

Section 4: Note to Users

The tools in this section invite managers and other users to reflect critically on their agency's approach to engaging with communities and to consider a more community-led approach.

It also recognizes that many managers will have a host of practical questions about things such as qualities to look for in facilitators, the phases of engaging with communities, and the kinds of benchmarks one can use to tell whether one is on a productive track, among others.

Recognizing that there are no "final" or universal answers to these questions, the tools in this section seek to give illustrative examples that stir the imagination and invite one to think how it might go in a particular context.

Managers also may find it useful to have a more in-depth look at an example of community-led work, together with tools that were used to support it. For this reason, this section includes a case study from Sierra Leone and some of the tools used as part of the community-led work.

It is important to recognize, though, that there is no one-size-fits-all in regard to community-led approaches. The Sierra Leone example and tools are best seen as illustrations and should not be seen as prescriptions for how to do community-led work.

MGM 9. Sample Initial Work Plan for Facilitators

Note: This work plan from Sierra Leone outlines the early part of the planning phase in which communities engage in dialogue and select which harm to children they want to address. It assumes that the work on preparation and learning about communities has already occurred, as facilitators may or may not have been involved in those phases. It also assumes that the facilitators have been trained and are prepared for their work. This outline is for purposes of illustration and is not intended to be a template for all settings.

Month 1

- Initial meeting (with Mentor) with Paramount Chief, Chiefdom Speakers, and Government Social Worker assigned to the Chiefdom, explaining our purpose and process, and asking the Chief's support (without them controlling the process) in collaborating with the community, which will use a slow, inclusive process of dialogue to select a harm to children that will subsequently be addressed through community-designed and -led intervention.
- Meet informally with key community stakeholders—section and town chiefs, imams, pastors, teachers, influential women, youth leaders, etc., explaining our purpose and process.
- Enable first open community meeting (one in each of the three communities), to explain our purpose, invite collaboration, spark thinking about harms to children (which may have changed significantly due to the Ebola crisis), explain the process of the community-led work, and identify the prospective roles of (a) the community, and (b) the facilitator.
- Facilitator takes transect walk, stopping to meet and talk with people in difficult circumstances who may not attend community meetings.
- Facilitator lives/works in communities at least 21 days of each month, getting to know people, building relationship and trust, doing participant observation, ensuring inclusive process, and keeping records of their work. In general, the facilitator lives in each community for one week each month, although following a schedule that is flexible and fits the needs and situation of different communities.
- The facilitator outlines the temporary nature of his or her engagement and how it supports community-owned action.
- Facilitator submits the monthly report by the end of the month. (The report includes two elements—(a) a short summary of the community process and the key events/accomplishments by the community, and (b) one participant-observation).

Month 2

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above, continuing relationship-building, doing participant-observation, and learning about power relations via transect walks and discussions.
- At the next community meeting, the facilitator enables initial dialogue and reflection about how to develop a process in which all community members have a voice and help to select one harm against children to address through collective action. The facilitator also invites ideas about which harm to children should be addressed by the community.
- If the community meeting suggests having subgroup discussions, organize and facilitate initial discussions with groups of approximately 10 people, inviting dialogue about which harm to children to address via a linking intervention (and why). Conduct discussions with 5 separate subgroups.
- Talk with people at random and in daily activities (e.g., over meals or on the way to school) about their thinking on which harm to children should be addressed.
- Submit monthly report by end of the month.

Months 3 and 4

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above and continues to promote an inclusive process.
- At next community meeting, the facilitator invites ideas about which harm to children should be addressed by the community, with ideas from the previous small group discussions fed in anonymously. By asking questions, the facilitator also invites the group to reflect on the fact that some people cannot or do not participate in community meetings or small group discussions. The community engages in problem-solving dialogue about how to invite and include the views of such people. Home visits may be an option, but the community may have better ideas.
- The facilitator helps to prepare for the home visits or other option the community has chosen for including marginalized people and people who do not or cannot attend community meetings and small group discussions.
- Subgroup discussions continue on which harm to children to address. This time and from here on, the subgroup discussions should be facilitated by a member selected by the group, with the facilitator present as an observer and resource, or not present. Afterwards, the facilitator should work with the subgroup facilitator on how to feed the main points back to the full community meeting.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 5

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above. If the discussions within the community are inclusive and include a cycle consisting of community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits, the facilitator now begins discussions on inter-community collaboration.
- At the next community meeting, the facilitator encourages the community to consider the value of collaborating with other villages. If communities are receptive, a planning facilitation group such as an Inter-Village Task Force (IVTF) is conceptualized.
- Facilitator works with each subgroup to select one member to represent the subgroup on the IVTF.
- Plans for the first IVTF meeting are developed. Facilitator works to make sure that people understand that the IVTF is not directive but facilitative.
- Subgroup meetings continue, with home visits and outreach to include the views of marginalized children and other people.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Months 6–8

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- Each month, there is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. Over time, the facilitator helps the communities to develop a common short-list of, e.g., the top two harms to children that the communities want to address collaboratively.
- Facilitator and mentor scan for how to link action options under discussion with government collaborators, encouraging options that have positive, sustainable linkages.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 9

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- There is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. Over time, the facilitator helps the communities to develop a common short-list of, e.g., the top two harms to children that the communities want to address collaboratively.

- Facilitators and mentors further explore linking aspects of the short-list options.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 10

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- There is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. The facilitator helps the communities to develop common ground and agree on a single harm to children to address through an action that links with formal stakeholders.
- Facilitators continue the process if additional time is needed. When agreement across the communities is reached, the facilitator begins preparing for the next phase—the planning of the community-led action.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.