Technical Evaluation Reference Group
ADAPTATION FUND

Training handout – CHALLENGES AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Questionable data or issues with sampling

Challenges	Contingency plan (strategy)
Data found in annual or other external reports of the project's process or accomplishments do not appear realistic, are not sufficiently disaggregated, or do not align with outputs and outcomes identified in the logic framework.	If data seem unrealistic, try to verify information from project monitoring data. If not available, query the organization's senior managers to understand what was reported and confirm its reliability. For example, critical contextual information on implementation, such as a large number of new staff recruitments, may not be included in the report but is necessary to understand the findings. If output and outcome data are not available in reports or are not sufficiently disaggregated for evaluation purposes, try to work backwards by reviewing monitoring data or other internal reports. If monitoring data sets are available and data are disaggregated by sex and age, consider doing additional analyses. If disaggregated data are unavailable, undertake new post-project data collection to elicit potentially different outcomes based on adolescent age or sex.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Questionable data or issues with sampling

Challenges	Contingency plan (strategy)
1. Site selection is done in consultation with government officials or implementing partner staff, which may introduce bias. Alternatively, sites are selected based on real life considerations, such as security issues or ease in reaching communities. **2. There is no comparison group or geographic area to control for the influence of confounding external factors**	**1.** Be aware of site selection biases and advocate for transparency in decision-making and unbiased site selection as much as possible. Try to independently assess characteristics of the selected sample, including similarities between the intervention and comparison groups regarding the adolescent population, services, and other relevant infrastructure such as schools. Secondary data may be helpful in assessing comparability. **2.** If funding and time are available, create a comparison group or area as part of new data collection processes. Alternatively, use secondary data for comparison, if they are of reasonable quality, such as national survey results or service statistics. Assess for similarities between the intervention and comparison groups regarding the adolescent population, services, and relevant infrastructure such as schools. While preferable to include a comparison

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Adding Context and Isolating Contribution

Challenges

Information on contextual factors to help explain the nature and trajectory of change is not available in the project documentation.

There is little reference to situational analyses or anticipated risks.

Project indicators are not linked to these contextual factors, either within the project cycle or after the project has ended.

Contingency plan (strategy)

Seek out a variety of information sources. Consult key informants for information on contextual factors, such as new policy developments or political forces that may have affected the project but be cautious about potential biases.

If possible, review pertinent information available from media sources, including news articles and other media records and Twitter feeds. Existing documentation (i.e. synthesis reviews, policy analyses) may provide contextual information. Try to recreate internal and external event timelines with available project or implementing partner staff and stakeholders to document factors that may have influenced implementation.

Consider engaging with ethnographers to visit sites and employ ethnographic methods to explore and document contextual factor.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Adding Context and Isolating Contribution

Challenges

Other development projects have launched during project implementation or between the end of the project and the post-project evaluation, complicating the plausible attribution of findings and/or influencing post-project evaluation findings.

Contingency plan (strategy)

Use evaluation reports and assessment studies from the other projects, if available, to validate anecdotal information.

If evaluation reports from the other projects are available, try to map overlapping activities. Try to determine, via an events timeline discussion, to what degree projects from different organizations supported or undermined each other's effects between the end of the project and the post-project evaluation.

Interview former staff and partners to inquire if prior projects and partnerships extending before the project years were important building blocks to the project under evaluation and include this as a component of the context documentation. Use methods such as Contribution Analysis (CA), RRA or MSC Focus groups to differentiate the AF project from the others. Identify specific difference and repeatedly refer to it in evaluation

Ideally include a comparison group or use secondary data for comparison, if they are of reasonable quality, such as national survey results or service statistics

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Missing respondents

Challenges	Contingency plan (strategy)
Key project personnel are not available due to migration, transfers to new projects, or other reasons after the project has ended.	Attempt to track down telephone numbers via colleagues and other community contacts and conduct phone interviews with former staff. Ask current employers if former project staff could attend a half-day or full-day meeting during which post-project data could be collected. If this is not possible, try to interview former staff in less formal settings such as coffee shops. If this is not possible, interview staff and people within the host organization and its implementation partners who have some knowledge of the former project.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Missing respondents example

Challenges	Contingency plan (strategy)
Key beneficiaries may have left the area and beneficiary lists are not available.	Young people are often an especially mobile population, and the evaluator may need to get creative to find young people who participated in the project. Identify existing structures such as schools or youth clubs where past beneficiaries might be located. Ask school principals or other managers to contact beneficiaries on your behalf If structures are still active, sample from still-functioning groups formerly supported by the project – comparing those groups with groups or individuals who never participated in the project. If it is not possible to contact former beneficiaries, consider collecting information from people who are familiar with the former beneficiaries.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Missing data, respondents or incomparable evaluation tools

Challenges

Data or respondents are missing; evaluation tools are incomparable

Contingency plan (strategy)

Try to verify outputs/ outcomes with monitoring data or periodic project reports

Take a wider original sample of possible respondents for the quantitative survey.

Recreate endline data through recall, triangulate with secondary data and other primary data collection ex-post

Use Likert scales for comparison of changes from endline, e.g. extent of hunger at project close versus ex-post

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Data mismatch or data issues specific to adaptation and resilience

Challenges

The cross-sector nature of adaptation requires collecting data points from multiple and unconventional sources

Progress may be non-linear and episodic, and priorities may change over time

A long-term timeframe in order to see (especially) natural systems results

Contingency plan (strategy)

To the extent possible, seek out coordinating units that work in climate change across various institutions and sectors. Their staff and specialists may have knowledge of, and/or access to, relevant government or non-government data sources relevant to climate risks, adaptation, disaster preparedness/risk management, or other related topics.

Due to climate disturbances, the project may have faced severe or unexpected set-backs or priority changes since implementation closing. Outputs and outcomes (and impacts) achieved must be placed in the context of the related climate disturbances.

Since replenishment and (re)generation of natural systems may take decades, their resilience is – to some extent - dependent on projected sustainability. Proxy indicators can be used as place holders, but project sites may have to be revisited later in order to assess actual resilience.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Subjectivity and uncertainties specific to adaptation and resilience

Challenges	Contingency plan (strategy)
Resilience is a subjective term and requires deliberation and context to define **End lines (point of comparison against results) are often absent and/or may move over time** **Multiple uncertainties due to climate risks**	Stakeholder engagement is necessary to identify what priorities have driven activities and resources toward sustained outcomes, as well as to clarify the value of the climate resilience that those outcomes may provide. The deliberative co-creation ex post evaluation process will break down how/whether, and why, resilience achieved is (not) desirable or sufficient in a specific context. Focusing on current key priorities and "win win" solutions under multiple climate scenarios may be necessary to define success in the context of multiple uncertainties and moving end lines.

Challenges and their contingency plans

C3

Methods options during COVID-19

- Using national evaluators and local enumerators should minimize the spread of COVID-19
- Given COVID, evaluators might opt to make Rapid Evaluation adaptations, which includes existing rapid review processes (e.g. Rapid Rural Appraisal) and applies it to the current emergency context.
- Even in a lower COVID-risk context, current guidance on how to adapt evaluation fieldwork will be used, such as those from Better Evaluation and UNDP.
- Fieldwork could need to be done with smaller focus groups as well as smaller debrief groups to minimize infections or via remote mobile interviews
- Evaluators and their respondents should wear face masks during quantitative survey data gathering and ideally conduct interviews outside, rather than inside to minimize the risk of spreading the infection
- Also ask the Implementing Entity for existing contingency plans and/or. see OECD/ UN Guidance: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/covid19/IEOOECD_DAC_Joint-Guidance_COVID19.pdf