of people it serves?	The organization members have neither identified nor discussed human rights.	The organization members have discussed human rights, but program activities do not intentionally protect, respect, and fulfill these rights.	The organization as a whole has identified specific human rights the project can work on to respect protect and fulfill through program activities.	The protection and fulfillment of human rights are recognized as the overarching goals of all program activities.
Vision, Mission, Values Score:				
Score divided by five:				

Key Determinant 2: Management	1	2	3	4
Are staff meetings well attended, organized and documented?	The organization almost never formally meets.	The organization meets irregularly with low attendance (less than 50% of staff), often with no meeting agenda or minutes recorded.	The organization has regular meetings with fair attendance (50% to 75% of staff members);an agenda is followed and meeting minutes recorded.	The organization has regular meetings with high attendance (more than 75% of staff members); an agenda allows for discussion of all key issues, and complete minutes are recorded and disseminated to all members of the organization.
How does the organization monitor and evaluate program progress?	The organization hopes to achieve goals by the end of the program, and has no system for monitoring progress.	The organization monitors and reports progress at the mid-term and final evaluation of the program.	The organization monitors progress and evaluates results on a monthly basis; reports are written and shared with all staff.	The organization systematically monitors and evaluates program progress; monthly reports are used by all staff to ensure program goals are achieved and to improve future activities.
How does the organization ensure timely and quality programs and services?	Implementation of program activities is done with little regard to timeliness and quality.	Program activities are compared to the organization's action plan at the mid-term and final evaluation to ensure completion; one member of the organization performs random observation of program activities to assess quality.	Program activites are compared to the action plan on a monthly basis to ensure completion; the organization has quality standards that staff members strive to achieve.	Program activities are continually monitored and adjusted to ensure they are on schedule to meet monthly action plan goals; the organization has quality standards and performs routine quality assessment with input from staff, beneficiaries, and partner or
How does the organization make decisions?	All important decisions are made privately by the organization founders.	Founders may decide without the input of staff, or decisions may go against staff input.	Decisions are made by the organization during staff meetings, and sometimes staff members disagree with the decision made.	Decisions are made following discussions with maximum staff participation. All needs and concerns are heard and consensus is reached.
Does the organization have open communication?	Important communication only takes place between top leaders, and information is not shared with organization staff.	Occasionally important communication is shared with select staff members.	Most communication is openly shared, and most staff feel informed and involved in important communication.	Open communication is encouraged, and all staff contribute to a free flow of information and feedback within the organization.
Management Score:				
Score divided by five:				

Monitoring and Evaluation of NGO Capacity Building Interventions in Conflict Affected Settings

Key Determinant 3: Finances	1	2	3	4
Are accounting and financial systems functional and transparent?	The organization has no system for recording and reporting financial status.	The organization periodically updates its financial tracking system, and the information is known only to the accountants or founders.	The organization regularly and accurately tracks its financial status, and shares this information with select staff members.	The organization's financial information is accurate, consistently up to date, openly shared and utilized by all staff for planning and decision making.
How does the organization use its budget?	Budget was created solely for the grant application, and is not used for other purposes. Funds are spent as they are received.	Budget is a rough estimate of available funds, and line items are often over or under spent.	Budget is accurate, linked to program activities, updated quarterly, and line items are rarely over spent.	Budget is accurate, consistent with program plan, balanced on a monthly basis, and reviewed by finance and program staff.
What are the organization's financial reporting procedures?	Financial reports are not accurate or produced in a timely manner.	Basic financial reporting is irregularly carried out and often incomplete and of poor quality.	Financial reports are periodic, easily understood, accurate, and used for planning.	Financial reporting is regular, systematic, high quality, computerized and used for decision making.
What is the organization's procedure for making purchases?	No consistent purchasing procedure is used.	One staff member is responsible for ensuring sufficient funds are available, and that person selects supplier without comparison.	Most purchases are approved by at least two managing staff members, and supplier is usually selected based on a cost comparison.	Purchases are systematically approved by at least two managing staff members, and supplier is consistently selected based on a comparison of three quotations.
Finances Score:				
Score divided by four:				

Key Determinant 4: Human Resources	1	2	3	4
Does the organization have personnel policies?	No personnel policies have been developed or used.	The organization has basic personnel policies written, but they are not often referenced or used.	Most personnel policies such as hiring procedures, legal requirements, and emergency protocols are written and followed.	Organization adheres to a comprehensive personnel policy manual that is distributed and signed by all personnel.
Are organization leaders and staff members committed to providing program services regardless of the ethnicity, nationality, religion, language ability, and/or financial status of the beneficiary?	The program does not extend full services to all community members.	The organization aims to provide services to all community members regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, language ability, and financial status, but has difficulty achieving this goal.	The organization is capable to extend full program services to all community members regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, language ability, and financial status.	The organization staff have diverse backgrounds and abilities. The program was designed to provide full services to all community members regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, language ability, and/or financial status.
How active are women in the planning and implementation of activities?	The organization has no female employees.	Women are represented but not in management or leadership positions. Female employees are only active in the implementation of some activities.	More than one woman is active in management, decision making and activity implementation.	Women form at least 40% of the organization staff, and are active in management, decision making, and activity implementation.
Are staff roles and job responsibilities clearly defined?	Staff roles and job responsibilities are not written and/or established.	Staff members have a general understanding of their roles and job responsibilities, but nothing is written and/or formally agreed upon.	Staff roles and job responsibilities are written and agreed upon at the time of hire and/or project initiation.	Staff roles and job responsibilities are developed and agreed upon by the organization as a whole, and every staff member has a clear, valid written understanding of their own role and responsibilities.
Does the organization assess staff performance?	No procedures for staff performance assessment have been developed or practiced.	Staff performance is only assessed when there is concern over poor performance.	The organization fairly assesses staff performance from time to time, and provides staff members with constructive feedback.	Staff performance assessments are developed, based on job descriptions and done regularly. Performance assessments are useful for constructive feedback, promotion, and salary adjustments.
Human Resources Score:				
Score divided by five:				

Key Determinant 5: External Relations	1	2	3	4
Is the organization known and trusted by the communities it serves?	Community relations have not yet been established.	A few community leaders and approximately 20% of the local population are familiar with the organization and the services it provides.	The organization and its services are trusted and supported by local leaders, and familiar to more than half of the community.	The organization is highly visible, trusted and respected by the majority of the community members and leaders it serves.
Does the organization collaborate with other local organizations or service providers?	The organization prefers to work in isolation and there is no contact or coordination with other local organizations or service providers.	The organization is known by other local organizations and service providers, but formal collaboration is rare.	The organization is in contact with other local organizations, and exchanges information and ideas whenever doing so is mutually beneficial.	Regular collaboration and good relations with other local organizations and service providers is a priority and practiced with success.
Does the organization interact with local media (e.g.. newspaper or radio)?	The organization has had no interaction with the local media.	The organization has made contact with local media, but no publicity or informational campaigns have been carried out.	The organization has once used local media for publicity and/or an informational campaign.	The organization frequently uses various local media sources to promote and implement project activities.
Is the organization recognized by the local government?	The organization has had no contact with local government officials.	The organization has contacted local government officials only to obtain NGO registration.	The organization consistently contacts local government to gain their cooperation with project activities.	The organization is highly respected by the local government, and frequently works in collaboration with officials to achieve project goals.
Has the organization succeeded in raising funds from donors other than the RHRC Consortium?	The organization has not identified other potential donors or applied for alternative funding.	The organization has identified potential donors, and has received non-financial support.	To date, the organization has received financial support from one other funding organization.	The organization actively pursues and receives financial and non-financial support from other donor organizations.
External Relations Score:				
Score divided by five:				

APPENDIX F: Most Significant Change Sample Storytelling Report Form

The below is a sample storytelling report using the Most Significant Change method adapted from Davies and Dart (2005), p.92.

1. Background

(Name of organization) would like to capture stories of significant change that may have resulted from their recent initiative to improve staff retention. This will help us to understand how staff retention affects project services, improves our strategies for retaining good staff, and enables us to be accountable to our funders.

2. Confidentiality

We may like to use your stories for reporting to our funders, or sharing with other people in the region.

Do you, (the storyteller): _____

- want to have your name on the story (tick one)
  Yes_____   No_____

- provide consent for your story to be used for publication (tick one)
  Yes_____   No_____

3. Details of source

Name of storyteller (WRITE 'ANONYMOUS' IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO HAVE THEIR NAME ON THE STORY):

_____

Relationship to project (donor/staff/volunteer/target population/service user):

_____

Name of person recording story:

_____

Location:

_____

Date of recording:

_____

4. Story

i) Tell me briefly how you first became involved with (name of organization):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii) From your point of view, what is the most significant change, either positive or negative, that has taken place in the working conditions for staff OR in staff performance at (name of organization) since (start date of staff retention initiative):

_____

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_____

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_____

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_____

iii) Why was this story significant to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

iv) Are you familiar with the activities undertaken through (name of organization's) staff retention initiative? (IF YES:) How, if at all, was this change connected to the initiative?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

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