THE CURVE

HOW CAN WE UNITE STAKEHOLDERS IN A SHARED DESIRE TO LEARN FROM RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK?

2021

Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the hard work of so many. We want to express our gratitude to our Nigerian Community of Practice for identifying this as an area for exploration. To all the individuals named below who joined our working group to act as co-authors and co-collaborators on this publication, we thank you for your commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication.

Contributing organizations

Copperfinch supports clients to build and sustain the skills needed to bring about sustainable social change. The services they provide include 1:1 and team coaching, group facilitation, and training. Please see www.copperfinch.co.uk for more information.

The Curve consortium was formed by M&C Saatchi World Services and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to convene global and Nigeria based communities of practice, where we share best practice advice and practice-based evidence on responsive feedback. Please see the-curve.org for more information.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide, co-authored by The Curve working group members and Copperfinch, is designed to provide practical advice on how to unite stakeholders in a shared desire to learn from responsive feedback (RF).

It explores the common challenges encountered by program implementers working to unite stakeholders. It identifies potential solutions to each challenge, and suggests further resources and tools for support.

By working through this guide, you will be able to complete a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy.

A template for this strategy is included on p8, followed by guidance and advice for populating each column of your stakeholder engagement strategy.

RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

> ***"If we engage all stakeholders in regularly analyzing feedback data, we can identify areas for experimentation and improvement while the program is still live in the field. We call this responsive feedback."***
>
> The Curve

Convening stakeholders is the first step of responsive feedback. Stakeholders must buy into the value of responsive feedback and must work together to make learning happen.

By collecting, analyzing and learning from formal and informal data throughout a program's life cycle, it is possible to maximize the potential impact of any intervention.

Cooperation and regular communication is needed between stakeholders, from the funders, to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) teams, to the implementing teams.

Figure 1: What does responsive feedback mean to our Working Group?

WHAT DOES RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK MEAN TO YOU?

RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK...

- Enables positive impact to be achieved
- Supports programme improvement
- Guides how we deliver intervenntions
- Ensures you are on course
- Improves programming
- Enables you to take actionable steps or make adjustments where necessary
- To improves project outcomes
- Improves the way the project is being implemented

RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK IS...

- A model for two-way communication
- Obtaining useful evidence during implementation
- Applying the right tools in stakeholder mannagement, programme review and performance management
- Routinely conduct timely assessments of how a planned intervention is fairing
- Regularly analysing feedback data to identify areas for experimentation and improvement
- Feedback that is routinely collected
- An ability to monitor annd accommodate changes where necessary in the life of a program

WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Our vision is for a Nigeria in which stakeholders are united in a shared desire to learn from responsive feedback.

We have identified a number of key points based on where we are now, in Nigeria, and where we would like to be, represented in Figure 2:

Figure 2: From 'now' to the 'future'

NOW

- Structured and hierarchical decision-making
- Data collection focused on performance indicators and tied to demonstrating achievements
- Motivations and incentives of different stakeholders are not aligned or cohesive
- Little focus on collecting and analyzing data to learn and adapt programs
- Program beneficiaries rarely involved in decision-making
- Local government face a lot of obstacles and challenges in accessing funding for programs
- Little transparency or accountability in reporting on program progress and outcomes, particularly to beneficiaries

FUTURE

- Local government together with national government and all other stakeholders to develop policy and make decisions
- Data collection for learning and programmatic improvement
- A co-created and shared vision where stakeholders are open and willing to generate and use data to adapt programs based on evidence and learning
- Routine interaction between stakeholders to test assumptions and learning
- Increased ownership of project/programs by intended beneficiaries
- Local government having access to funding without obstacles
- Transparency and accountability in reporting outcomes

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS: WHO ARE THEY AND WHY UNITE THEM?

Collecting and analyzing routine feedback data is not on its own sufficient for improving programs and maximizing their impact. All key stakeholders need to buy in to the process.

> ***"If you don't engage stakeholders, they're less likely to accept your findings and if findings are not accepted it becomes difficult to use findings to improve your program."***
>
> **Adolor Aisiri, Centre for Communication and Social Impact, Nigeria**

Who are the key stakeholders who need to be united to learn from responsive feedback?

Development programs/projects are complex systems with many different stakeholders influencing, implementing, and benefiting from activities. Some will have significant power or influence, others will have less power, but might be more impacted by the project/program.

Each stakeholder will have different priorities and motivations for engaging in responsive feedback, as well as different capabilities and constraints to doing so.

It is important to identify these differences at the outset to understand how to engage these stakeholders. Understanding and responding to these differences is crucial if stakeholders are to be united around a common vision for learning from responsive feedback.

We carried out stakeholder mapping exercises during the development of this guide and found three main types of stakeholder who should be brought on board from the beginning if responsive feedback is to lead to sustainable, impactful change:

1. **Government**
2. **Development partners**
3. **Community**

Within each stakeholder group are specific individuals whose involvement is paramount, such as policy/decision-makers within government; religious and traditional leaders in the community; and those responsible for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) among donors and IPs.

AS INFORMATION CHANGES, STAKEHOLDERS CHANGE

"In 2016 the Foundation made a commitment to help Nigeria reduce the rates of malnutrition using an integrated approach which involves five components: Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food security, Livelihoods and Social Protection (FSLSP) Social Behavioral Change (SBC) and Nutrition Leadership and Governance (NLG). In the first phase of the programme, a Service Availability and Readiness Mapping of Health Facilities was conducted, which revealed most of the facilities selected will need to be upgraded for the program. This meant more stakeholders becoming involved in upgrading the Health Facilities with consideration to infrastructure and manpower. This experience demonstrates that the stakeholders who you need to involve in program delivery and responsive feedback may change as more information comes to light."

– Maryam Buhari-Shehu, Aliko Dangote Foundation

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY:
A FRAMEWORK TO FOLLOW

Since no projects/ programs are exactly alike, this framework is designed to help you identify the key stakeholders for your specific context, and the engagement strategy needed to unite them.

We break down what you need to fill out each section of the framework over the following pages, with supporting tools and resources.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2" rowspan="2">Types Of Stakeholder</th><th>Defining Your Stakeholders</th><th>Role they play in RF</th><th>Challenges/ Barriers</th><th>Stakeholder Interests, Influence and Power</th><th colspan="2">Engagement Strategy</th></tr>
<tr><th>SECTION 1, P7</th><th>SECTION 2, P9</th><th>SECTION 3, P11</th><th>SECTION 4, P21</th><th>SECTION 5, P26</th><th>SECTION 6, P29</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Government</td><td>Political leaders at national, state and local level</td><td rowspan="9">Which people and organizations are most relevant to your program?</td><td rowspan="9">What role or resources might key stakeholders bring to responsive feedback?</td><td rowspan="9">What is preventing my stakeholders from being united?

What might we do to help individual stakeholders address their challenges to involvement?</td><td rowspan="9">A stakeholder interest/ influence map can be produced by identifying and organizing the various actors within a system, and their interactions and relationships with other actors.</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="9">Use the tips, tools and resources provided in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 to gain oversight and make a clear engagement strategy using the tools and techniques in Sections 5 and 6, focusing what it takes to initiate and maintain strong relationships with your stakeholders and develop a shared vision with them.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Technocrats/civil servants and national, state and local level</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Development Partners</td><td>International non-governmental organization (INGOs)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) / community-based organizations (CBOs)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bilateral and multilateral donors</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">MEL teams</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Community</td><td>Project beneficiaries</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community and religious leaders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Frontline workers</td></tr>
</table>

SECTION 1:
DEFINING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

SECTION 1: DEFINING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

WHAT

Now you've identified your stakeholders, you can locate the most important stakeholders with regard to responsive feedback and maximizing the impact of the project/program.

Consider who or which organizations have influence or power over the intervention, or have an interest in its successful conclusion, and make sure you identify the correct individual stakeholders, or how to identify them, within an organization.

HOW

Here is an exercise you can use to create a visual representation of your stakeholders.

It can be used not just to identify who your most important stakeholders are but to help understand their motivations and any challenges they may face in doing so.

The main challenge with any guide of this nature is there will, inevitably, be a gap between what is reflected in this guide and your own context.

You might choose to re-label these stakeholders in a way that feels relevant.

Type Of Stakeholder		Your Stakeholders
Government	Political leaders at national, state and local level	
	Technocrats/civil servants at national, state and local level	
Development Partners	INGOs	
	Local NGOs/CBOs	
	Bilateral and multilateral donors	
MEL teams		
Community	Project beneficiaries	
	Community and religious leaders	
	Frontline workers	

TOOL: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

What	Mapping stakeholders on paper following specific questions.
Why	To identify key stakeholders, consider their roles and motivations for engagement, and uncover hidden dynamics.
When	As a first step in the process.
How	Using a large piece of paper and colored pens, follow the steps below.

1. Draw a circle in the middle of a large piece of paper to represent the project/program around which you want to unite stakeholders (leave room around the circle).
2. Indicate the direction in which the project/program is facing/travelling in a way that makes sense to you (e.g., an arrow in the circle pointing towards the top of the page, with the top representing the intended outcome of the project).
3. Draw other circles on the page representing the key stakeholders to the project/program. You may want to choose different colors for some of the stakeholders. But before you mark each stakeholder on the page think about:
   - Where is the stakeholder in relation to the project? Within it? Behind? At the side? Off the page?
   - How important is the stakeholder to your project? Denote this by the size of the circle.
   - How closely do you currently work with them? Position their circle close to or far from your circle to represent how closely the project currently works with them.
4. Draw the connections between the project/program and each of the stakeholders you've included. What are these connections like? They may be straight, strong and clear, broken and fain, or convoluted and bendy.
5. Draw arrows on these lines to represent the primary direction of influence between stakeholders.
6. Take a step back from the page and look at it from different angles. What do you notice? Now identify from the map up to six stakeholders it is crucial to engage in your efforts to promote responsive feedback.
7. For each of these chosen stakeholders, put yourself in their 'shoes' and note down in the table below:
   - the benefits to them of promoting/engaging in responsive feedback
   - the role they play in responsive feedback
   - the data they have available to feed into responsive feedback
   - the data they need to get out of the responsive feedback process
   - what gets in the way of them engaging fully in responsive feedback
   - what factors would be needed for them to engage more fully.

SECTION 2:

THE ROLE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS PLAY IN RF

SECTION 2: THE ROLE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS PLAY IN RF

WHAT	HOW
Having identified your key stakeholders, it is important to identify the roles they play in the process. Understanding each role is important to understanding how to engage stakeholders and secure their buy-in. Think about each stakeholder in ways that may uncover aspects you wouldn't have come up with by just jotting down what you instinctively know about them. Each stakeholder will have a unique profile in terms of: • the point in the process in which their support, involvement or action is critical • the type of support, involvement, or action they are able and required to give • the type of data they collect, analyze and feed into the process, and the actions they perform in response to the data.	The table below is designed to capture a high-level description of each of the stakeholders identified through mapping exercises and the role they play in responsive feedback.

SECTION 2: THE ROLE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS PLAY IN RF

Figure 3: Understanding the role of your stakeholders.

Type Of Stakeholder		Role they play in RF
Government	Political leaders at national, state and local level	• Can ensure responsive feedback is enshrined in policy documents • Commit resources to responsive feedback
Government	Technocrats/ civil servants at national, state and local level	• Championing and creating an enabling environment for responsive feedback • The collection and presentation of national level data • Coordination of different programs and their data collection efforts • Facilitate an enabling environment for frontline workers to carry out activities and conduct data collection • Commit resources • At local level: the provision/collection of data on project learnings and outcomes.
Development Partners	INGOs	• Building capacity for all stakeholders at national, state and local government levels on responsive feedback. Developing tools and agreements for responsive feedback • Gathering, analyzing, and reporting routine data about targets met/beneficiaries reached, and primary (often qualitative) feedback from beneficiaries about lessons learned and impact • Providing examples from other countries – the global perspective – to feed into the analysis of, and response to, the responsive feedback data collected.
Development Partners	Local NGOs/ CBOs	• Build capacity of stakeholders at State, local government and community levels, and facilitate engagement/feedback meetings to promote participation and learning • Providing feedback to the project's beneficiaries and all stakeholders • Making connections to community structures and leadership for the benefit of the responsive feedback process.
Development Partners	Bilateral and multilateral donors	• Conducting engagement meetings with management of consortium partners and project teams • Setting the agenda in development and can lead the way in ensuring stakeholders buy-in to RF (can help to lead a sea change) and can ensure RF is prioritized within their donor programs • Commissioning and carrying out evaluation activities • Providing financial and other resources to enable the conduct of activities • Coordination of all non-government stakeholders in the country towards the vision of RF.
MEL teams		As champions and thought leaders around RF, they can provide a technical backstop to the RF process by: • Developing MEL framework and indicators • Developing data collection tools and approaches • Ensuring data quality • Advising on areas to make changes as part of adaptive programming mechanism. • Giving heads up to program managers, government etc. on how performance is going in respect of mutually agreed targets.
Community	Project beneficiaries	Provision of data on how the project is being experienced (and collection/analysis of such data where participatory approaches are used).
Community	Community and religious leaders	• Knowledge of, and access to, the communities and people. Ability to organize and engage the community around RF • Provision of qualitative data on how the project is being experienced by the community.
Community	Frontline workers	Collection of project delivery data and data on how beneficiaries are experiencing the intervention.

SECTION 3:

CHALLENGES IN UNITING STAKEHOLDERS

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES IN UNITING STAKEHOLDERS

We have identified six key challenges in uniting stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback (RF):

1. Difficulties navigating group dynamics, including conflicting priorities.
2. Varying capacity and abilities hinder consensus building.
3. Lack of shared understanding of the benefits of working together on RF.
4. Insufficient leadership and structure to unite stakeholders.
5. Insufficient time and resources to unite stakeholders in a meaningful way.

Here we present each of these challenges and offer ideas and support for how to overcome them.

CHALLENGE 1: DIFFICULTIES NAVIGATING GROUP DYNAMICS

Stakeholders should ideally come together with a commonality of purpose through responsive feedback. However, groups of stakeholders are governed by unconscious dynamics which include differences in motivations, priorities, and power.

Each stakeholder has their own motivations and interests, and these may not always be openly voiced or apparent. Motivations may be shaped by organizations, personalities, contextual factors, or social structures.

For example, a donor organization may be motivated to learn from what is working and what isn't to inform the design of future interventions. A junior partner in a consortium, however, may be less motivated to engage with and learn from feedback if they do not have the scope to adjust their program activities.

Different motivations can impact trust and lead to competitiveness and/or hidden agendas on a project/program. This may play out in varying degrees of engagement from stakeholders and affect their behavior and openness to learn from feedback.

Understanding stakeholder interests and motivations is a critical first step to overcoming this challenge.

"My experience managing grants is that the categories of stakeholders extend beyond the programme implementation phase. This means donors need to consider and carry along stakeholders that will see them through donor exit and the sustainability of the program beyond, ideally from the inception phase."

– Maryam Buhari-Shehu, Aliko Dangote Foundation

"In my role with the Leprosy Mission we've had quite a lot of experience working with communities. In terms of stakeholder engagement, we take a different approach at different levels. The way we engage with government is different to how we engage with communities who are the beneficiaries of our interventions."

– Pius Ogbu Sunday, the Leprosy Mission

"When you ensure that government is in charge, and support government to create a vision that is broad enough to accommodate the goals of the nation, but also specific enough to be measurable and then support government to have some structures e.g., at ministry level, technical working groups then it is easier to unite stakeholders."

– Sada Danmusa, Mid-Space

CHALLENGE 2: VARYING CAPACITY AND ABILITIES HINDER CONSENSUS BUILDING

Due to staffing and resources, stakeholders are likely to have different levels of capacity and ability to engage with and learn from responsive feedback (RF).

This impacts how stakeholders come together to learn from RF, as we cannot take a 'one-size fits all approach', and must adapt to suit our collective circumstances.

Overcoming this potential challenge:

- Ask all stakeholders what resources they need (financial, human and physical) to engage in responsive feedback at the beginning of the process, and check in at intervals throughout it to ensure that sufficient resources are in place.
- Support stakeholders to give and receive feedback by asking stakeholders to reflect on receiving feedback in the past and consider ways in which it could be better delivered.

"When working with different capacities and abilities, we engage early in the design of program, using their local context and resources. We also task them to come up with the best way to provide or receive our feedback, making sure that all relevant stakeholders are represented and engaged. Responsibilities are assigned based on a stakeholder's capacity. Lastly, we also make sure we build trust at the early stages by being transparent with all stakeholders, so they understand how we are going to use the data we get from their communities. These approaches have helped us to work through differences."

– Usman Usman, Breakthrough Action Nigeria

CHALLENGE 3: LACK OF SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER

There may not always be a shared understanding of what responsive feedback is, or the benefits of incorporating it into the project/program.

Without this shared understanding, it can be difficult to unite different groups of people.

To overcome this potential challenge, you could develop a group charter or collaboration agreement so that all stakeholders are clear on their role and the expectations on them.

"One of the major approaches in our project, Breakthrough Action Nigeria, is Community Capacity Strengthening (CCS) where we bring all major stakeholders in the communities to develop a Community Health Action Resource Plan (CHARP). CHARP is the communities' own action plan as to how they will contribute towards better health outcomes in their own community. It spells out the various activities, roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders and how they can use feedback and data to evaluate the successes of their implementation at intervals. One of the feedback mechanisms is the use of a Community Information Board. Each community has a board kept in an open space and it shows data on key health indicators. Every month individuals are assigned to update the board using data from the health facilities and communities. Stakeholders are expected to use the data in planning activities for subsequent months. This approach has worked well to help create a shared understanding of the benefits of working together on responsive feedback as the board has been accessible to all stakeholders, making it easier to see progress on key health indicators, and the data indicators are simple and easy for stakeholders to interpret and act upon."

– Usman Usman, Breakthrough Action Nigeria

"To ensure that stakeholders remain engaged in a meaningful manner throughout the project cycle, it is important to reflect on the common goal and the benefits the project will bring to everyone."

— Maryam Buhari-Shehu, Aliko Dangote Foundation

CHALLENGE 4: INSUFFICIENT LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE TO UNITE STAKEHOLDERS

Shared experience in Nigeria has indicated that if there is insufficient leadership from within the project/program to implement responsive feedback, it will be difficult to unite stakeholders.

Equally, if there are insufficient structures in place, such as a project work plan or dedicated meetings to reflect on data, it will be difficult to bring the right people into the room together.

To ensure that there is sufficient leadership and structure in place to unite stakeholders, there are several practical solutions that can be taken.

Establishing clear working groups with terms of reference in place and set meeting times and agendas can be effective. Additional resources can also be found here.

"What worked well to unite our different stakeholders was: firstly, develop a common work plan on how they can combine resources to develop communities; secondly, to strengthen the links between the community structures, the local government, state government and the national government. The community structures were motivated when they saw that the state and national government had recognized their performances in community development, and worked together to evaluate work plan performance and developing a common corrective action plan."

— Usman Usman, Breakthrough Action Nigeria

"The MEL and program team meet regularly to discuss progress and feedback data. Having regular meetings built into the program design has been really helpful to ensure that we learn from responsive feedback."

— Adolor Aisiri, Centre for Communication and Social Impact

"When you bring smaller groups together to talk through technical issues it often easier than having large meetings."

— Sada Danmusa, Mid-Space

CHALLENGE 5: INSUFFICIENT TIME AND RESOURCES TO UNITE STAKEHOLDERS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

Ensuring stakeholders devote time and effort to engage in responsive feedback throughout the project cycle, requires effort and buy-in from everyone involved.

There are several ways practitioners can support this, including building explicit time into the project/program work plan and agreeing at the outset when and how people will meet.

There may also be work that needs to be done to negotiate with stakeholders to ensure they stay engaged and to manage the departure and arrival of different team members.

"Sometimes you need to provide incentives to stakeholders e.g., transport to help ensure that people remain engaged throughout the project cycle."

— Adolor Aisiri, Centre for Communication and Social Impact

"When we develop new projects, we ensure that we build in time and a budget line to accommodate learning from the start."

— Pius Ogbu Sunday, the Leprosy Mission

CHALLENGES FACED BY DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

WHAT

In order to build an effective engagement strategy, it is important to acknowledge the challenges stakeholders are likely to face.

This section details some of the challenges faced by different stakeholders.

Challenges may be experienced differently by different groups of people. The table below explores some of these challenges further, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

HOW

There are a number of ways you can help to understand the challenges or barriers your stakeholders may face in engaging in responsive feedback, these include:

- Identifying the unique challenges in a program/project (see 'Understanding and Deconstruction' on p21)
- Identifying contextual or systematic barriers (see 'Logical Levels' on p22)

Figure 4: Challenges faced by different stakeholders

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Type Of Stakeholder</th><th>Role they play in RF</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Government</td><td>Political leaders at national, state and local level</td><td rowspan="3">• Political leaders do not have execution power so can only advise the executive to support or change things.
• Changing and competing priorities
• Not a homogenous group
• Bureaucracy/levels of hierarchy
• Transactional behavior
• Priorities may be different to donors
• Seeing merit in TA projects
• Wary of collecting or showing data that may show project 'failure'
• Lack of budget/capacity for the collection and analysis of monitoring data</td></tr>
<tr><td>Technocrats/civil servants at national, state and local level</td></tr>
<tr><td>Frontline workers</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Development Partners</td><td>INGOs</td><td>• Interests/agenda may not align with donor or government
• Challenge of the project cycle – limited time to be responsive within short (e.g. 3-5 year) projects.
• International bureaucracy leads to limited room to adapt to the context in a timely manner.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Local NGOs/CBOs</td><td>• Priorities may be different to those of government
• Challenge of project cycles
• More susceptible to local influences which reduces their ability to be firm with local stakeholders about changes that need to be made
• More modest capacity than national NGOs
• Challenge of the project cycle – limited time to be responsive within short (e.g. 3-5 year) projects.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bilateral and multilateral donors</td><td>• Changing and competing priorities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">MEL teams</td><td>• Not always having the necessary funding or support from other key stakeholders to push for responsive feedback
• Not understanding how findings might translate on the ground</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Community</td><td>Project beneficiaries</td><td rowspan="3">• Not a homogenous group so need to work in different ways with different people.
• Not believing/understanding the findings from MEL teams</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community and religious leaders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Frontline workers</td></tr>
</table>

TOOL: UNDERSTANDING AND DECONSTRUCTING CHALLENGES

While there are common challenges when uniting people, the challenges and intensity of challenges will differ across projects/programs.

It is important firstly to identify the unique challenges faced in your project/program and to deconstruct the problem before designing and implementing tailored solutions.

Is the problem complex? A complex problem is one where cause and effect is only understandable in retrospect and is not a repeated pattern. In this situation you are likely to implement multiple options/solutions to solve the problem and will need to work in an adaptive manner.	**Is the problem complicated?** A complicated situation is one in which cause and effect are separated by space and time, but can be understood. To solve these types of problems there is a need to work in a systemic way and apply good practices to overcome the challenge.
Is the problem chaotic? A chaotic problem is one in which no cause and effect relationship can be determined. To solve this type of problem there is a need to stabilize the situation and work in a novel way, assessing the situation and responding accordingly.	**Is the problem obvious/simple?** A simple problem is one in which cause and effect is repeatable and predictable. To solve these types of problems, procedures and best practice can be applied to overcome the issue.

Identifying whether your problem is complex, complicated, or simple in the first instance can help in determining how to approach the situation and solve the problem.

For instance, if your challenge is simple then reaching for known procedures or best practice is likely to be effective. Conversely, if the challenge is complex, known procedures may not work and you may need multiple options/solutions and to work in an adaptive manner.

Five Whys

The “Five Whys” is a technique that can help uncover the root causes of challenges:

1. Frame your problem as a question. For instance “Why are stakeholders not united in my intervention to learn from responsive feedback?”
2. Then having identified one, two or more causes ask “Why does this happen?” at least five times.

Exploring multiple causes of a challenge will give further insight in how to solve the challenge and move forward.

Further information on this technique can be found in the PDIA toolkit and you can find an example, below:

Why is money being lost in service delivery?

Why does this happen?
Loopholes in disbursement system allows reallocation of funds.

Why does this happen?
Disbursement systems are missing key controls.

Why does this happen?
Disbursement system designs were insufficient and have never been improved.

Why does this happen?
We lack resources and skills to improve the disbursement system.

Why does this happen?
We have not raised this issue with key stakeholders and requested specific support.

TOOL: LOGICAL LEVELS

What	Asking questions related to different contextual levels in a systematic way.
Why	To explore barriers and enablers (to uniting stakeholders) at different levels.
How	This tool can be used in person or online, with one person or with a group.

Introduction

Logical Levels (also sometimes referred to as Neurological Levels, or Logical Levels of Awareness), was developed in the 1970s by Robert Dilts, learning from work by one of his University teachers, Gregory Bateson. Asking questions related to the different Logical Levels is very useful for assisting with understanding change from an individual, social or organizational viewpoint.

Setting up the exercise

Ideally, a printout of the pyramid can be laid out on a tabletop, or better still, on the floor, using markers to identify each level. Online, the organizer should bring up an image of the pyramid.

The person or people participating should be encouraged to physically move up and down the levels of the pyramid as they consider the questions. An online participant can move their mouse up and down the different levels as the questions are being asked.

Facilitating the session

Start by "walking up" the pyramid, asking questions at each level that explore 'what is':

- Environment (Where?): Where are we when we are uniting stakeholders? Who is there?
- Behavior (What?): What do we do when we try to unite stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback?
- Capabilities (How?): What skills and expertise do we use when we try to engage and unite stakeholders?
- Beliefs/Values (Why?): What is important about uniting stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback? Why does it matter?
- Identity (Who?): Thinking about uniting stakeholders in learning from responsive feedback, how do you see yourself, the team? How do others see you/stakeholders working on responsive feedback?
- Mission (Who else?): What are we doing this for? What else?

Next turn around and walk back down, asking questions that explore 'what needs to be',
"To achieve the mission and purpose described…":

- Identity: How do we need to be to unite stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback? What holds us back and how can we overcome this?
- Beliefs and values: What values and beliefs do you need to have to unite stakeholders? What holds us back and how can we overcome this?
- Capabilities: What skills and expertise do we need more of? What is currently missing and how can overcome this?
- Behavior: How does it need to change? What stops us from making these changes and how can we support change?
- Environment: How do we need to tweak the environment to enable the above to happen e.g. create more time. How can we adjust the environment to create what we need?

Stepping away from the model, facilitator then asks:

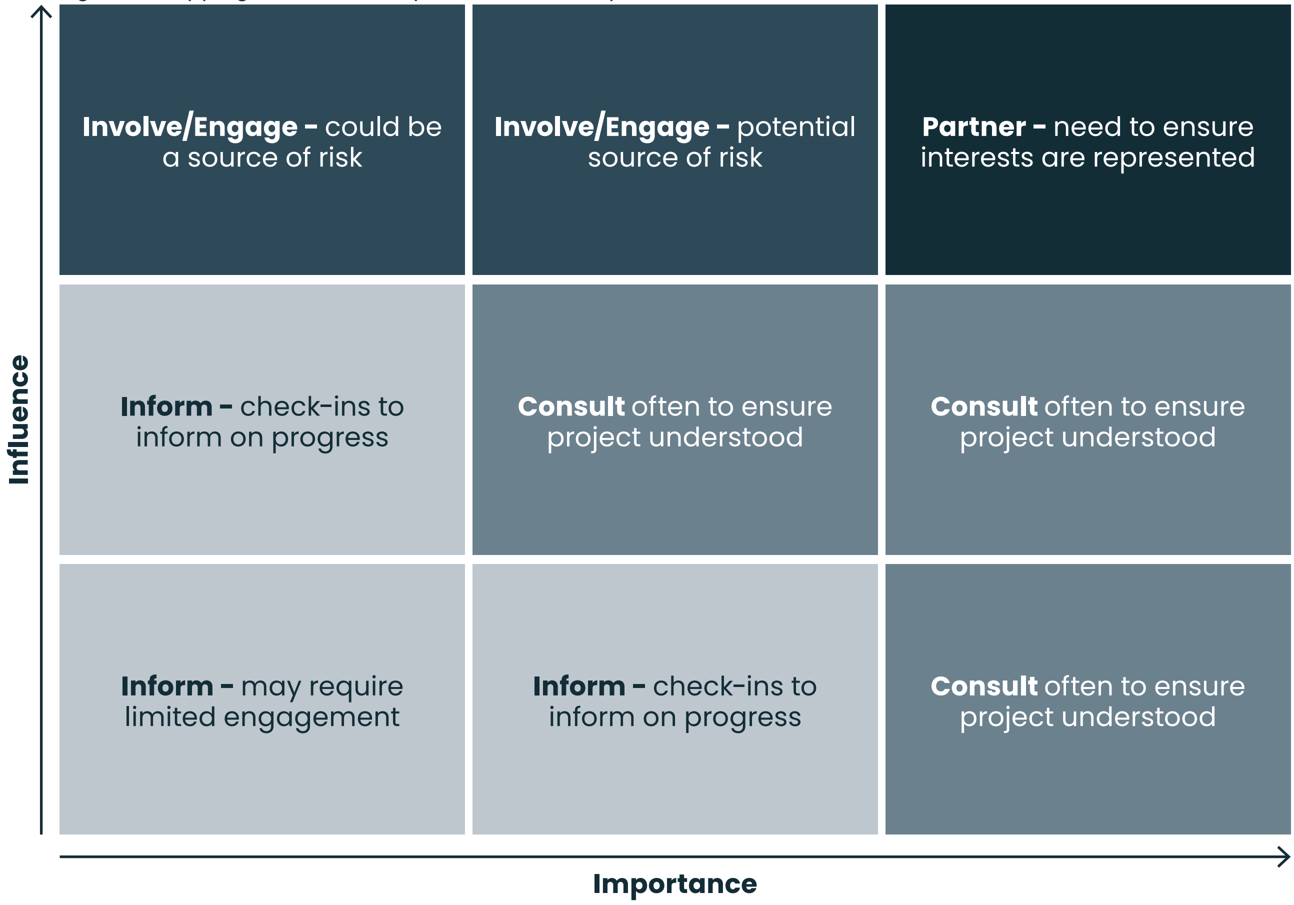
1. What insights have we gained?
2. Is there anything missing?

SECTION 4:
STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS, INFLUENCE AND POWER

SECTION 4: STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS, INFLUENCE AND POWER

WHAT	HOW
Stakeholder mapping has been used in many ways and for a wide range of purposes. Mapping your stakeholders enables you to clearly visualize interrelationships between stakeholders and can make explicit previously hidden patterns and dynamics. It has been effectively used within the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and Thinking and Working Politically (TWP) arenas to understand stakeholder motivations and interests and how they may influence, or be used to support, project outcomes. To understand the motivations, influence, and power of your stakeholders, and what their interest may be in engaging in responsive feedback, analysis should be repeated periodically to ensure you are engaging with all the necessary stakeholders.	Map out your stakeholders by their 'power/influence' over your work and by their 'importance' in your work (see figure 6 below). In this exercise ask yourself: firstly, who stands to lose/gain from this project, and secondly, whose actions could impact project success/failure (column 1 of the template in figure 2). The below diagram can guide you on the level of engagement (inform, consult, involve) you may need to have with each stakeholder relating to influence/ importance.

Figure 6: Mapping stakeholders by influence and importance



Low importance, low influence - These are not key stakeholders but keeping in touch with them is a good idea, just in case their status changes.

High importance, low influence - These individuals can be difficult because it is easy to ignore them as they apparently cannot derail the change, although if they are sufficiently upset, they may gain influence and negatively affect the process.

Low importance, high influence - People with a low importance will not be particularly worried about what you are doing. A problem can appear when they are persuaded to act for those who oppose your project. It is therefore important to keep them informed, for example, with regular meetings to explain what is happening.

High importance, high influence - These individuals are both significantly affected and most able to do something about it, by either supporting or opposing the process. It is particularly important to partner with them, ensuring that they understand what is going on and creating a sense of ownership.

Map out your stakeholders using a constellations approach (see p27) to identify those individuals who may be most receptive to supporting responsive feedback.

Figure 7: Mapping stakeholder interests, influence and power

Type Of Stakeholder		Stakeholder Interests, Influence and Power
Government	Political leaders at national, state and local level	Convening ability, a mandate for development policy
Government	Technocrats/ civil servants at national, state and local level	Convening ability, public budget/spending power, mandate for long-term development planning, provision of public services and infrastructure, securing resources and funding to carry out their role and function effectively.
Development Partners	INGOs	• Promoting the rights, equity and social/economic/environmental development of their target beneficiaries. • Access to international knowledge and resources. Delivery capacity. • Capacity to organize and engage people to mobilize/implement programs.
Development Partners	Local NGOs/ CBOs	• Promoting the rights, equity and social/economic/environmental development of their target beneficiaries. Acting as guardians of the rights of the underrepresented and holding government to account. • Influence through their access to resources, INGOs, donor organizations. • Some may lack delivery capacity (particularly CBOs) and be overly reliant on INGOs and donor partners.
Development Partners	Bilateral and multilateral donors	• An interest in seeing that their funded programs are delivered effectively and within budget/on time. Value for money • Influence over how funds are used. Accountability mechanisms. • Access to large amounts of funding. Political connections and influence.
MEL teams		• To ensure responsive feedback processes are mainstreamed into programs.
Community	Project beneficiaries	Often limited power and influence. Sometimes consulted as passive recipients of donor and government funding.
Community	Community and religious leaders	A strong interest in securing services and infrastructure to improve the lives of those living in their community in order to maintain their local influence and legitimacy. Power and influence through their ability to influence local voters.
Community	Frontline workers	Limited power and influence.

"Part of the learning for us is you cannot address a problem in isolation. There is a ripple effect from all the key stakeholders from the government level, from the community structures, and from the religious structures, down to the base. Stakeholders are sometimes beyond the myopic scope that we look at – there are other stakeholders that we must work with. We consistently do stakeholder analyses for every project/program or project that we want to do."

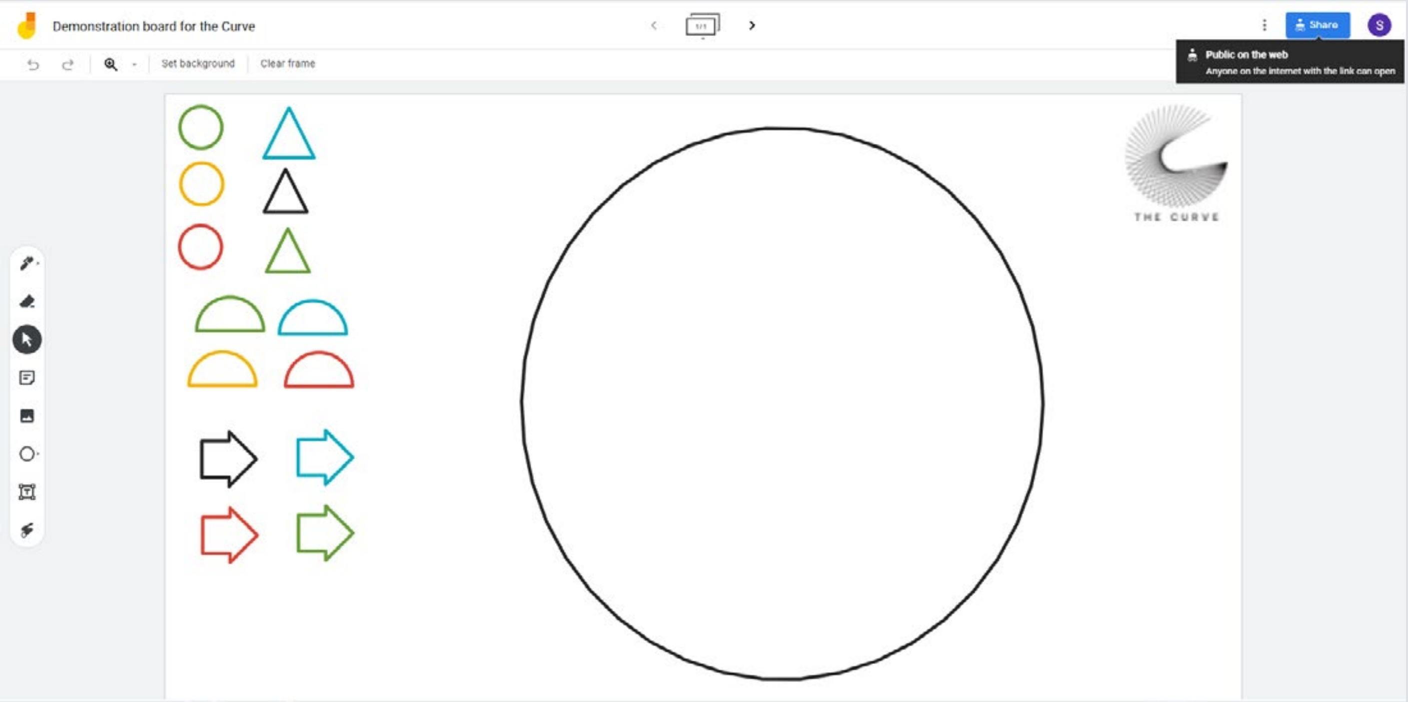
— Pius Ogbu Sunday, the Leprosy Mission

TOOL: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING USING SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS[1]

What	Mapping stakeholders using virtual or physical representatives
Why	To identify patterns and hidden dynamics between stakeholders
When	At any point when wanting to understand "what is" and identify steps to address blockages in communication, power dynamics etc.
How	This tool can be used in person or online. This guide explains a step-by-step process for using it online. If using in person, the same process can be followed on a tabletop using different objects to represent stakeholders, or in a room using workshop participants as the representatives.

Set up for online exercise with a group

- Choose a virtual white board, e.g., Jamboard, Mural, or Miro.
- Change sharing and editing settings such that anyone online with a link to the board can edit it. To do this on Jamboard, click on the Share button at the top right of the screen, then click Get Link button and change to Anyone with the Link can Edit.
- Set up a board that can be used for your exercise. E.g., put in a circle from the side that can represent the 'system' or sphere of influence of the project/program you are exploring. Put various geometric shapes of different colors on the side of the board, for use to represent different stakeholders:



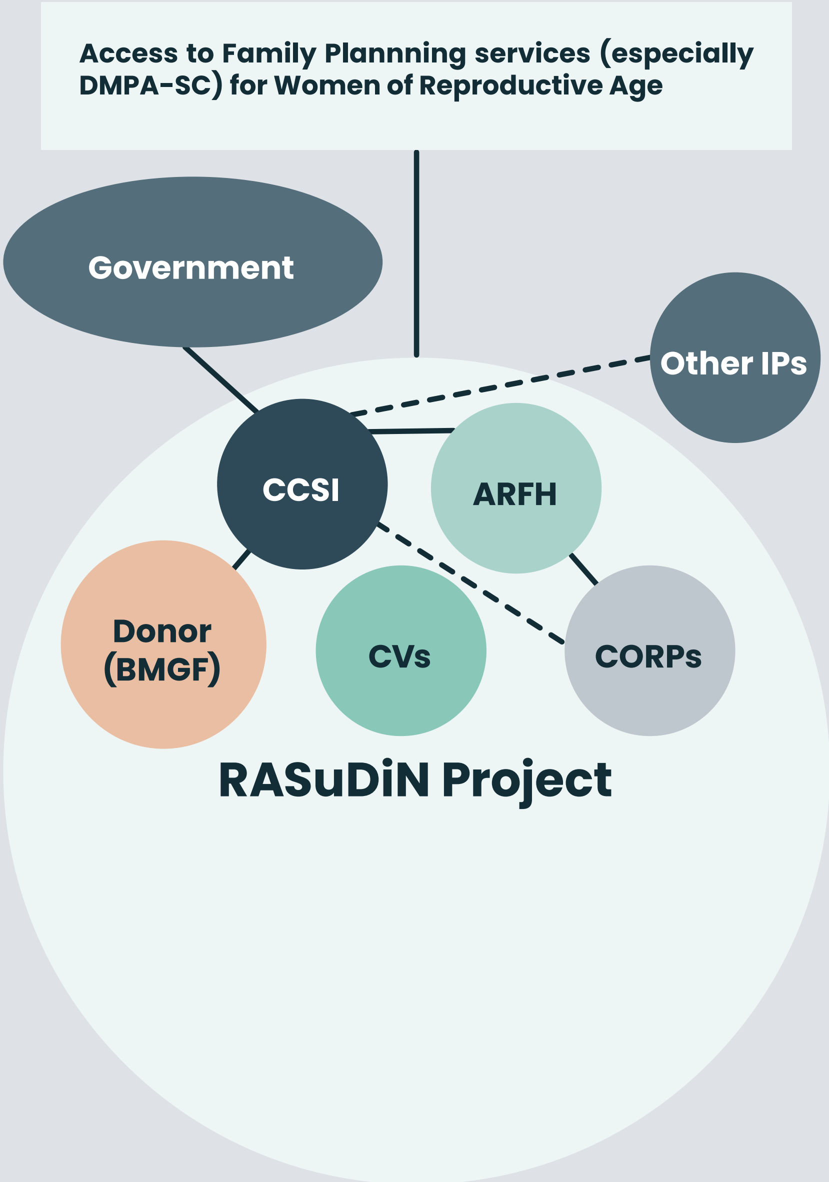
This approach can be used for uncovering assumptions and unspoken truths about almost any issue facing any 'system', such as organizations, networks or consortia.

1. Systemic Constellations originated from the field of family therapy but are now used widely in the field of organizational development. It adds richness to classical project stakeholder analysis tools by enabling the inclusion of emotions, attitudes, prejudices, and unconscious assumptions—thereby providing a richer basis for understanding stakeholders.

Facilitating the session

1. Encourage participants to become familiar with using the pieces at the side of the board – see how they can move them, make them bigger and smaller and change the way they are facing.
2. Also point out the tools on the far left. They can create sticky labels and write in them, and use the pen to draw lines or write things. Show them also that they can change the color of any piece they have chosen by using the Border Color and Fill Color icons at the top of the page.
3. Explain that this exercise is being used to map the different stakeholders that need to be united and to uncover hidden dynamics between them. Encourage them to trust the process, and not to over-think what they're being asked to do.
4. Identify a volunteer to briefly describe to the group the project/program whose stakeholders they are exploring.
5. Explain that this exercise is first and foremost about noticing and acknowledging 'what is' (rather than 'what should be'). We can only move on to examining steps if we first fully understand the status quo.
6. Ask the primary volunteer to choose one of the geometric shapes from the side of the board to represent the project they have chosen. Ask them to place it on the mat.
7. Ask them "what or who is the next most important next stakeholder to place on the map"? Then ask them to choose another person from the group to represent this stakeholder.
8. Ask that person to choose a shape from the side and place on the board, taking care to notice which way they're facing, their proximity to the main project stakeholder, their size in relation to them etc. The facilitator will ask the representative if they can talk through their thought process as they place their piece.
9. The facilitator asks the first volunteer what or who is the next most important stakeholder. Again, choose someone to represent that new stakeholder and ask that person to choose a piece to place on the board, thinking about the size of their piece and where they are in relation to the issue holder and other stakeholder.
10. Keep adding in more – and remind the issue holder that they don't all need to be people. Think also about whether key concepts or ideas need to be included in the map – e.g. "goal for responsive feedback", "data or data collection".
11. The facilitator asks the primary volunteer: What do you notice about this map?
12. They then ask all other representatives one by one, what do you notice?
13. Each stakeholder is asked in turn for a 'statement of truth'. E.g., What would you like to say to others or to the system as a whole?
14. The facilitator asks again what people are noticing, opening discussions onto:
    - What did you notice about how united stakeholders currently are?
    - What did you notice about common motivations for engaging in responsive feedback?
    - What do you notice about barriers to uniting stakeholders?
    - What do we know now that we didn't before in relation to our question?
15. Finally, ask: What does the system require to enable **one step towards better?**

Here is an example of a constellations exercise used to analyze stakeholders working on a health program in Nigeria.



"Looking at the distance between the different stakeholders. If we are uniting them, we need to pay attention to the distance between them."

"The map helps me acknowledge that even though we are all heading towards the direction of the blue arrow, we recognize that we will require other stakeholders to work with us, to arrive at our destination. No stakeholder can travel alone. There are key partners we must work with".

"I see a strong link between the consortium partners and donor which could signify strength of engagement and collaboration"

"I see that the project partners recognize Government as a critical stakeholder to engage with".

SECTION 5:
HOW RF WILL HELP YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

SECTION 5: HOW RF WILL HELP YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

WHAT

Keep in mind how different stakeholders might benefit from engaging in responsive feedback.

This will form part of your narrative when looking to connect with different stakeholders and securing their support and engagement with responsive feedback.

HOW

Take into consideration what you know of different stakeholders' viewpoints, interests, capacity, and the challenges they may face.

Use the completed table below to give you ideas on how the stakeholders you wish to engage in responsive feedback may benefit from engaging with you.

		Engagement Strategy
Type Of Stakeholder		**How will responsive feedback help your stakeholders?**
Government	Political leaders at national, state and local level	• Political leaders will want to demonstrate what has been achieved during his/her term in office. They might be able to use this data in their future election campaigns. • By having the data and being able to demonstrate the impact of programs in their constituency, they may be able to access additional funding. • It will empower them to plan and implement better programs, by using the information from responsive feedback to course correct. • By having the data and being able to demonstrate the impact of programs in their constituency, they may be able to access additional funding. • They can use responsive feedback learning as a case study to scale up to other areas. • For the local level, ensure the data from responsive feedback is relevant to their local level (not just showing national level data). Bring responsive feedback closer to what they are doing • Where data is not favorable, we can highlight the learning and any progress made.
	Technocrats/civil servants at national, state and local level	Receiving timely data and feedback can help them to course correct and make adjustments to their programs mid-course. They will also be in a position to answer any technical questions on how their programs are working.
Development Partners	INGOs	• It will help them to demonstrate the bigger impact of their programs • Donors are starting to look for responsive feedback and adaptive programming, they are looking to see this in INGO programs. More likely to get donor funding. • If they introduce responsive feedback in your programs, it is capacity building for their staff.
	Local NGOs/CBOs	• Using results/learning to improve programming. • If they are playing the role of frontline workers, they may also fear responsive feedback as performance feedback/appraisal of particular staff. You would assess this potential sensitivity for your own program context and ensure you reassure them that it is not personal.
	Bilateral and multilateral donors	Donors are often setting the agenda in this regard so not necessarily a case of ensuring their buy-in. However, since different donors are taking different approaches to responsive feedback, you may need to be aware of different donor preferences and language relating to the process.
MEL teams		MEL teams are often the thought leaders and champions of responsive feedback so should have a clear understanding of how it can support program performance and benefit them and their programs.
Community	Project beneficiaries	Participating in responsive feedback may help their community access additional funding and support.
	Community and religious leaders	It will empower them to be able to answer any questions relating to the programs being implemented in their locality to provide and receive RF data
	Frontline workers	• Emphasize that learning is for the greater good and to improve the program, that RF is not a performance assessment, (which could be perceived as threatening). • Engage with them at various levels and keep emphasizing that it not about their personal performance.

SECTION 6:
HOW TO ENGAGE AND MAINTAIN BUY-IN

SECTION 6: HOW TO ENGAGE AND MAINTAIN BUY-IN

WHAT	HOW
The work you've done so far will help you identify the strategies and actions required to promote the productive involvement of stakeholders in responsive feedback. Review the insights you have gained from evaluating the barriers and the interests/ influence and importance of your stakeholders, before completing the last column of your table. By the end of this exercise, you will have formulated an effective engagement strategy.	1. Check that your style of communication works for your stakeholders. Perhaps try using more personal forms of communication and ask each stakeholder for their preference. 2. Consider the language you might need to use when engaging with each stakeholder. For example, avoid too much technical jargon or acronyms. 3. Outline a plan for the type and frequency of communication, (e.g. weekly emails, monthly phone calls, or weekly face to face meetings). Update this as your engagement progresses. 4. Your stakeholder engagement plan should be a 'live' document that is regularly updated to take account of any changes and following feedback. How will you adjust or correct your approach based on feedback?

Learning from Practice

"We implemented responsive feedback across some of our projects. It is a bit tricky engaging stakeholders to implement RF when your organization is not the organization leading the process. We have had situations where we successfully engaged relevant stakeholders starting with the consortium members. This was easy for us because we first engaged with the MEL personnel before the program team and then the wider stakeholders relevant for RF on the project. Over the course of this FP project, we have had some minor iterations based on lessons from RF."

"From previous collaboration work, we have learnt that stakeholder's interests may differ. To effectively engage consortium members, there must be a shared interest."

— Adolor Aisiri, Centre for Communication and Social Impact

Figure 8: Mapping out your engagement strategy

Type Of Stakeholder		Engagement Strategy How to engage and maintain buy-in
Government	Political leaders at national, state and local level	• If you don't engage with national governments and secure their buy-in, it will be difficult to make meaningful progress on your program and to achieve sustainable results. Their approval or implicit endorsement is often a necessary precondition and can open the door to more meaningful engagement with lower levels of government. • Your partnership with central government may be strongly influenced by election cycles and public spending cycles. It is therefore important to be aware of, and sensitive to, such cycles and how to navigate them. • Connecting to the right people in government can be a bit tricky. It is generally better to get the name and contact details of a specific individual via an existing contact. Alternatively, you can try the formal approach with a letter of introduction from the most senior person in your organization to someone (the name of the office if you do not have an actual name) in the government department you wish to connect with. • Local level public sector officials may have limited resources and may lack capacity to be very responsive to your engagement attempts. • There could be variations in the degree of decentralization of power and the level of influence over how funding is spent at local level. This may influence how you are able to engage with different civil servants at local level as it alters the power they might be able to wield locally.
	Technocrats/ civil servants at national, state and local level	
Development Partners	INGOs	• NGOs are usually quite accessible via contact information found on their websites. However, personal introductions to named contacts are usually a more effective way of engaging with INGOs. • INGOs generally have very limited funding that is not already committed to ongoing programs. This means that it is often more effective to engage with them by aligning with an existing program.
	Local NGOs/ CBOs	• Local NGOs and CBOs will vary greatly in terms of their accessibility. Some may have websites and obvious ways to contact them. Others may not have easy to locate contact information. In many cases, it is likely to require a personal visit to their offices to find the right person to initiate engagement with. It may be worthwhile going through your existing network if there are specific organizations you are looking to partner with.
	Bilateral and multilateral donors	• Different donors will have quite different levels of flexibility in their funding. Some are only able to fund through certain modalities and may have less flexibility to build in responsive feedback mechanisms and adaptive programming. Others may have higher appetites for risk and innovation. You will need to understand these donor dynamics when designing your engagement strategy. • It is important to be aware of different funding modalities, particularly where larger sums of money are required.
MEL teams		• It is likely that you will have a lot of shared language and a similar interest in responsive feedback, with MEL teams • Ensure to keep communication open throughout the process, even when not directly working with the MEL teams
Community	Project beneficiaries	• It is important to think about the language you use (ensuring you use the local language/dialect or use an interpreter, if necessary) when engaging with project beneficiaries. Do not use technical jargon when talking about RF, but put it into language that will enable them to clearly see the benefits of RF.
	Community and religious leaders	
	Frontline workers	

TOOL: TAILORING ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

Different stakeholders will have different engagement styles and communication preferences. Being aware of these can help when bringing people together.

The table below is a helpful starting point in matching individual preferences to engagement approaches when trying to bring stakeholders together around responsive feedback.

Preferences	Engagement options	Example approach
Analysts Those who like intellectual challenge alongside clear structures and procedures	• Reviewing written records • Acquiring knowledge from a range of sources • Participating in a debate on key issues	"You might be interested in reading the results of the latest scorecard and how the results show that we may need to take a different approach"
Problem solvers Those who enjoy being confronted with challenges and provided with opportunities for brainstorming new ideas	• Participating in scenario-based activities • Action research • Role playing	"Would you like to participate in an exercise where we will be meeting with project participants to explore how the activities can be taken to scale?"
Pragmatists Those who respond to active participation and practical engagement	• Skills enhancement of development • Practice-based mentoring • Job-swaps	"Do you think you could take forward component A of the program? It would be good to see how you would apply the learnings from the project so far"
Reviewers Those who learn by listening and observing with ample opportunities for quiet reflection	• Opportunities for observation • Keeping a journal of thoughts and ideas to be shared at a future time	"In due course it would be good to hear your views on whether you feel we are maximizing the opportunities we have in this program"

Adapted from Honey and Mumford (1992)

SECTION 7:
ACTIONS TO MAINTAIN BUY-IN LONGER TERM

SECTION 7: MAINTAINING BUY-IN

Building responsive feedback into your project/program at the start is important, but so is maintaining that vision and the commitment of stakeholders throughout its lifecycle.

There are a number of important actions you can take to engage and maintain buy-in to responsive feedback with your stakeholders longer term.

Here we will provide tools and supporting resources for the following actions:

1. **A common vision for responsive feedback:** which will help you and your stakeholders ensure that you are all clear on where you are headed and to find a commonality of purpose.
2. **Co-creating a plan:** once you are clear on your vision, it is important to develop a plan together that enables you to jointly make decisions, take action and share accountability.
3. **Maintaining partnerships:** all relationships need work and maintenance to function well. This section will provide some tips and ideas on how to maintain healthy and active partnerships with your stakeholders, even as things change.
4. **Monitoring, reviewing, learning, adapting:** the process followed to unite stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback should be closely monitored and reviewed in order to capture lessons and adapt where necessary.

ACTION 1: DEVELOP A COMMON VISION FOR RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK

WHAT	HOW
A shared or common vision will help the various stakeholders to work together. While perspectives or priorities between stakeholders may differ, it is important to find commonality and purpose in order to drive the project forwards together. To create a shared vision, organizations and individuals must be willing to compromise their own vision and have a clear sense of the needs of a wider group. Engage stakeholders early in this process in order to build a sense of ownership.	Stakeholders must develop a common understanding of where the project is going and why. • **Listen to stakeholders:** seek stakeholders' honest perspectives on issues, listening to them and aligning their shared values with your vision. • **Create a culture of open and honest dialogue:** as well seeking opinions from stakeholders, create an environment where they feel comfortable voicing concerns voluntarily. • **Use inclusive language:** breakdown key terminology to ensure assumptions are not being made. Clarity helps develop trust and collaboration among different stakeholders. • **Ask critical but neutral questions:** you might conduct an anonymous survey to identify motivations, expectations and views before ensuring you can engage in a shared vision.

There are many ways you can approach the above, whether through group discussion, drawing exercises, role-play and other techniques.

See Annex 3.1 for an example exercise focused on envisioning a timeline.

Learning from Practice

Uniting stakeholders on roll-out of National Family Planning Blueprint in Nigeria.

Prior to 2014, there wasn't a family planning (FP) costed implementation plan (CIP) for Nigeria, and there was no agreed vision or target. Consequently, government and partners were developing and implementing individual and different plans for FP with resultant duplication and lack of progress.

With the launch of the Blueprint, a Technical Support Unit (TSU) project was commissioned by the BMGF to support government to organize and coordinate partners and sub-national government towards the agreed vision of reaching a contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) of 36% from 15% by 2020, as earlier declared at the London 2012 Summit of FP.

With every partner and donor used to working on their separate plans, pursuing individual organizational interests, and the government not used to exercise its overall authority in FP, it was initially seen as a herculean task to bring all stakeholders around the same vision and contributing to the few identified outcomes as expressed in the Blueprint.

The TSU successfully supported the government to achieve that unity among stakeholders by first listening to all important stakeholders, in a quick online survey, to understand what 'uniting' means to everyone and what can be done to achieve it. Using this information, an existing but moribund reproductive health technical working group (RHTWG) was revitalized and used for further discussion to understand the 'why' of each suggestion.

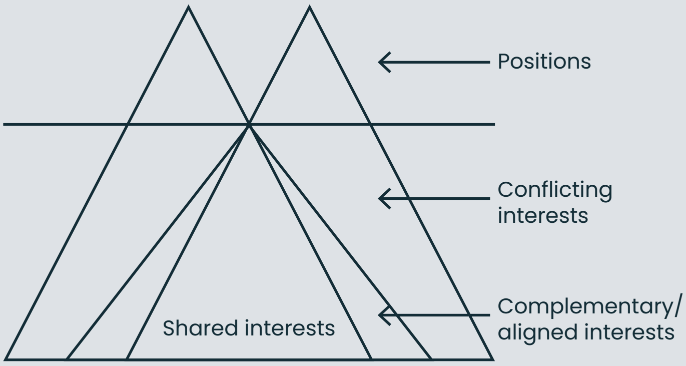
At the end of a series of facilitated meetings, it was agreed that unity of stakeholders in implementing the national vision means all partners and states have aligned their goals and programs to the national goal and are transparently reporting achievements based on the national data and measures for national efficiency instead of individual program effectiveness.

The RHTWG was then agreed to be made an effective, neutral, 'clearing house' for consultation and alignment of activities and resources. The government went ahead to create sub-committees (as sub-structures of the RHTWG) to ensure in-depth technical discussions and consultations among stakeholders, which helped in no small way in addressing individual organizations' interests and motivations and aligning them with the national goal.

With this united front the partners supported almost all states (sub-national level) to develop context-specific CIPs to align to the national vision. This has continued to be an exemplary achievement of uniting stakeholders that the government is very proud of.

TOOL: TIPS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATION

In the early stages of bringing stakeholders together it is common for representatives from different organizations to be positional about what they want and what they are prepared to give to the collaboration. They are likely to put their organisation's interests first.



The 'Positions, Interest and Needs' (PIN) diagram illustrates a 'position' as the tip of the iceberg – what is immediately visible. Having a strong 'position' or stance is often not a good basis for making progress and reaching a consensus amongst different stakeholders on how to move forward with learning from responsive feedback.

However, by understanding what is happening beneath the surface (the interests and needs different stakeholders have) it is likely that you will reveal common ground upon which genuine agreement can be reached.

Central to effective negotiation, and in understanding where there are complementary or aligned interests and needs, is asking well-chosen opening questions.

Some tips on how to ask effective questions and reach consensus are provided below.

1. Demonstrate genuine interest so that your questions are warm and not hostile.
2. Gather information from a range of sources to have insight into the circumstances/issues before having the conversation.
3. Be sensitive to issues of power (real or perceived) and where necessary be firm. For instance "I can see that in your position it must be very difficult to…however…"
4. Widen the options for collaboration by helping stakeholders explore a range of alternative or new approaches.
5. Where needed, introduce a question before you ask it – explain its purpose and why are you are asking it to reduce the chance of it being misinterpreted. If it is a difficult question, give advance warning to reduce shock or insult.
6. Keep questions short. Long questions make it easier to pick and choose which part to answer.
7. Use the simplest words you can to help focus the answer. Avoid using any words that need defining.
8. Start with straightforward questions and move to harder ones. End with easy questions.
9. Group together questions on similar topics to deepen responses.
10. Remember that different types of questions get different types of answer:
    - Open questions (How, When, Where, What) invite layered responses and aid understanding of a particular issue. What questions help to generate information. How questions are often the most demanding and often get 'what' answers – which may be a clue that people know what they want but not how to achieve it.
    - Closed questions invite yes/no answers
    - Why questions generate justifications and explanations.
11. Avoid leading questions that suggest pre-ordained answer or outcome – unless the purpose of the question is to float an idea, in which case pre-suppositions can be useful.
12. Never ask a question if you don't want to hear the answer!

Source: adapted from the Partnership Brokers in Action workbook, 2017

ACTION 2: CO-CREATE A PLAN

WHAT	HOW
Creating a plan together with key stakeholders enables joint decision-making, and fosters a shared purpose, commitment to action and collective accountability. This process provides an opportunity for stakeholders to influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them. Co-creating a plan lends legitimacy, credibility, quality and accountability to the processes, decisions and operations geared towards achieving the shared purpose/ vision.	In order to begin meaningful dialogue around planning, it is important that dialogue is inclusive and participatory, where everyone is welcome to share ideas. • Build enough time and resources for responsive feedback into the initial plan, and ensure that this practice continues throughout implementation. • Create a group charter/partnership agreement. This should be a living document, which changes as the project/program progresses, that each team member and new person to the project reads and has access to. (See our charter template on p37). • Co-creating a plan is never 'done'. Even when you think you have your plan in place, you've just begun the process of making it better through a cycle of collecting information, assimilating it, distilling it and applying the learning. Co-creation is a process of proactively and constantly course correcting to generate the best possible outcome. • Throughout the lifecycle of your project/program, keep adequate records in order to stay on track of discussions and agreements. (See: tips on effect record keeping, p38)

Learning from Practice

TLM Nigeria implemented a three-year (January 2007 to December 2009) Kwara State SED Project in Nigeria, funded by Swedish International Developmental Agency (SIDA) through the Swedish Missions Council (SMC). The project aims to reduce poverty and social exclusion, and improve the living conditions of residents in five leprosy affected communities in Bode Saadu, Eleyin, Karuma, Okegbala and Patigi. The target population includes a total of 1,745 beneficiaries.

The project hoped to specifically build the capacity of community members to take responsibility for their own development and through that challenge the local authorities to take responsibility for future community interventions. The project planned activities in 14 operational areas with 17 output targets. The general community activities include health care, leprosy situation, education, water supply, knowledge about human rights, advocacy, electricity supply, V.I.P. Latrines and group formation and registration. End Term Evaluation was conducted in December 2009 and gave a total of 25 recommendations for strengthening the SED Project.

One key finding was from a V.I.P latrine constructed in Eleyin community that remained locked and unused months after it was commissioned and handed over to the community. The community members felt that it was culturally inappropriate to use a seated toilet, and they would prefer the squatting option that is popular and convenient for them. The lesson was that stakeholder engagement and feedback is key in every step of the project management cycle, from initiation to design, to implementation and learning. What we now do differently is to ensure that representatives of the beneficiaries are actively involved to co-create and implement the plan.

– Pius Ogbu Sunday, The Leprosy Mission, Nigeria

TOOL: TEMPLATE CHARTER/COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

Complete the sections below and circulate a copy to each stakeholder to sign and retain.

Background and mission

- Background of the project and partnership and brief description of each partner
- Links to each partner's wider contexts

Shared vision/objectives

- Individual partner objectives/motivations for involvement (may be specific to partners and not necessarily shared, but should be in alignment

Management, coordination and governance

- Details of the roles and responsibilities within the partnership
- Structure, composition and regularity of engagements/meetings
- Internal and external communication
- Agreed methods to share feedback and discuss next steps

Guiding principles and values

- Including specific descriptions of expected behaviors of each partner, not just generic statements

Members' strengths and commitments

- Detailing each members' unique strengths, experience, and expertise to bring to the group.
- Detailing the commitments each member has committed to during the process.

TOOL: GUIDELINES FOR RECORD-KEEPING

Effective record-keeping can help ensure the aims and outcomes of a project/ program remain aligned throughout its lifecycle.

Consider how you wish to record events, meetings and commitments to collaboration between different stakeholders.

Here are some examples of records that may be valuable in supporting collaboration between stakeholders.

Type	Purpose	Notes
Letter of intent/MoU	• This document indicates early intentions to collaborate and creates a foundation for a robust working relationship.	Drawing up this document early on can be a good way of bringing people together for the project/program, but also to explore what responsive feedback means. It is useful to agree a common theme or vision statement which stakeholders can collaborate on.
Collaboration agreement	• This is a more formal and binding document where roles, responsibilities and decision-making procedures are agreed.	Stakeholders are likely to have their own views about the nature of the agreement so ensuring there are opportunities for innovation, review and revisions over time is important.
Minutes of meetings	• Essential records setting out all decisions/actions agreed and flagging up any outstanding issues.	Minutes should record all main points raised during meetings and any significantly different views or unresolved issues.
Collaboration ground rules	• List of principles and working practices that are agreed by stakeholders as a foundation for the smooth functioning of the working relationship.	Exploring what ground rules are needed, particularly in relation to responsive feedback, can be a useful collaboration exercise since different stakeholders are likely to have different suggestions. Ground rules might include valuing diverse views and being open/ transparent. Once established, ground rules or a charter can be referred to as a reminder in the event that anyone deviates from agreed ways of working.
Program description	• Clarifies stakeholder roles and commitments and may form the basis for securing buy-in from other stakeholders external to the program.	Ensuring that all stakeholders are clear on the program's objectives and theory of change is critical to then design appropriate mechanisms to support responsive feedback.
Resource records	• A record or map capturing the range of resources needed to deliver the program of work including responsive feedback mechanisms. A record or table to track specific commitments that stakeholders make in relation to responsive feedback.	It is important for stakeholders who are involved in responsive feedback to make tangible resource commitments (time, money etc.) and for those commitments to be known by all involved. Commitments should be realistic and delivered.
Case-studies	• A record of things that have worked and things that haven't.	Case-studies are useful to adjust practices and bring new stakeholders up to speed if entering the program once it has been established. They can also be useful to refer to at a later date once the program may have been completed.

Source: adapted from the Partnership Brokers in Action workbook, 2017

ACTION 3: MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT	HOW
Maintaining good relationships with key stakeholders is essential for projects to operate effectively and to make the most from responsive feedback. It will enable you to foster partnerships and to surface issues or concerns before they become potential risks. Maintaining partnerships requires an investment of time and resources in order to build trust and to encourage open and transparent dialogue within and between stakeholders. Trust is a fundamental basis for effective communication and for meaningful engagement with stakeholders around the need for responsive feedback.	• Clear communication is critical to almost every aspect of effective partnership with stakeholders, whatever the type or scale of partnership. • Foster open and honest communication between stakeholders throughout the project/ program cycle on the purpose of responsive feedback and what it is. • Use active listening in all your interactions with stakeholders (See Annex 3.2: How to actively listen). • Build in meeting time for responsive feedback and make meetings as effective as possible (See 'Tips for running effective meetings,' p44). • Be transparent in your engagement efforts and be honest about the role and influence individuals will have in either the decision-making or implementation of solutions. • Since some interactions are likely to be remote/online, you can find ideas for how to make them as effective as possible in 'Tips for engaging stakeholders remotely,' p44.

Learning from Practice

"Stakeholder management has been the fulcrum of our work at CHAI. The concept of providing technical assistance, especially around an entire spectrum of health systems strengthening, is relatively new. Most times it involves you supporting the state to think through how to make a system work in its best interest without providing any actual funding for it. This depends on a collaborative understanding between the partner/donor and the state stakeholders. Trust is essential for this. Supporting a government staff to think through a strategy when he hasn't been paid salaries for several months, requires humility and empathy and that is only possible through a transparent partnership and a high degree of trust.

How do we even engage the state on partner program integration in the best interest of the health system without trust? When you have a partnership with stakeholders that is built on trust - our work is 50% done."

– Samaila Yusuf, CHAI

TOOL: TIPS FOR RUNNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Meetings can play an integral role in maintaining effective and productive partnerships throughout the program.

Meeting structure

- Create a clear structure for all meetings: outline an agenda with topics to cover and a clear objective and purpose, and circulate it at least 24 hours before the meeting.
- Start every meeting with a quick check-in. An example of a check in could be to say, "On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being completely distracted and 1 being completely focused, how are you doing?" Encourage check-ins to be brief and honest, and listen without judgement. See Annex 3.2 for tips on 'Active Listening'.
- Set ground rules and clear expectations at the start of the meeting. Ground rules should include all participants being respectful of others and listening when it is another's turn to talk etc.
- Confidentiality reminder. Remind the group what is and is not confidential before the meeting begins.

Meeting management

- Be mindful of the feeling in the room (or the virtual room, if being held remotely), so that any unresolved tensions are aired or acknowledged.
- Run a quick poll/ask the group if any obstacles surfaced should be added to the agenda.
- If an obstacle arises that may inhibit meeting goals, reassess the meeting's purpose. Revise the meeting to include resolving the obstacle and/or reschedule the original meeting goal to a different meeting if necessary.
- Assign roles. Meetings may provide an opportunity for people to exercise a particular authority, for example, timekeeper, scribe, observer etc. These should be rotated for subsequent meetings.
- Meeting minutes. Summarize any important ideas, questions or issues that arise during the meeting to keep the meeting focused on the agenda, whilst not losing sight of any important items that might come up.
- Closure. End the meeting with a confidentiality reminder and ensure everyone is clear on any agreed actions/outcomes of the meeting.
- Engage in continuous learning by seeking responsive feedback on meeting effectiveness.

A useful guide can be found in '7 Tips to Run Effective Meetings' by Adriana Girdler
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp0VAutGFyg&t=217s

TOOL: TIPS FOR ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS REMOTELY

Remote working, and working with international stakeholders, is becoming more regular for many teams. When engaging in meetings with stakeholders remotely it is important to consider the below:

1. Remember that working across a range of geographies, cultures, languages, and experiences brings valuable insights.
2. Build time into online meetings to get to know each other better and to gain a better understanding of each other's contexts and concerns.
3. Listen intently, work with images, use metaphors and other imaginative ways of communicating. Defy distance by working differently.
4. Tell stories as a way of illustrating ideas, issues and achievements that will provide valuable insight.
5. Share power by ensuring there are ample opportunities for partners to work autonomously and to take on leadership roles.
6. Create mechanisms for horizontal accountability where those involved are truly accountable to each other (alongside vertical accountabilities e.g. to external donors)
7. Provide space for challenges to be worked through and for the unexpected to emerge.

Source: Adapted from www.remotepartnering.org

ACTION 4: MONITORING, REVIEWING, LEARNING, ADAPTING

WHAT	HOW
Uniting stakeholders in a shared desire to learn from responsive feedback is a valuable and important task. The process of uniting stakeholders should itself be closely monitored and periodically reviewed. This will ensure that lessons are learned, and approaches are adapted where necessary, for example when key stakeholders move on, or the project/ program requires overhaul.	Regularly check in with key stakeholders on expected inputs to responsive feedback and discuss any potential challenges to obtaining them. Invest in the time, space, skills, and systems to enable true partnership, mutual learning and adaptation. See Annex 3.3: 'Micro-skills in facilitating learning' for ideas. Identify which methods to adopt for monitoring and reviewing progress on uniting stakeholders. This process needs to take account of the following questions: • What data is needed? • Where the data will be collected from? • How the data will be collected and analyzed? • When the data will be collected? • Who has responsibility for collecting the data? Consider exactly how the information generated will be used/useful in assess how effective you have been at uniting stakeholders. Consider how you can transform the data you generate into knowledge and wisdom that could foster adaptation and improvement of the approaches used to unite stakeholders. Meet regularly with stakeholders to review any learning and feedback, and collectively agree how to act on them. See 'Feedback principles' (p46) for ideas on how to do this. Decide collaboratively how you will adapt your approaches to uniting stakeholders in responsive feedback going forward and in future projects.

Learning from Practice

"One of the key things we have done as an organization is to recognize levels of learning. We have project learning reviews that happen quarterly at with the program officer and the office staff from the country office, who meet with the community people and review what has been done for that particular period. The review asks what has worked well and what can we do differently? Then we unpick learnings from that.

We also have our annual country learning forum with representatives from all the stakeholders, so from the government, minister of health and women's affairs, everyone from the church partners we work with, to our donor partners. From that kind of forum, we rise up from the learnings of stakeholders' engagement, learning from things to change in our approach in the project for that we've learnt for that year."

– **Pius Ogbu Sunday, the Leprosy Mission.**

TOOL: FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES

Feedback conveys information about behaviors and offers an evaluation of the quality of those behaviors.

While it is easy to take feedback personally, it is important to see responsive feedback mechanisms as a learning opportunity.

Responsive feedback can reinforce existing strengths, keep goal-directed behavior on course, clarify the effects of behavior, and increase our ability to detect and remedy errors.

Here are some tips on how to receive and give feedback effectively.

Giving effective feedback

Prioritize your ideas. Limit your feedback to the most important issues.

Consider the feedback's potential value to the program and how you would respond – could you act on the feedback?

Too much feedback provided at a single time can be overwhelming.

- **Concentrate on the behavior, not the person.** One strategy is to open by stating the behavior in question, then describing it, and ending with what you want. This model enables you to avoid sounding accusatory by using "I".
- **Balance the content.** Use the "sandwich approach." Begin by providing comments on specific strengths. This provides reinforcement and identifies the things that the program should keep doing. Then identify specific areas of improvement and ways to make changes. Conclude with a positive comment.
- **Be specific.** Avoid general comments that may be of limited use. Try to include examples to illustrate your statement. As well, offering alternatives rather than just giving advice allows the receiver to decide what to do with your feedback.
- **Be realistic.** Feedback should focus on what can be changed. It is useless and frustrating to get comments on something over which you may have no control. Avoid using the words "always" and "never." Behavior is rarely that consistent.
- **Be timely.** Seek an appropriate time to communicate feedback. Being prompt is key since feedback loses its impact if delayed too long. Delayed feedback can also cause feelings of guilt and resentment if the opportunity for improvement has passed.
- **Offer continuing support.** Feedback should be a continuous process, not a one-time event. After offering feedback, make a conscious effort to follow up. Let stakeholders know you are available if they have questions and, if appropriate, ask for another opportunity to provide more feedback in the future.

TOOL: FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES

Receiving feedback effectively

- **Listen to the feedback given.** This means not interrupting. Hear what is being said and listen to what is being really said, not what you assume will be said. You can absorb more information if you are concentrating on listening and understanding rather than being defensive and focusing on a response.
- **Be aware of your responses.** Your body language and tone of voice often speak louder than words. Try to avoid putting up barriers. Attentiveness, on the other hand, indicates that you value what someone has to say and puts both of you at ease.
- **Be open.** This means being receptive to new ideas and different opinions. Often, there is more than one way of doing something and others may have a completely different viewpoint on a given topic. You may learn something worthwhile.
- **Understand the message.** Make sure you understand what is being said, especially before responding to the feedback. Ask questions for clarification if necessary. In a group environment, ask for others' feedback before responding. If possible, be explicit about what kind of feedback you are seeking beforehand so you are not taken by surprise.
- **Reflect and decide what to do.** Assess the value of the feedback, the consequences of using it or ignoring it, and then decide what to do. Your response is your choice. If you disagree with the feedback, consider asking for a second opinion from someone else.
- **Follow up.** There are many ways to follow up on feedback. Sometimes, your follow-up will simply involve implementing the suggestions given to you. In other situations, you might want to set up another meeting to discuss the feedback to work out the best course of action for the program.

Source: Adapted from "Receiving and giving effective feedback" produced by the University of Waterloo

Further reading

- Dempsey, J.V. and G.C. Sales (Eds.). (1993) Interactive Instruction and Feedback. Educational Technology Publication. NJ: Englewood Cliffs
- McGill, I. and L. Beaty (1995) Action Learning. 2nd Ed. London: Kogan Page Ltd.

2 https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-student-work/grading-and-feedback/receiving-and-giving-effective-feedback

CONCLUSION: UNITING STAKEHOLDERS AND RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK

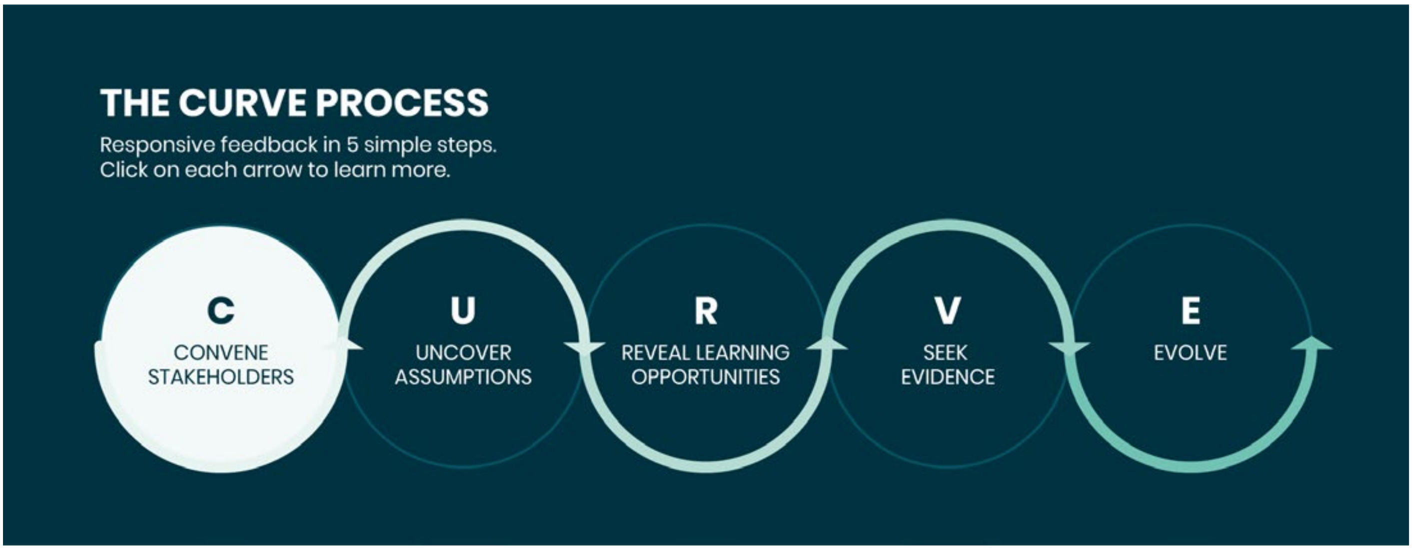
CONCLUSION:
UNITING STAKEHOLDERS AND RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK

The act of uniting stakeholders in a shared desire to learn is integral to a successful responsive feedback approach. For a program to get better faster, organizations need to learn from data and act, collaboratively.

It is key that stakeholders see the value of responsive feedback and have the motivation to engage in data through the lifecycle of the program. Articulating 'what success looks like' and creating a shared vision together will ensure wider stakeholder buy-in from program inception. Creating a plan to check in, review and enable joint-decision making will foster a shared commitment to action and accountability. Inevitably, challenges may arise, and the program may not go to plan. Maintaining strong, productive partnerships is therefore crucial to enable ongoing learning and course correction. Time and resources are required to maintain these relationships, as trust and effective communication between stakeholders are fundamental to strong partnership, responsive feedback, and programmatic success. In this spirit, the process of uniting stakeholders should itself be closely monitored, ensuring that lessons are learned, and approaches are adapted as required.

The investment of time and effort in this process will ultimately payback, as better collaboration, learning and adaptation will lead to improved program outcomes. The process of uniting stakeholders in a shared desire to learn from responsive feedback does not need to be a burden. The tools featured above (and in the appendix) should enable the institutionalization of ongoing learning, leading to a stronger culture of continuous improvement within organizations and individual programs.

To find out more about The CURVE process of responsive feedback, and The CURVE process, visit the-curve.org



ANNEXES:

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY

Consult	To discuss with others before making a decision.
Engage	To involve and interest someone in something.
Implementing partner	Usually a non-government entity or agency funded by a larger organization to carry out the work needed to deliver on the larger organization's goals and objectives.
Influence	The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.
Intervention	A discrete set of activities intended to bring about change or an umbrella term used to refer to any project or program.
Program	A set of related measures or activities with a particular long-term aim.
Project	An individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim.
Responsive feedback	An agile programmatic approach to collect insights to enable iteration and optimization while the program is still live.
Stakeholder	Those whose interests are affected by an issue or project/program, those whose activities strongly affect it or who possess the resources necessary to implement it.
System	A set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex whole.
System change	The emergence of a new pattern of organization or system structure. That pattern being the physical structure, the flows and relationships or the mindsets or paradigms of a system, it is also a pattern that results in new goals of the system.
Systems thinking	An awareness of the role of structure in creating the conditions we face; a recognition that there are powerful laws of systems operating that we are unaware of; a realization that there are consequences to our actions that we are oblivious to.
Unite	Bring together for a common purpose or action.

ANNEX 2: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CCS	Community Capacity Strengthening
CCSI	Centre for Communication and Social Impact
CHARP	Community Health Action Resource Plan
CIP	Costed Implementation Plan
COP	Community of Practice
DIKW	Data, information, knowledge and wisdom
DIKIW	Data, information, knowledge, intelligence and wisdom
EOC	Emergency Operation Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IP	Implementing Partner
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDIA	Problem Driven Adaptive Management
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
RI	Routine Immunization
RF	Responsive feedback
SCIDaR	Solina Centre for International Development and Research
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TA	Technical Assistant
TWG	Technical Working Group
TWP	Thinking and Working Politically
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WHO	World Health Organization

ANNEX 3: ADDITIONAL TOOLS

ANNEX 3.1: VISIONING AND TIMELINE EXERCISE

What	An exercise to create a vision for the future and identify the 'headlines' for a plan to getting there.
Why	To enable stakeholders to experience and share in the future they are wanting to create and to identify together the key milestones needed to get there.
When	Once key stakeholders that need to be involved in the process have been identified.
Who	Representatives from each key stakeholder group.
How	This tool can be used in person or online. This guide explains a step-by-step process for using it in person with a group.

Introduction

This exercise will help stakeholders tune in to the key activities or decisions that are needed to get from the present to the outcome of the project/program.

It can be used both to explore and agree on a common vision (Action 1) and to identify the main components of a co-created plan (Action 2).

Ideally, the exercise would be done in person, with key stakeholders together in a room.

Where this is not possible, the 'together in the room' experience can be simulated online using virtual whiteboard Apps, such as Jamboard.

The instructions below assume you are working with stakeholders in person.

Key tips and set up

- Use a facilitator who won't participate in the exercise itself. If possible, identify another person to capture key statements and themes on using pens and a flipchart.
- Prepare floor markers using paper. One should be used to represent the present, one some designated time in the future (e.g., three, five or ten years from now), and three or four others to represent key milestones between the two.
- Lay these markers out in the room, leaving sufficient space around and between them for your participants to group together around each marker.

Facilitating the session

1. Explain to participants that you are going to be facilitating an experience which will allow them to connect with and share their hopes for the future. Encourage them to trust the exercise and to follow your instructions carefully.
2. Invite all participants to stand around the marker that denotes "Now". Ask them each to close their eyes and think about what the current situation is with regards the use of responsive feedback. Invite each stakeholder to briefly share a sentence of what they see, feel or experience in relation to this, which will be captured by the scribe.
3. Invite the participants to walk slowly along the timeline to the marker that denotes the agreed time in the future.

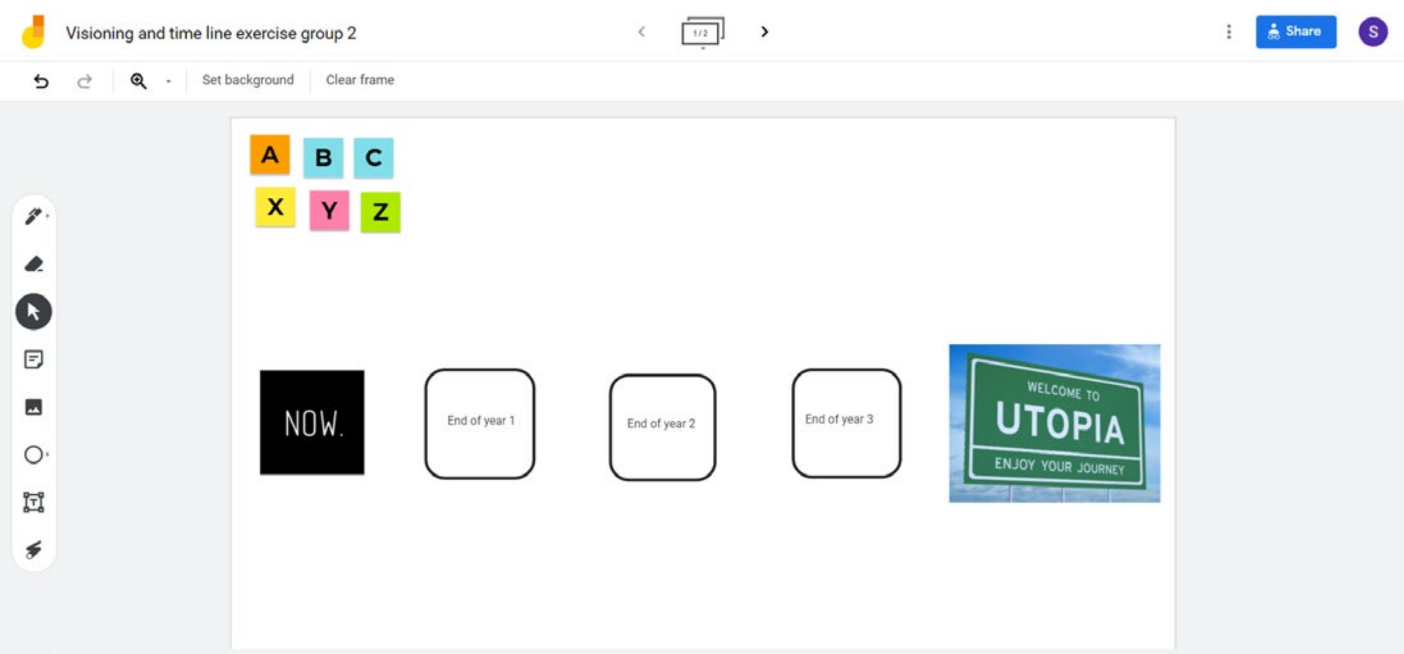
4. Again, ask the participants to cluster around the marker and to close their eyes and imagine themselves in that future. Explain that you are going to ask them a series of questions, and you want them to take their time to really experience the answer as if in the future and to give their answers using the present tense.
5. Ask specific questions that feel relevant to capturing the vision for the future, e.g. "where are you?" "who is with you?" "what are you all talking about?"; "what are you noticing/ feeling?" "what is happening as a result of the way the project/program stakeholders have embraced responsive feedback?"; "what has been the biggest impact of the way this was done?" "why does this matter?"
6. The facilitator might notice significant differences in what different stakeholders are envisaging, and they should say what those are to the group and ask further questions to encourage the coming together or ideas and a vision for the future that all are agreed on.
7. Now invite stakeholders to walk back down the timeline, stopping at each marker that denotes significant milestones leading up to the future. At each milestone, ask the participants to once again notice what is happening at that point in time, and ask questions to prompt reflection on what significant things happened at each of those milestones in order to achieve the ideal outcome at the end.

Other applications

Note that we have demonstrated here how to use the visioning and timeline exercise for the purposes of creating a common vision and co-created plan for uniting stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback. However, the approach can be used for visioning and planning for any desired future, such as a multi-stakeholder project or organizational strategy.

Using the tool virtually

For tips on how to set up and use the exercise virtually, follow the guidelines given in the constellations exercise (p21). You might also want to pre-prepare and label sticky notes to represent the different stakeholders who will be in the exercise. E.g.:



ANNEX 3.2: HOW TO LISTEN ACTIVELY

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have in developing connections and building trust with partners and stakeholders.

How well you listen has a big impact on your effectiveness and on the quality of your relationships.

Often, people are only listening to obtain information or to wait for the pause to get their point across, which is a very transactional way of listening.

As we develop our listening skills to build the ability to stand in another person's shoes, we will be able to gain new insights into their context and situation.

How to listen more effectively:

1. Focus and attention to what the other person is saying. Do not start planning your response in your head, or you could miss something.
2. Pay attention to body language and non-verbal cues. Also be mindful of your own body language as you are listening.
3. Listen with all of your senses, reflecting back what you notice in a non-judgmental manner. Ask clarifying questions to check understanding.
4. Be patient. Silence can be a very powerful component of dialogue. It is not necessary to fill periods of silence.
5. Maintain good eye contact while the other person speaks.
6. Avoid abruptly changing the subject. This tends to indicate that you were not fully listening to the other person, but rather your own internal dialogue.

There are good resources out there to support active listening skills, such as:

- Active Listening Skills | Psychology Today
- Active Listening Skills, Examples and Exercises (virtualspeech.com)

ANNEX 3.3: MICRO-SKILLS IN FACILITATING LEARNING

When bringing together different stakeholders to learn from responsive feedback, thinking through the purpose of why you're bringing people together is an important step.

Once you are clear on the purpose it can then be useful to think through how that purpose can be achieved in the design of your meeting and/or workshop.

Using a range of approaches, tailored to what you're trying to achieve, can help to bring people together to learn from responsive feedback.

The table below provides information on facilitation approaches that can be used when holding meetings/workshops with stakeholders.

Facilitation approach	Description of approach
Paraphrase – Helps to validate.	Say it in your own words, ask for confirmation
Summarize - Helps to acknowledge conflicting points of view; and bring a discussion back on track when it is getting lost.	Indicate the number of themes being discussed, summarize the key points for each theme, pose a question and move on.
Track - Various themes, frames in order to focus and streamline discussions.	Pick up the themes and express them to the group. Ask for confirmation.
Balance - When a discussion is skewed, in one direction only.	Are there other ways of looking at it? Introduce a new dimension, or a new frame of reference.
Ask questions - Understand an issue further, help draw attention to a blind spot, provoke and challenge or help decision making.	Frame your questions depending on your intent. Are they closed? Open ended? Non-directive?
Empathise - Helps recognize and deal with emotions.	Put yourself in the shoes of the person/s and reflect their feelings.
De-layer - Explore the experience, mindset, approach that informs an opinion / frame of reference.	Ask questions, reflect, empathize.
Reflect - Helps to shift from content to process.	Reflect an observable process, without judgment.
Reframe - Place a discussion, argument in a new perspective, without smoothing or avoiding the issue.	Example: Reframe positions in terms of interests.
Hold silence - Help group to reflect, think through an issue, resolve intense emotions.	Learn to tolerate awkwardness, stay focused, with body language that reflects your attention and calm.

ANNEX 3.4: UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

During the lifecycle of programs there are likely to be changes in personnel and/or stakeholders. Some stakeholders may join the program, others may leave.

Examples of departures and arrivals that may affect an intervention, and therefore their role in responsive feedback, are provided below alongside some suggested solutions.

Departures	
Stakeholders whose departure may affect collaboration efforts	**Suggestions on how to manage departures well**
Individuals in the program moving on to new roles or jobs Significant other external stakeholders e.g. political figures moving on to new roles and no longer involved in the program Significant other external stakeholders losing interest in the program/collaboration efforts Implementing partners leaving the program because their role is complete	• Be transparent between stakeholders at all times – clarifying what is happening and co-creating new roles where needed • Celebrate achievements/contributions of those departing (however small) • Spend time debriefing with those leaving and those remaining • Value and capture knowledge/experience before departures • Transfer knowledge, where needed, to others as concisely as possibly • Use departures as a time to take stock of how collaboration on responsive feedback is working.
Arrivals	
Stakeholders whose arrival may affect collaboration efforts	**Suggestions on how to manage departures well**
An individual taking over as a key stakeholder in the program A new organization that is now needed for the program Taking on a role as new external stakeholder to the program e.g. political figure	• Take time to welcome and introduce newcomers. • Ensure stakeholders are comfortable with newcomers and that key operational information, including details on responsive feedback is shared early on • Ask newcomers questions about themselves/ organizations and what they want to know/see/hear. • Invite newcomers to share experiences or bring new ideas • Use their arrival to take stock of how collaboration on responsive feedback is working.

Source: Adapted from work contained in the Partnership Brokers in Action workbook, 2017

ANNEX 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Section of process	Title	Description	Link
Defining your key stakeholders	*Stakeholder interviews using an open dialogue approach*	An approach that allows for reflection, thinking together and encourages creativity.	www.presencing.org/files/tools/PI_Tool_DialogueInterviews.pdf
Defining your key stakeholders	*Stakeholder mapping tools*	Free resources for mapping your stakeholders	https://kumu.io/
Defining your key stakeholders	*Open mind and open heart: Exploring the dynamics in stakeholder networks in complex co-design projects.*	A paper that explains the importance of mapping stakeholders through a systemic lens, rather than simply trying to capture in a graph the interest and influence of different stakeholders, is set out in this paper:	Relating systems thinking and design,
Challenges uniting stakeholders	*Advancing project stakeholder analysis by standing on the shoulders of giants*	An academic paper that presents the strengths and limitations of using systemic constellations approaches to stakeholder mapping	
Stakeholder engagement	*Participatory methods*	There are a lot of useful resources, that cut across all the various steps, developed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Robert Chambers	https://www.participatorymethods.org/authors/robert-chambers
Develop a common vision	*Visioning tools*	See Otto Scharmer's work with the Presencing Institute on Theory-U, which models a different approach to visioning a future reality and Martin Kalungu-Banda's adaptation of this approach for the African continent, Ubuntu Lab.	https://www.presencing.org/ https://www.presencing.org/programs/ubuntu-lab.
Develop a common vision	*Visioning tools*	There are some useful exercises to support the development of a shared vision at the following links	http://fearlesscapacity.com/teaching-visioning/; and https://www.leadstrat.com/the-secrets-to-facilitating-strategy-the-visioning-exercise/; and https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c8840f0b64974001296/R7856Vis.pdf

Section of process	Title	Description	Link
Co-create a plan	*Co-Creation Guide: Realizing Social Innovation Together*	This resource guide from the Social Innovation Exchange, provides some useful insights and ideas on how to co-create and build a culture of co-creation, among different stakeholders	https://socialinnovationexchange.org/sites/default/files/uploads/co-creation_guide.pdf
Co-create a plan	*SDG Partnership Guidebook*	This article outlines a piece of action research to understand the value of including many stakeholders in joint activities and aims to tell the story of what was learnt through this research and how it can be applied elsewhere	2698SDG_Partnership_Guidebook_0.95_web.pdf (un.org)
Maintaining partnerships	*The neuroscience of trust* *And* *The trust factor*	Two useful articles on Trust by Paul Zak, will help you to understand more about the brain science behind why and how we trust others	https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-neuroscience-of-trust
Maintaining partnerships	*Everything starts with trust*	A useful article on the importance of trust and a useful article on the importance of trust and how you build it. This article also refers to a trust triangle, which is a way of understanding and visualizing the core drivers of trust (these being, according to the authors, logic, authenticity and empathy).	Everything Starts with Trust (hbr.org)
Maintaining partnerships	*Animating alliances*	You can find some useful resources on how to make collaborative working more effective	https://animatingalliances.org/
Monitoring, Learning, Adapting	*What have we learnt about learning?*	This questions the automatic relationship between knowledge generation and organizational change	What have we learned about learning? Unpacking the relationship between knowledge and organizational change in development agencies (die-gdi.de)
Monitoring, Learning, Adapting	*How to measure the difficult stuff*	Unpacking 'difficult stuff' to measure, data beyond numbers.	How do you measure the difficult stuff (empowerment, resilience) and whether any change is attributable to your role? - From Poverty to Power (oxfamblogs.org)

Section of process	Title	Description	Link
Monitoring, Learning, Adapting	*Adaptive programming in practice*	Detailing the approaches and lessons of adaptive programming from two Nigerian programs (SAVI- State Accountability and Voice Initiative, and LASER- Legal Assistance for Economic Reform)	11-laser_savi_report-online-version-final-120816pdf.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Monitoring, Learning, Adapting	*Built to evolve: a donors' guide to making grants adaptive'*	Provides a step-by-step guide to adaptive programming. Although focused on donor grants, many of the ideas and approaches are useful to other kinds of programming.	Built to Evolve - A Donors' Guide to Making Grants Adaptive - 1209-3 print (the-curve.org)
Monitoring, Learning, Adapting	*Senge. P. 2014. The fifth discipline*	Peter Senge's seminal work on building a learning culture	https://www.mudamasters.com/en/change-management/fifth-discipline-psenge-summary

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