U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Office of Transition Initiatives

MEETING NOTES

Performance Monitoring in Post-conflict/Transition Programming Brainstorming Session

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Washington, D.C.
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I. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this meeting was to bring together M&E specialists from USAID, the World Bank, InterAction, and consulting firms to share information and experiences on monitoring post-conflict/transition programs. The agenda (see Appendix A) was organized around four questions:

- what is being done to monitor post-conflict/transition programs in the field;
- how are monitoring efforts being carried out;
- what issues and problems affect monitoring; and,
- how can efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs be improved?

Participants were asked to prepare a one-page summary response to these four questions for use as a ready reference during the discussion and for possible inclusion in a report of the proceedings (see Appendix C). Some twenty-six individuals, evenly distributed between USAID and non-USAID representatives, participated in the meeting. (see Appendix B)

II. OPENING REMARKS

Greg Gottlieb (USAID/OTI) opened the meeting with the observation that his office has tried, but so far failed, to develop a satisfactory system for monitoring programs in post-conflict/transition environments. He commented on the lack of effective implementation and inadequate understanding of monitoring in these settings. The difficulties encountered in trying to develop a sound monitoring system, combined with pressure from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to produce more complete and credible results reporting, have kept OTI focused on improving its efforts to monitor post-conflict situations.

Hal Lippman (USAID/OTI) explained that the impetus for this brainstorming session came from a desk study on monitoring in post-conflict/transition environments completed last month. The study found that references to M&E in such environments almost invariably concerned evaluation and failed to address monitoring. The intent of organizing this session was to have representatives of a diverse group of organizations share their experiences and ideas on post-conflict/transition monitoring, with the aim of identifying ways to overcome the problems it faces and improve its effectiveness.

III. MONITORING – DEFINITION/PURPOSE

Mary Stewart (USAID/OTI) facilitated a discussion on what is meant by monitoring. The discussion was framed in terms of the what, why, when, how, and who of M&E, as summarized below:

What

- Systematic collection and analysis of data during program implementation concerning performance, management constraints, and the context on the ground as it relates to program objectives and assumptions.

- Although participants acknowledged differences in post-conflict, transition, and other related programming, there was debate on whether there are similar distinctions in ways to monitor programs in these different settings. One participant suggested the key difference in monitoring is the shorter timeframe, while another commented that attitudes don't change overnight, and thus monitoring challenges for programs in post-conflict environments are largely the same as in other settings.

Why

- Informing decision-making during implementation and ultimately affecting a project's impact (formative vs. summative monitoring).

- Measuring unintended effects.

- Demonstrating and reporting on the usefulness of funding ongoing activities during implementation and informing potential funders.

When

- Ongoing; programs that are successful in the short-term are not necessarily successful in the long term.

How

- A degree of flexibility is necessary to permit adjustments during implementation, but it is important to guard against allowing objectives to be shifted to create a false appearance of success. One way to guard against the abuse of flexibility is to maintain firm higher-level objectives, although in a transitional context this can result in objectives that can be too far removed from reality to be useful.

- Although it is often possible to find a correlation between program activities and macro-level change, it is generally difficult to demonstrate causation. Given such difficulty, participants debated the amount of attention that should be paid to attribution.

- Monitoring is relatively straightforward if there are measurable outputs and outcomes. However, monitoring post-conflict/transition programs often involves measuring much more subtle factors, such as changes in attitudes and behaviors.

- Monitoring can be done at the macro level, where it can help demonstrate the usefulness of programs during implementation and/or at the micro level, where it can influence operational decision-making.

Who

- Although monitoring is the responsibility of implementers, it is often not done effectively unless a third party is brought in from outside. On the other hand, outsiders may not know the context and nuances of programs as well as implementers.

- Although monitoring often does not take place unless someone is hired to specifically perform this function, there seemed to be a consensus that monitoring is ultimately everyone's responsibility.

IV. PANEL PRESENTATIONS

USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

Rebecca Scheurer explained that although impact evaluations are important, OFDA has decided to gather data on a more systematic and ongoing basis to improve targeting and ensure that necessary adjustments are made during implementation. While attending to emergency needs, OFDA is making a concerted effort to keep the longer-term picture in mind, e.g., trying to design programs to help OTI and post-conflict efforts pick up where it leaves off. A significant problem for OFDA is how to measure performance in disasters where there are no baseline data. To address this problem, OFDA works with partners to obtain a baseline estimate of the situation the moment they become operational. OFDA is also trying to cultivate an understanding that it's "OK to be wrong," i.e., it is more important to extract accurate lessons than to focus on demonstrating success. Another problem OFDA has faced is how to supplement the available quantitative data with more qualitative data that can help substantiate conclusions drawn from the former and explain changes.

OFDA's approach to monitoring is holistic, reflecting the recognition that data it collects and analyzes in turn will be used by others in transitional/development programs. The need for quality, real-time data during disasters affects other offices beyond OFDA. Better monitoring is needed because many areas of OFDA activity overlap with what others do. OFDA is also encouraging more stakeholder involvement (not just immediate beneficiaries) and to provide more opportunities for their feedback during program implementation.

To improve its ability to monitor, OFDA has designed and implemented training for its staff; a training module has been piloted with selected partners. Next year, OFDA plans to expand its target audience by conducting monitoring workshops with partners. OFDA has also put a requirement in place that all proposals include a monitoring plan. At an upcoming NGO conference, OFDA is also planning to hold a breakout session on

monitoring. A draft booklet with monitoring guidance will soon be published online and incorporated into OFDA's operational guidance in the next few months.

In addition to these remarks, OFDA provided the following summary of its monitoring efforts:

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Monitoring Initiatives – May 2004

OFDA is developing a more streamlined, analytical approach to monitoring with aims to increase accountability, effectiveness and most of all program impact. In doing so, OFDA makes a clear distinction between monitoring and evaluation. Whereas evaluation tends to place an emphasis on retrospective learning, monitoring allows OFDA and its partners to recalibrate during the course of program execution. Experience suggests this helps ensure maximum use of resources through informed decision-making and participatory programming. Below is a brief description of OFDA's key activities and plans in this regard.

1) Monitoring Training Module: A training session specific to monitoring has been developed and integrated into the required Grant Management Course for all OFDA staff. It has also been piloted among select implementing partners. The content of the course includes guidance on basic monitoring principles, best practices, data collection methodologies, indicator selection, qualitative means for measuring impact, tool usage, data analysis and reporting.

2) Monitoring Tools: Templates for tracking program progress and soliciting stakeholder feedback have been developed to encourage consistent monitoring. These tools are in use among many OFDA staff. Context-specific variations of these tools have been piloted in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Thailand and Nepal over the last six months. Most recently, OFDA introduced these tools to implementing partners for urban disaster preparedness programs in Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand in an effort to improve data integrity and decentralize monitoring responsibilities to the field level.

3) Outreach and Research: OFDA has made considerable efforts to exchange information within the humanitarian and development community in order to determine what others are doing with respect to monitoring, as well as to share OFDA's approach. OFDA has met with representatives within USAID, State/PRM, the U.S. and international NGO community, and DFID, and next plans to focus on UN partners. OFDA has made its reference material, training documents, monitoring tools, etc. available to members of USAID, PRM and the NGO community, and intends to heighten its efforts in the field.

4) Monitoring Requirements for all Proposals: The new grant guidelines, now pending Senior Management approval, require Performance Monitoring Plans for all proposal submissions.

5) Monitoring Guidance Booklet: OFDA is currently drafting a reference booklet for its staff to use as a tool for both desk-top and field-based monitoring. This booklet will eventually be posted on OFDA's website and be linked to other resources, such as the OFDA Mitigation Guidelines and the FOG.

6) Monitoring Break-Out Session at NGO Conference: Monitoring will be one of several key subjects for break-out sessions at the next OFDA/NGO Conference in Fall 2004. Discussions will include ascertaining what tools are currently in use and how the relief community might improve its monitoring practices. OFDA will make its tools readily available during this session.

7) Partner Training: OFDA intends to develop a training module specific to monitoring guidance for implementing partners. It will be designed to complement the grant management course now being revised for partners by OFDA's Training Unit.

Mercy Corps/CARE

Jock Baker (CARE) and Dana Brown (Mercy Corps) gave a joint presentation on the implications of the characteristics of crisis environments for M&E, obstacles to improving accountability, and ways to monitor in post-conflict/transition environments, including real-time evaluation (RTE) as a tool.

Characteristics of Crisis Environments

- High susceptibility to external factors (e.g. changes in security situation);
- Rapidly changing operating conditions and program/project objectives;
- Diverse participants and actors;
- Different time frames for different programs and donors;
- Difficulties in attributing short-term impact.

What are Implications for M&E?

- Interpret outcomes and impacts within a contextual analysis;
- Monitoring that tends to be more flexible and frequent;
- More weight given to qualitative methods;
- Protection implications need to be considered;

- Ethnic, religious or gender differences may pose monitoring challenges;
- Design programs that can use remote monitoring systems;
- Collaborative approaches are more likely to get a better measure of impact.

What's impeding agencies from improving accountability and M&E?

- Shortage of capacity, time, information and (for low profile crises) funding;
- Short term priorities are assessment, proposal writing and implementation - not monitoring;
- Lack of common monitoring formats and methods;
- Rapid turnover and often significant numbers of inexperienced local staff and partners;
- Only large NGOs tend to have M&E capacity;
- Access limited due to security considerations.

Ways to Monitor in Post-Conflict and Transitional Environments

- Make monitoring visits part of the funding and programming cycle with implementing partners and staff—budget and plan for it!
- Build capacity of partners and staff to develop implementation and monitoring plans with realistic indicators, as well as their monitoring capacity.
- Conduct participatory evaluations with partners to make it more of a learning activity, and less of an "inspection."
- Incorporate monitoring reports into your data management, reporting system and organizational learning opportunities.
- Do "remote" monitoring, possibly working with outside organizations to monitor.

Real Time Evaluation as a Monitoring Tool?

"A real-time evaluation is an evaluation carried out whilst a programme is in full implementation and which almost simultaneously feeds back its findings to the programme for its immediate use." (Definition used in the "Desk Review Of Real-time Evaluation Experience," UNICEF 2003)

What's different about an RTE?

<u>Monitoring/Review</u>

- Staff directly involved in program management;
- Objectives include review & team building;

- Timing (particularly reviews) usually linked to specific strategic objectives.

Real-Time Evaluation

- M&E staff not involved with program or external(s) very familiar with agency's work;
- Use of evaluative techniques (FGD, KII);
- "Mirror for Management";
- Repeated at two-month intervals during early stages of a crisis.

An RTE does usually not…

- Measure impact;
- Replace an evaluation;
- Provide a top-down judgment or a technical assessment;

M&E Discussion Questions

Design & Standards:

- How can we move towards common standards for measuring impacts of interventions on conflict & peacebuilding in the short and long term?
- Can our "remote" monitoring systems be improved?
- What is different about monitoring in post-conflict versus transitional environments?

Learning & Accountability:

- Tension between accountability & learning?
- How to improve learning environments in the field?
- How can we promote greater transparency?

Resources:

- Would longer-term funding help M&E?
- Is there scope for a shared M&E capacity?

Management Systems International (MSI)

Michael Lund's remarks followed an outline that was fleshed-out in the Commentary below.

How Do We Find Out if We Are Making a Difference in Post-Conflict Programs? Toward Conflict-Sensitive Programming

Commentary for OTI Brainstorming Session

Some Basics

1. Whatever we may want to discuss about the methods and procedural nuts and bolts of doing M&E in post-conflict environments (problems like security, available data, attribution, etc.), we need to start with a clear notion of why we are doing M&E in those situations – the substance of M&E there. M&E performance methods, etc., are intended to measure achievement of desired goals. Our standards and criteria for monitoring and evaluating effective programs come from the goals and objectives we wish to realize. These become the benchmarks for judging progress.

2. What then are the appropriate substantive goals we should pursue in post-conflict (P-C) situations? Some of those goals derive from USAID's general policy goals about what the USG wants those societies to achieve, such as democracy, including civil society building, and economic growth.

But we can't automatically assume we can achieve those overall policy goals and associated programs in P-C environments, as easily or quickly as in more stable contexts. That "one size fits all" approach can lead to failed programs or worsening the situation. For example, economic reforms used in developing countries to stimulate economic growth have been criticized as impairing peace processes in P-C societies. It is argued that structural adjustment programs should be applied only if and when they demonstrably contribute to those peace processes ["peace conditionality"]. Another example is holding majoritarian elections in ethnically-divided societies, which can increase inter-group tensions even further. So we may need to postpone or adjust those overall goals in relation to what is possible, helpful, and sustainable in P-C environments in particular.

Hence, most of the goals that should be adopted for P-C situations must be based on what needs to be done in those special types of environments. These special P-C goals are not necessarily the same ones that are pursued in non-PC environments. If we are going to achieve our general USG goals, we (and/or other actors) must above all -- beyond the familiar goal of alleviating humanitarian needs of the victims of war -- terminate the armed conflict and build a sustainable peace.

This is the overriding imperative, the mother of all SO's, in P-C environments. It often entails such subgoals or objectives as:

- stopping violence or armed activity and maintaining security;
- achieving political agreements to identify credible interim leaders;
- getting government going again to provide services, including law enforcement;
- rehabilitating or reconstructing essential physical facilities;
- working toward a legitimate representative government; and
- seeking to establish workable inter-group relations, if not reconciliation.

This whole set of objectives, along with others being pursued in P-C settings, are often called "peacebuilding," but in the most demanding of situations they become virtual nation-building.

3. Moreover, these P-C goals and objectives are not likely to be all achievable simultaneously and immediately. Some appear to be needed before others are possible. This is suggested by a considerable body of case-study and multi-case research that has focused in recent years on the basic effectiveness of international policies/programs in post-conflict environments.

Although there is no single recipe for all places, this research suggests that certain of these goals may need to be phased in at different P-C stages, and thus that certain sequences of priorities generally work best. By and large, as hinted above, something like the following sequence is found to have the best chance of promoting stable progress toward sustainable peace and beyond, and to avoid a return to violence:[1]

- "security first," such as through effective police and law enforcement or peacekeeping forces;
- political agreements, such as power-sharing;
- strong effective government agencies for delivering basic services;
- legitimate government, so that it is not easily challenged, such as reached through democratic or representative processes;
- economic growth to reduce poverty and begin to raise incomes;
- inter-group reconciliation.

This research also finds that the extent that these P-C goals/objectives can be achieved depends on key contextual conditions that make particular P-C situations more or less tractable to international efforts, such as: whether one side defeated the other; the duration and severity of the

[1] A review of lessons learned from this multi-country literature on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding is found in Michael Lund, "Assessing Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding and Charting Future Directions," in What Kind of Peace is Being Built? (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre [IDRC], January, 2003).

conflict; and, the basic level of economic development. Unfortunately, this policy-relevant research has been virtually ignored by the development and NGO communities.

4. It follows that to measure program performance through M&E in P-C situations, we need to be looking to see whether those program efforts are serving these P-C goals, and when it is most appropriate to do so. This means looking at programs through a different lens -- a conflict and peace lens -- than would be done if we were M&E'ing them only in terms of their particular established project, program or sectoral objectives. Even if they achieve particular program or project objectives well does not mean they are being effective in overall P-C terms. In other words, M&E criteria and indicators have to include many that are explicitly peace and conflict-sensitive, and that show how they specifically contribute to advancing the peace process. The methodology for doing this kind of M&E has been called "peace and conflict impact assessment"(PCIA).

5. Currently, however, M&E tends to be done only at the micro levels of activity, program, or sectors, and it tends to measure the various particular aims of existing activities, projects and program -- as if success in those terms also means success in P-C peacebuilding. But many of these were simply taken off the shelf, having been designed for general purposes.

And thus, these programs and their goals may have little connection to the P-C situation's special needs and goals and priorities, or that connection may be merely presumed or rhetorical. So effective performance of these discrete efforts in their individual terms may or may not add up to effectiveness in achieving the essential P-C goals. ("Each of our projects was evaluated to be successful, and the country was going to hell!")

6. In sum, M&E can and needs to be done using conflict-sensitive criteria/indicators, and also at the macro levels of: sectors, the whole mission portfolio, USG-wide efforts, and multi-mission (international) efforts.[2] By the same token, we need to design our programs -- in the first

[2] Standard program evaluations do consider whether programs have some intended impact on their environments (outcomes), and also whether that environment in which programs operate may have some influence on those observed outcomes (contextual shaping factors). But in many of the P-C contexts in which traditional evaluations may be carried out, evaluations tend to assume that the environment in which the programs operate are relatively stable and regularized: a government and private sector are assumed to be in operation. However, in post-conflict and other transitioning country contexts with political instability, economic disarray, etc., such an environment cannot be taken for granted. Instead, this environment is still in a process of being created. Moreover, the programs that are be evaluated are themselves being used to construct that overall stable environment – of governance, politics, social relations, and civil society (nation-building) -- not just to produce particular immediate outcomes <u>within</u> a more or less fixed environment. So, the social, political, and governance environment is simultaneously the <u>context</u> of the program and an intended <u>target</u> of its activities. Given these broader P-C aims of the programs, it seems inescapable for an evaluation to look more broadly than is usually the case in

place -- to aim toward those goals. This means that the special P-C goals need to inform the nature and mix of programs that are adopted for specific P-C countries (and thus what should be subsequently M&E'd).

These packages of mutually-supportive programs -- i.e., country strategies -- need to be derived, in turn, from country-specific assessments of the country's social stability, conflict potential, peace capacities, institutional strengths, etc.. Such diagnoses can be done through appropriately honed tools such as conflict vulnerability assessments (CVA's), DG assessments, and so on. Preferably, all these assessments and strategies should be developed multi-laterally – to achieve the maximum appropriate impact on the overall P-C environment and positive complementary and multiplier impacts.

What MSI's Been Doing in M&E in P-C Environments

Mission level M&E:

- Iraq Monitoring and Evaluation Program Performance (MEPP) deals with USAID/Iraq's overall technical assistance efforts and thus focuses on economic recovery, education, health, local governance, infrastructure and other sectors (for USAID ANE).

Program level M&E:

- Sierra Leone Youth Training and Reintegration Program (for USAID OTI with World Vision).

- A three-country in Serbia, Macedonia and Georgia of the impacts of participatory community development (CD) on civic empowerment & conflict mitigation (for USAID E&E). In addition to civic empowerment criteria, this uses explicit peace and conflict impact criteria that are probed at the village and district levels. Examples include:

  - behavior – is conflict behavior reduced or prevented (e.g. violent incidents, contributing funds to armed groups, joining armed groups)?
  - attitudes and perceptions – have inter-group attitudes and perceptions that can increase the risk of conflict improved? Are the projects encouraging more positive perceptions and attitudes and reducing inter-ethnic distrust or prejudice between the ordinary members of contending ethnic groups,

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evaluations at the overall elements and dynamics of the context in which the program operates, and for impacts of the program on those factors.

such as by creating or strengthening direct contacts and working relationships?

- political and governing processes – were organizational and procedural capacities to manage conflicts strengthened? Do the projects help to create or strengthen legitimate, integrative institutions and procedures (old or new, formal or informal) that can manage public affairs for all citizens and can channel future emerging disputes and conflict issues into peaceful processes for resolution?

- underlying conditions – were basic socio-economic conditions that can predispose areas to potential conflicts reduced?

Problems (from the CD study)

Limited time and resources for consistent application of evaluation instruments; lack of "control" cases.

Suggestions

Sponsor multi-donor joint country-specific P-C (and potential) assessments and strategy development to foster coherent and thus more effective programs.

Social Impact

Rolf Sartorius of Social Impact gave a presentation on ways to strengthen OTI performance monitoring.

Strengthening OTI Performance Monitoring

I. Overview

- OTI, like many international development and humanitarian organizations, develops performance monitoring plans (PMPs) for its programs to support routine monitoring of program inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- During the past several years the quantity and quality of OTI project designs and PMPs has increased significantly due to the hard work of OTI's Program Development Team.
- The quality of program design—clarity, realism and relevance of program objectives, assessment of risk and quality of performance monitoring systems—are key ingredients of program effectiveness.
- OTI has synthesized typical program objectives and sample indicators to support its PMP development.

- OTI, because of it's unique mandate and program focus, and relatively short program cycle, is seeking to develop a practical, fast track performance monitoring and evaluation approach—sort of "M&E lite"
- OTI's PMPs tend to be *output* rather than *outcome* focused.
- Implementation of OTI PMPs—especially for monitoring outcomes—is spotty at best.

II. Analysis—why are PMPs not being implemented, even with good design?

- Some PMPs may still be too complex
- Lack of clear institutional and program roles and responsibilities for M&E
- Lack of incentives (or real disincentives) for M&E.
- Lack of capacity—especially when it comes to more complicated outcomes monitoring.
- Lack of budgetary resources to carry out quality performance monitoring work
- The culture for results-based M&E and RBM does not exist yet and it takes a long time to establish.
- Performance monitoring of *outcome-level performance* in transition and peacebuilding programs is a relatively new area. The techniques and tools for this are currently being developed and adapted from other related fields.
- In some cases the tools are there and ready for use by OTI. In other cases they aren't there yet and OTI can help to push the envelope.

III. What are some promising approaches to strengthen OTI's performance monitoring work?

First, there are two important sides of this equation—*the organizational development side and the M&E technical side.*

<u>The organizational development side</u>: On the organizational development side OTI needs to continue to develop and consolidate its overall strategy for performance monitoring and evaluation. The strategy must:

- Provide continued, highly visible, leadership support to build a culture of results-based management (let's focus less on "burn rates"), program quality, performance monitoring and systematic learning from program experience.
- Provide adequate project-level budgetary resources to design, implement and backstop good quality performance monitoring work.

- Select, cultivate and reward program managers for their ability to use results-based management know-how and experience.
- Build-in additional resources for M&E for new and innovative programming approaches—otherwise how do you learn about what works and what has potential for scale-up.
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for performance monitoring work (job descriptions) especially at the outcomes level.
- Incorporate dedicated project M&E staff with the right skills mix.
- Anticipate that outcomes-level performance monitoring will always be more challenging and provide the right technical backstopping and budgetary support so that it "kicks-in" at the right time in the program life.
- More closely integrate performance monitoring with evaluation.
- Routinely assess the quality of performance monitoring and evaluation—using simple metrics--so that it can continue to improve.
- Have a realistic timeframe—5-7 years.

The M&E technical side: There are many innovations in performance monitoring and evaluation the OTI can draw on to improve its work:

- *Simple surveys to assess quantitative changes in community attitudes, skills and behaviors* related to OTI objectives such as reducing tension and increasing tolerance and reconciliation in target groups. For example, Social Impact employed for the first time a simple survey in five communities of Macedonia to assess attitude and behavior changes related to increased tolerance and collaboration for the OTI Macedonia Final Evaluation. The results were exciting and validated OTI's objectives. OTI should do more to use simple surveys for outcomes-level performance monitoring during program implementation.

- *Adapt social capital survey tools to measure changes in community cohesion.* The new SC measures are overly complex and costly, however, with some adaptation and experimentation they can be made practical and relevant to transition programming. These measures should be adapted and pilot-tested by OTI for baseline, performance monitoring and impact evaluation work.

- *Participatory evaluation*. This could be made integral to OTI's participatory grant making process and would reinforce program objectives related to promoting tolerance and reconciliation and would support communities to take greater control over transition initiatives. SI supports participatory evaluation systems with large Social Funds in countries including Angola and Ethiopia. There is also good potential for OTI to blend more traditional and

participatory evaluation approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry. OTI should explore use of participatory evaluation methods in some targeted new programs.

- *Make better use of indices for measuring changes such as enhanced advocacy capacity, ratification and implementation of human rights laws, increased effectiveness of civil society organizations and increased capacity/responsiveness of local government.* Indices for each of these objectives are being promoted by Social Impact and other groups in the DG sector. OTI should adapt and make use of these indices for its performance monitoring work.

World Bank

Kim Maynard of the World Bank reported mixed results from an evaluation she recently completed on how well community-driven development (CDD) programming works compared with traditional ministry-driven programming. Another study of the Bank's impact evaluations found that the Bank performed poorly in terms of evaluating programs. Kim said she has also looked at ways of establishing baselines in conflict or post-conflict situations, where data are unreliable or difficult to obtain - e.g. whether an ex-post-facto baseline is feasible.

She explained that CDD assumes that positive social capital is built up in the course of program implementation through shared visioning, etc. Social capital measures factors like inclusion/exclusion, trust, groups/networks, collective action toward common goals, ICT systems, etc. Although a social capital assessment tool (SOCAP) has been developed to measure these factors, the tool is cumbersome, so the Bank is developing a "SOCAP-light" for conflict and post-conflict situations. The tool is being piloted in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Bank has also developed a Rapid Social Assessment Tool to measure the social dynamics being targeted by programs and to eventually detect change.

V. Q and A

In response to a question from Rick Hill (CHF) about the difficulty of getting people to speak openly about projects, Michael Lund (MSI) commented on the importance of trust to be able to gauge whether there has been a change in the willingness of young men to take up arms, for example. Based on his agency's experience in Sierra Leone, Jock Baker (CARE) noted how comfortable people are talking about such issues as indicators in themselves.

Max Goldensohn (DAI) raised the problem of how to filter out responses that are not disinterested, e.g. from respondents who are trying to favorably influence an evaluation to ensure the continuation of a program on which they have come to rely financially.

Richard Byess, (World Vision) commented on the importance of distinguishing between M&E for accountability and M&E aimed at learning. Compared with accountability-based monitoring, learning-based monitoring tends to ease some of the suspicions that make data collection difficult. He also urged participants to take into consideration for whom the monitoring is being undertaken – beneficiaries, donors, etc.

Sarah Cohen (USAID/PVC-ASHA) said there are ways to conduct baseline studies collaboratively and urged participants to look not just at M&E tools but to consider tools for collaborative baselines.

Mary Stewart (USAID/OTI) observed that the donor should not burden the field with obligations it is more suited to carry out itself, such as reporting to Congress. The donor should focus on enabling the field to carry out activities rather than pushing off responsibility to do reporting. She also cautioned against aiming for perfection, urging the more realistic goal of using the best available tool. Michale Lund (MSI) commented on the distinction between criteria applied at the field level to make sure program objectives are fulfilled and criteria applied at a higher level to measure where programs are going at a policy level from the donor perspective.

Rob Jenkins (USAID/OTI) commented on the benefits of using "light" tools over more cumbersome approaches that tend to result in "paralysis of analysis". Recognizing that proof is elusive, he said what is needed is just enough information to justify a “rational leap of faith” that programs are achieving their objectives.

Dayna Brown (Mercy Corps) commented on the usefulness of proxy indicators for monitoring, i.e. asking people in communities how they would determine whether they are safe, for example. Kim Maynard (World Bank) described satisfaction matrices as one way to do this. She also stressed the importance of being reflective about operating assumptions and thinking about how to ensure that the input gathered in the monitoring process is effectively translated into program operations. Rob Jenkins (USAID/OTI) described the ratio of nationalistic music played in cafes and the number of heart patients admitted as examples of proxy indicators for rising tensions and potential conflict. He commented that while the usefulness of proxy indicators in the field is undeniable, donors often don’t accept them. He suggested an education process may be needed to gain greater acceptance of proxy indicators in the donor community.

VI. NEXT STEPS/WRAP-UP

Hal Lippman (USAID/OTI) suggested the possibility of establishing an informal working group to carry forward some of the ideas that emerged at this session. He invited participants to submit specific suggestions for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs and asked for feedback on what should happen next and for commitments from individuals regarding what they would be willing to take on.

Mary Stewart (USAID/OTI) indicated she is planning this summer to look at the objectives of OTI programs and group them into sets of similar objectives. The idea is to

then come up with some simple tools to measure performance against these clusters of objectives and to develop methods for analyzing the data. She invited those interested to feed into this effort and said she hopes to be able to do a rollout in the fall.

Jock Baker (CARE) commented that USAID is not the only agency NGOs have to take into consideration, and noted that DOD and State were not part of this session, despite their considerable role in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. He pointed out that DOD's approach to measuring impact, in particular, seems rather different from that of NGOs. Sarah Cohen (PVC-ASHA) concurred, and added that PRM as well as ECHO appear to be in the beginning stages of addressing these issues. She encouraged the group to look more closely at what different agencies are calling M&E and how they link up with each other.

Michael Lund (MSI) suggested grouping the issues raised at this session by topic and setting up follow-up meetings on specific issues, and perhaps involving State and DOD. Suggested topics might include approaches that are working in post-conflict situations, how to obtain reliable data, and developing the right indicators.

Hal Lippman (USAID/OTI) urged participants to continue the dialogue by e-mail and said he would be following up with them accordingly. He also asked Nancy Schwartz (OMB) who had attended the session as an observer if she had any thoughts she wanted to share. She acknowledged OMB's impetus in wanting OTI to look at these issues and expressed satisfaction with the discussion. She said she looks forward to hearing about the next steps.

APPENDIX A

Agenda

BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON PERFORMANCE MONITORING IN POST-CONFLICT/TRANSITION PROGRAMMING

Date/Time: May 13th, 8:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Venue: Ronald Reagan Office Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Conference Room 7.08 c/d

Purpose: To bring together M&E specialists to share information and experiences on monitoring post-conflict/transition programs. The session will be organized around four questions:

1. what have you/your organization been doing to monitor post-conflict/transition programs/activities in the field;
2. how do you/your organization carry out your monitoring efforts;
3. what issues and problems have you encountered in so doing; and,
4. what specific suggestions do you have for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs.

Participants are urged to prepare a one-page summary response to these four questions for use as a ready reference during the discussion and for inclusion in a report of the proceedings, should there be one.

8:45 a.m.:- 8:55 a.m.: Welcome/Introductions/Opening Remarks – how the session came about, purpose, expectations (Greg Gottlieb/Hal Lippman)

8:55 a.m.:- 9:25 a.m.: Participatory Exercise – definition and purposes of monitoring (Mary Stewart)

9:25 a.m.:- 10:45 a.m. Panel Discussion – Rebecca Scheurer (USAID/OFDA), Michael Lund, (MSI), Dayna Brown/Jock Baker (InterAction), and Rolf Sartorius (Social Impact) will make 10-minute presentations that address the first three questions listed above – what is being done, how it is being done, what issues/problems are being encountered. Their remarks will be followed by general discussion to enable others to talk about their experience and/or engage in Q&A with the panelists. (Moderator, Patricia MacWilliams)

10:45 a.m.: Coffee Break

11:00 a.m.:- 11:45 a.m.: General Discussion – on the fourth question listed above – specific ideas and suggestions participants have for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs. (Moderator, Patrice Zmitrovis)

11:45 a.m.: Next Steps/Wrap-up (Hal Lippman)

APPENDIX B

List of Participants

USAID

Hal Lippman, DCHA/OTI
Mary Stewart, DCHA/OTI
Carlisle Levine, DCHA/OTI
Rob Jenkins, DCHA/OTI
Rebecca Scheurer, DCHA/OFDA
Emily McPhie, DCHA/PVC-ASHA
Sarah Cohen, DCHA/PVC-ASHA
Wendy Marshall, DCHA/DG
Holly Benner, DCHA/CMM
Adam Reisman, DCHA/CMM
Tom Marchione, DCHA/PPM
Bob Leavitt, AFR/SD

Donors/Partners/Consultants, Other

Kim Maynard, World Bank
Jock Baker, CARE
Robin Gulick, CRS
Richard Byess, World Vision
Dayna Brown, Mercy Corps
Duwan Gottlieb, InterAction
Patricia MacWilliams, InterAction
Rick Hill, CHF
Stephen Lennon, IOM
Michael Lund, MSI
Max D. Goldensohn, DAI
Patrice Zmitrovis, Social Impact
Rolf Sartorius, Social Impact
Nancy Schwartz, OMB

Unable to Attend

Tjip Walker, USAID/OTI, Cressida Slote, USAID/E&E, Anne Ralte, USAID/PPC
Cheyanne Church, Search for Common Ground
Peter Woodrow, Diana Chigas, Mary Anderson, Collaborative for Development Action
Ian Bannon, Dan Murphy, Camilla Holmemo, World Bank

APPENDIX C

Summaries of Participants' M&E Efforts In Post-Conflict/Transitional Programming

MERCY CORPS

Monitoring in Post-Conflict and Transitional Environments

Lessons Learned from Monitoring in Post-Conflict and Transitional Environments:

- Make monitoring visits part of the funding and programming cycle with implementing partners and staff. Project funds should be released to local partners in tranches, based on on-site monitoring of the progress of work laid out in their implementation plans and reported in regular project reports. This enables you to see the progress and unforeseen challenges, adjusting when necessary and ensuring that partners are able to deliver on time—which is key for building trust and credibility with communities and for showing accountability for results.

- Incorporate monitoring reports into your data management and reporting system. There should be mechanisms in your data management and reporting system that notify you when monitoring reports are due, project reports are late, or when the next tranche of funds needs to be processed to allow your staff and/or implementing partners to stay on time in program implementation.

- The monitoring of projects should be included in your workplan and reporting. For instance, in situation reports (which are more frequently done in unstable post-conflict environments and cover changes in the operating environment as well as programs), a short list or numbers of projects monitored can be included as well as a short picture and report from one or two in particular. This is important for staff and partners to see that the information is used and shared and that all of their efforts in reporting are not in vain. You can even introduce a level of competition for best project write-ups capturing not just successes, but also lessons learned.

- In some instances (especially if remote monitoring becomes necessary), you may contract with outside organizations (perhaps National level NGOs in an area where they are not working, or universities or technical specialists who can better collect quantitative data) to monitor the progress of the projects. This is not the best option given that a key aspect of monitoring is working with your staff and partners to address challenges that arise, but does at least allow for some "eyes on the ground" to report progress and issues.

- Staff and partners need training in how to monitor, especially in many transitional environments where people are used to "inspections" and may not see monitoring as a joint participatory exercise to note the progress as well as to address any changes or issues which must now be addressed. In many cases with local partners, this means providing training and capacity building in how to develop realistic indicators, preparing implementation and monitoring plans, data collection and monitoring methods, and reporting formats and procedures so that everyone knows what is expected and understand their role in making the program and projects successful.

- It is best for local staff and/or partners to monitor in teams to get different perspectives and to prevent opportunities for corruption. It is especially useful for teams to include technical and non-technical staff (often more familiar with community development or the communities), and possibly finance/compliance staff who can check the financial records, systems and verify financial reports.

- Your monitoring system should feed into evaluation and organizational learning processes. For instance, it can be useful to capture the approach and various issues that programs are addressing

early in the programming cycle, and then use that later in evaluations to see how the fluctuating dynamics and environmental factors affected the programming over the long term—what adjustments were made in strategies, how were lessons learned applied, what can be learned for the next post-conflict or transitional program?

Issues for Further Discussion:

- Challenges of short-term funding for "quick impact projects"—transitions are not over in a few months or a couple of years, and many post-conflict environments undergo several more cycles of conflict and violence before they can truly be considered "post-conflict." You can count projects completed, but that does not capture the process side of development which is just as important in seeing irreversible positive social, political and economic change in post-conflict and transitional environments. It is hard to measure attitudinal or social changes over the short term, so both qualitative (i.e. proxy indicators) and quantitative measures need to be developed, and possibly adjusted over the long-term.

- Challenges of security and the necessity for "remote monitoring" when situations deteriorate or you cannot reach the project areas to monitor. How does this affect your local staff and partners, their ability to operate and their credibility with communities? What alternatives can be developed to ensure safety of your staff and partners, and support for local initiatives at these critical times?

- Defining and differentiating monitoring issues in post-conflict versus transitional environments, given that the operating environments and various actors involved may be different, as well as the types of programs being implemented and the different funding cycles of various donors in these different contexts.

- Different information needs from donors at different times—i.e. outputs versus impacts.

Post-Conflict Monitoring at World Vision

What has our organization been doing to monitor post-conflict/transition programs/activities in the field?
World Vision employs a standard program lifecycle monitoring and evaluation methodology which adapts equally well to conventional and post-conflict activities. (DME, or Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, currently being redesigned; staff worldwide are participating in review and training sessions on the new methodology.) Planning and program documents include results frameworks and other results-based measures and indicators. Monitoring is project-based and is carried out throughout the life of an activity.

How do we carry out our monitoring efforts?
Monitoring is carried out by field staff in national offices, with occasional visits by support offices (e.g., WVUS or WV Australia). Post-activity evaluations are often carried out by contractors or other third parties using funds provided in the grant budget. All emergency programs are evaluated by ERDM staff once the conflict has ended and recommendations are circulated widely to WV staff and partners in the form of Lessons Learned.

What issues and problems have you encountered in so doing?
Particular issues that distinguish post-conflict and transition activities from conventional development programs include (1) unstable and shifting security environments; (2) radically foreshortened and often unrealistic implementation schedules; (3) emphasis on visible material assistance, construction and commodity delivery, sometimes at the expense of long-term investments; (4) heightened political scrutiny and increased influence of the State Department and White House in decision making; (5) More frequent requests for visits by VIPs to program sites; and (6) quick start-up times that stretch local offices' capacity to produce good designs.

What specific suggestions do you have for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs?
Adequate provision should be made to fund security-related expenditures where security is likely to be of concern. Arrangements should sometimes be made to lessen the visibility of USG branding (flags, marking requirements, etc.) USAID and Embassy staff should make efforts to be open and available to meet on implementation issues, and empowered to make implementation decisions. If USAID and Embassy staff wish to participate in monitoring visits this should be made clear to NGO staff to reduce misunderstandings. Where VIP visits are likely to occur, USG and NGO staff should take care to select sites suitable for such visits.

Most NGOs base their programming systems on a much longer planning horizon than is likely to obtain in conflict and transition situations. In World Vision's case the planning period is 15 years for conventional ADP programs. Finally, NGO staff are extremely sensitive to the perception that they may be carrying out unpopular USG mandates in a given situation and have understandable concern for the security of their personnel who are likely to remain in country long after a given activity is completed. USG planners should be sensitive to this as well.

USAID OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES (OTI)

What have you/your organization been doing to monitor post-conflict/transition programs/activities in the field? Over the past four years, OTI has developed a monitoring approach embedded in its strategic planning process. The purposes of this monitoring approach are to enable OTI country program staff to: 1) make informed and timely decisions on whether or not the program's objectives are being or have been met, and what adjustments may be necessary; and, 2) report about program successes and challenges to a wide variety of stakeholders. Pursuant to this approach, OTI country program personnel, in close consultation with OTI/Washington, are responsible for developing and implementing a performance management plan (PMP). The PMP ties together the key elements – goals, objectives, and activities – of the strategic planning process, organizes the essential information needed to document program results, and specifies what information needs to be collected, how and when it will be collected, and who is responsible for its collection. While OTI's monitoring approach is routinely applied to countries in which it operates, for a variety of reasons (see question three below) and despite intensive, ongoing efforts in support, few OTI programs have fully implemented a PMP. In short, while in recent years OTI has made great strides in its monitoring approach, much remains to be done to bring these efforts to the desired level of utilization and effectiveness.

How do you/your organization carry out your monitoring efforts? OTI monitoring efforts take place in a number of ways. On one track, OTI/Washington and country program staff work together to develop a PMP. This is typically a protracted process, which can include one or more PMP workshops in the field. A key resource in this effort is the OTI guide for strategic planning and M&E, which describes in some detail the "what" and "why" of the monitoring process and PMP development.

At the same time the PMP is being developed, some monitoring takes place. For example, in most cases, early in a country program start-up a database is developed as a primary means of keeping track of small grant activities. The database contains basic information for each small grant, such as start and completion dates, funding, and project results. Also, as grants are approved and activities take place, those responsible for monitoring gather data on the quality of the projects, as well as financial and management oversight, and provide that information to OTI's country representative. OTI/Washington staff provide ongoing support to country program monitoring activities and keep track of these efforts via quarterly conference calls.

What issues and problems have you encountered in so doing? Numerous factors make monitoring in OTI a very difficult task:

- Monitoring efforts are consistently confronted by urgent day-to-day country program operational priorities, which typically result in their being pushed

aside "for the moment." With the need to initiate activities quickly, it can take up to three months to develop a PMP.

- Short OTI program timeframes – between two and three years on average – make routine delays in getting PMPs developed and implemented even more consequential.

- Essential features of effective monitoring, such as site visits, are inhibited and/or disrupted by security considerations and travel difficulties.

- Among OTI staff and implementing partners there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to monitor post-conflict/transition programs. To a conisderable extent, this situation reflects the nascent state of knowledge and understanding among M&E experts regarding the unique requirements of post-conflict/transition monitoring. For example, there is nothing available that tells someone in the field precisley how to implement a PMP in post-conflict/transition settings. Likewise, it is very difficult to develop baselines for post-conflict/transition programs and there are few, if any, tools that deal effectively with hard-to-measure outcomes, such as changes in attitude and behavior.

What specific suggestions do you have for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs? Develop a guide that explains in clear, easily understood language how to implement a PMP and, either as part of this guide or separately, develop simple, readily usable data collection methods and instruments for field personnel working in post-conflict/transtion settings. Require that an M&E specialist be included as essential personnel in any post-conflict/transition program.

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

1. What has your organization been doing to monitor post-conflict/transition programs/activities in the field/ How does your organization carry out your monitoring efforts?

All staff are expected to use and apply the Proframe as a primary monitoring and evaluation tool. (See guidance). This tool is eventually to be applied to all programming. It is not a tool designed specifically for post-conflict situations.

2. What issues and problems have you encountered in so doing?

Effective programming adapts to partner and community needs and interests. Post-conflict environments are often complex and programs have to be fluid and flexible to changing circumstances; only continuous monitoring can give direction to the changes required. However, our monitoring and evaluation processes rarely provide information on how a project has been reoriented/adapted given learnings. This is an area where we need to improve.

It takes a lot of time to continually monitor programs and we have found that the absence of time for reflection consequently makes programming more reactive than proactive. Also, partners fear criticism. Therefore, CRS staff have to approach monitoring and evaluation carefully – ensuring that monitoring and evaluation isn't seen as meddling by CRS or the donor, but as a necessary component of sound programming.

It's true, though, that in some cases monitoring can identify partners that are not working out and CRS can adjust our work with them. This may lead to ending a partnership or to identifying areas where a partner needs to improve and we can work with the partner to improve the problems. In a post-conflict environment this is an especially difficult challenge as there may be limited time to incorporate the necessary capacity building measures.

3. What specific suggestions do you have for improving efforts to monitor post-conflict/transition programs?

CRS staff are developing peacebuilding specific M&E guidelines. In Southeast Asia, project evaluations have shown that we need to put systems and people in place to effectively monitor and evaluate PB programming and document successes, shortcomings, lessons, theories developed, etc. In Europe and the Middle East, staff are focusing on two areas:

1) establishing baselines that actually say something about the conflict situation in which we are working (here, we're getting help from CDA on our context analysis). At the beginning of a new program, it is important to have clear descriptions of the context, situation, conflict dynamics and relationships in the community.
2) accepting indicators that are "good enough", i.e. being comfortable with some ambiguity, trying to balance meaning without making the M&E system too expensive.

We need to encourage a greater level of stakeholder involvement (both donors and beneficiaries) in setting up M&E systems. Beneficiaries, especially, need to generate indicators.

Another important aspect of this is how much donors really want to invest in M&E and defining, together, what we want to learn from this. Obviously, as peacebuilders working with the complexities of conflict, we want to learn as much as possible and have many different aspects to consider. At the same time, it's important to set boundaries and have a very clear understanding with stakeholders, so that we fulfill our commitments to donors and also so we don't promise too much or too little to ourselves and our beneficiaries, doing Harm, undermining confidence, frustrating relationships, etc.

Guidelines for the CRS Proframe – Program or Project Framework

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Measurement Methods and/or Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Goal: This is the wider sectoral or national objective to which the program / project, along with others, is designed to contribute. It should describe substantive development change relating to beneficiary well-being, living standards, or livelihoods, in the sector(s) of interest. ***Program / project actions are among factors affect -ing change at this level.*** Provide a one-sentence statement of the long-term goal program/project is designed to contribute to. *How to write it: put the verb in the past tense as something already achieved over long term.*	Indicators at this level typically measure general sectoral or national program performance relevant to the program / project. Indicators accompanying the goal involve measurements that are not generally funded by the program / project, but by others as part of other work. Normally, sectoral or government agencies would monitor these indicators as part of good management practice for the sector.	Indicators accompanying the Goal are generally monitored and/or evaluated via various measures reported in sector, country or international reports or impact studies generated outside the program / project.	
Strategic Objectives (SOs): These are the 'immediate' (i.e., End of Project) outcomes of changes in beneficiary behaviour, systems, policies or institutional performance. Achievement of an SO is the result of beneficiary access to, use of and satisfaction with program / project Outputs as indicated by the Intermediate Results. An SO should express an aim that is realistic, specific and measurable. Provide a statement of each SO that will have been achieved at the end of program / project as a result of both the delivery of both the program / project outputs, and the changes in beneficiary behaviour, systems or institutional performance. *How to write it: put the verb in the present or past tense as if already achieved.*	SO indicators relate to what will be achieved by the end of project. SO indicators are verifiable in terms of Quantity, Quality and Time. If time is not stated, end of project is assumed. Although impact may not be fully achieved until some years after implementation is over, SO indicators should capture at least trends toward impact. SO indicators are not a restatement of those at output or IR level. Data collection for measurement of result indicators is generally funded by the program / project.	Indicators accompanying the program / project SOs are generally collected by the program / project and monitored and/or evaluated via periodic reports, supervision missions, and mid-term and final evaluations. A succinct description of the measurement method and/or specific data source should be provided for each indicator. Since CRS is keen to ensure the sustainability of its interventions, it is important to consider allowing for a 'modest' ex-post assessment of program / project outcomes around 12 months after end of project.	**(From SOs to Goal)** If an SO is achieved, what additional assumptions, if any, are needed to justify the SO's contribution to the Goal? These assumptions refer to: (a) the longer-term sustainability of the program / project (b) contribution(s) of additional program / project inputs, and/or responses from beneficiary groups and institutions, that are critical to the achievement of the Goal.

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Measurement Methods and/or Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Intermediate Results (IRs): IRs refer to the anticipated response(s) from beneficiary groups and/or institutions arising from the program / project outputs. IRs address the critical concerns about program / project 'reach' or coverage. ***How to write it:* put the verb in the present or past, as if already achieved.**	IR indicators focus on the opinions of beneficiaries about their: (a) **access to**; (b) **use of**; and (c) **degree of satisfaction** with the Outputs delivered by the program / project. IR indicators are, in effect, proxies for relevant and sustainable change at the SO level.	IR indicators are generally monitored and evaluated via regular on-going data collection (e.g., Beneficiary Contact Monitoring methods). A succinct description of the measurement method and/or specific data source should be provided for each indicator.	**(From IRs to SOs)** If the IRs indicate uptake of program / project Outputs, what additional assumptions, if any, are needed to achieve the SOs? **Note:** If the attainment of IRs is less than anticipated, program / project managers are accountable for revising the Outputs strategy.
Outputs: Outputs constitute intervention(s) that the program / project can be held accountable for delivering. There may be a more than one Output for each IR/SO. For simplicity and clarity of logic, if there are a number of Outputs relating to an SO, then the numbering of each of those Outputs should facilitate easy correspondence to its respective SO. The most important thing to remember is that the CRS program / project team is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Outputs as part of good design, implementation, planning, and delivery. ***Provide the end of project results achieved through the implementation of program / project activities.*** *How to write it: put the verb in the present or past, as if already achieved.*	Output indicators are verifiable in terms of Quantity, Quality and Time. If time is not stated, end of project is assumed. A correct statement of Outputs will be relatively straightforward to measure. Collection of data for measurement of these indicators is funded by the program / project. For complex program / projects, a separate table may be used to provide a more detailed listing of specific indicators in the program / project implementation plan.	Sources for monitoring and evaluating Output indicators typically include programmatic, administrative and management record-keeping systems. A succinct description of the measurement method and/or specific data source should be provided for each indicator.	**(From Outputs to IRs)** Output-to-IR assumptions include the critical conditions for capturing program / project benefits.

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Measurement Methods and/or Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
Activities: *Activities describe how the program / project goods and services will be delivered, i.e., the functions that need to be undertaken and managed in order to deliver the Outputs.* **There may be a more than one Activity for each Output. For simplicity and clarity of logic, if there are a number of Activities relating to an Output, then the numbering of each of those Activities should facilitate easy correspondence to its respective Output.** List each Activity as a main heading, followed by a list of the major types of sub-activities, if any, that are funded under it. However, to avoid over-complicating the Proframe, a complete Activity schedule should be provided (e.g., in the form of a program / project GANTT chart) elsewhere. *How to write it: put the verb in the infinitive, as something to do.*	A statement of Activities completed is not difficult. Activity indicators are verifiable mainly in terms of Quantity and Time, but where appropriate a Quality element should be included. It is better to concentrate on the most important activities for CRS management of Activities (i.e., those falling on the critical path), rather than expend time and resources collecting unnecessary detail.	Activities are generally monitored and evaluated via progress reports and disbursement data.	**(From Activities to Outputs)** Assuming that the Activities are implemented successfully, what additional assumptions are needed, if any, to achieve the Outputs? **The assumptions concern conditions outside the direct control of CRS, but that must nevertheless be met if the Outputs are to be delivered.** **These assumptions need to be monitored during supervision.** **CRS itself should not be spending money to achieve any of the assumed conditions; if any funds are allocated to addressing these assumed external conditions, they should be included as Activities rather than Critical Assumptions.**

* * * * *

Proframe Tips Sheet

1. CRS Program / Project Design Requirements

A Proframe should accompany each Program / Project Concept Note and corresponding Proposal, regardless of the funding source, together with a visual representation of the intervention logic in the form of a Results Framework. In the case of the more-detailed Program / Project Proposal, attached to the Proframe should be a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (see p. 141 of the current PPG).

2. Description of Objectives

At Goal level, program / project interventions are among many factors influencing change at this level.

When it comes to SOs, smaller, simpler programs / projects often require only a single SO. Larger, more complex endeavours (like DAPs) may need two, three, or at most four.

3. Performance Indicators

Remember that it is better to have only a few meaningful and easily measured indicators, rather than an abundance of indicators for which data collection is problematic.

Increasingly, internationally recognized 'standard' menus of indicators are available for common types of relief and development efforts. In the next year or so, CRS will be working to create a small subset of SO level indicators for its major program areas.

Indicators are only proxy measurements of success. It is important to bear in mind that there may occur responses to program / project interventions that were not anticipated. It is, therefore, critical that on monitoring visits CRS/partner staff should always be considering the question, 'Did anything unexpected arise, positive or negative?'

4. Measurement Methods and / or Data Sources

It is important that this column is used in a way that is meaningful to Proframe readers. For this reason, it is suggested that, "a succinct description of the measurement method and/or specific data source should be provided for each indicator." This will encourage those completing the Proframe to think carefully not only about the nature of the indicator, but at the same time how information for measuring the selected indicator will be collected, and by whom. This should help provide a 'reality-check' to program / project designers during indicator formulation.

5. Manageable Interest

CRS implementers are accountable for producing Outputs on schedule and within budget. Although Outputs are delivered in order to attain an SO, the latter is ultimately beyond CRS' control.

The IRs provide an intermediate 'leading indicator' of how likely it is that the program / project will achieve its SO by end of project; this is why **implementers must regularly monitor the IRs once project implementation has commenced**. If program / project managers find there are concerns arising regarding the attainment of the IRs, then **the implementing team is responsible for reviewing its Outputs strategy and making any necessary decisions regarding the need for revision**.

The principle is that the program / project team can be held accountable for producing a set of Outputs, but not for what the beneficiaries or institutions will do with them. In sum, the CRS program / project team (via its partners) is:

- Contractually bound to produce or co-produce Outputs with program / project resources.

  But also it is…

- Accountable for using IR feedback to review its Outputs strategy to ensure the achievement of the IRs which, in turn, enhance the chances of SO-level success.

USAID OFFICE OF OFFICE OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY COOPERATION-AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS ABROAD (PVC-ASHA)

In post-conflict and transitioning environments one will find many similarities in operational complexity to communities of smaller scale that have undergone severe social stress, natural disasters, or extended periods of regional/ or communal conflict. In order to 'scale up' and address countries of post conflict or transitioning environments the humanitarian and development community have worked with various methods to enhance accountability, project transparency, participation, and impact assessment.

PVC-ASHA has done primarily evaluations, with limited monitoring. This may be the case of most Washington based programs, but also seems to be an endemic approach often taken by USAID to assure that results are 'reportable'. Monitoring is often deemphasized both in relief and development settings as either 'difficult based on limited time frames' or because of the 'cost of monitoring'. The results based reporting method limits information dissemination, but this should not limit the importance or necessity of adequate monitoring.

Key issues to consider in current post-conflict/ transitional monitoring:

<u>Baselines and Assessments</u>

- Collaborative baselines may make more sense and will yield enhanced collaboration and minimize the probability of duplication of services or increased impact on local populations.
- Assessments have most likely been done informally by local communication channels. Having assessments that balance 'proven information' with local perceptions is critical to link gathered information with more legitimate program planning and partnership development.
- Baselines are not 'starting points' but represent where a community is, or may have 'fallen' to based on current situations. This should be overlaid with information in the assessment that shows past status so that recovery and timing can be looked at as a component of program implementation.
- Baselines can be done through participatory mechanisms that allow for the integration of local information and systems to be able to sense timing and realistic targets.

<u>Monitoring</u>

- Monitoring should be designed using local mechanisms and partners. Peer based monitoring is often problematic in these types of settings and this should be done carefully if used as a method.
- Remote monitoring techniques are not new, and have been used in 'traditional warning systems' to alert possible social changes. Monitoring in areas that cannot be accessed can be difficult, but the channels of

information are critical as a part of the design. This can be done through local participation and innovative mechanisms of reporting.

- Timing is critical but is only one portion of monitoring. Monitoring in these settings should reflect a gauge of social change, problems in programming, and external factors that may affect impact. Components of monitoring are critical to design with local input to be sure the right things are being noted as indicators of change and impact.

Suggestions for Improving Performance Monitoring in Post-Conflict/Transition Programming

- Collaborate on baselines and assessments. These are costly and the problems created by multiple baseline/ assessment processes in small or traumatized communities are reflected in local impact of these methods. Initial analysis should focus on legitimate local partnerships and local information channels to reflect mechanism that are already a part of these communities.
- Mapping is an important process that should be done through donor coordination and by international and local partners. Mapping is a critical component that can also be used as an assessment and evaluation tool to note organizational change, community stability and to monitor program resiliency.
- Monitor using local methods and channels. External monitoring is critical, but monitoring is also critical to assess change and assure local impact.
- Monitoring should not be done in a vacuum. Link monitoring methods with a theory of social change that denotes awareness of the policy environment and of the macro levels. This can be done by program planning and linking monitoring to assessment and baseline information. This is critical for organizational resiliency in complex environments.