UNEARTHING COLLECTIVE WISDOM

Strengthening Disaster Preparedness & Early Action with Participatory Learning and Action Tools and Principles

A GUIDE

ABOUT THE REAL AWARD

The Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award is a consortium-led effort funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. It was established to respond to growing demand among USAID Missions, host governments, implementing organizations, and other key stakeholders for rigorous, yet practical, monitoring, evaluation, strategic analysis, and capacity building support. Led by Save the Children, REAL draws on the expertise of its partners: Food for the Hungry, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International.

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"Early warning systems (EWS) are only as good as the actions they catalyze; action is an essential part of any warning system. If a warning is sounded, and no one takes the action that the warning was intended to trigger, then the warning system failed."
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2012

"Information is valuable insofar as people are willing and able to act upon it. If people either cannot or will not change behavior in response to information they receive, then the information has no practical value."
Barrett et al 2004

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ACRONYMS

EWS	Early warning system
GLP	Global Learning Partners
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

AN OVERVIEW

WHY DEVELOP PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION TOOLS TO INFORM THE DESIGN OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS?

Early Warning Systems (EWSs) are an important part of achieving relief and development goals. Their purpose is to prevent and mitigate the effects of disasters—be they related to weather, conflict, or disease. Most EWSs, however, still focus on triggering action by governments and official stakeholders that enhances the timeliness and effectiveness of humanitarian relief efforts. While more attention is being given to designing people-centered EWSs, especially to developing the warnings, less progress has been made in understanding how best to elicit early preparation, prevention, and mitigation actions from the exposed and vulnerable populations themselves.

Food for the Hungry conducted a [comprehensive literature review](#) based on decades of psychology, social and behavioral change theory, and practice to propose a socially- and behaviorally-informed approach to EWS design, development, and implementation. The approach focuses on identifying proper early actions and the determinants of those behaviors to improve the likelihood that affected populations heed early warnings and take proper action to protect themselves and the resources they may require for recovery. While the paper makes a strong case for applying a behavioral approach, it does not provide stakeholders with practical tools.

The purpose of this set of tools and resources is to equip EWS designers, implementers, and stakeholders with a simple methodology to identify behaviors that are potentially impactful and feasible for the affected populations and to identify the determinants that support or inhibit the adoption of these behaviors.

These two processes—identifying behaviors and their determinants—are the first step in the *Behavior Change for Early Warning and Early Action Framework* (below).

Behavior Change Programs Address Key Early Action Determinants incl. the Enabling Environment

1 I.D. Early Actions & Behavioral Determinants

EW Information
I.D. info relevant for prompting actions. I.D. communication channels for all vulnerable groups.

2 EW Messaging
Tailor messages to address identified behavioral determinants; inlc. calls to actions.

3 Preparedness & Early Action
Support pre-identified preparedness and early actions as they are taken by exposed population.

4 Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning
Adapt EWS iteratively to accommodate lessons learned from actions.

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Food for the Hungry tested several Participatory Learning Action (PLA) tools in drought-prone northern Kenya to identify resilience behaviors and their determinants. A team of Food for the Hungry staff based both in the United States (U.S.) and in Kenya, along with a consultant from Global Learning Partners (GLP), trained local staff to facilitate the data-collecting process and analysis.

PLA offers many benefits for improving EWSs and their effectiveness in prompting action, including the following:

- It engages community members to analyze their situation and provide critical information from their perspective to the non-governmental organization (NGO) staff.
- It is respectful of communities, acknowledging their expertise in their context and daily lives.
- It encourages curiosity and open-mindedness on the part of the NGO staff.
- It is a relatively simple methodology that is commonly used in development work.

By testing these tools, Food for the Hungry will not only inform improved activities in northern Kenya, but will also encourage the use of PLA to design more behaviorally informed EWSs in other contexts.

THE PLAN—TEAMWORK

Each team will need at least two members* and may have as many as five:

1. Interviewer: the person(s) who asks the questions.*
2. Note-taker: the person(s) who takes the notes.*
3. Data collector: the person(s) who collects the data.
4. Observer: the person(s) who observes.
5. Interpreter: the person(s) who interprets.

These roles may change from interview to interview. However, they do not change *within* an interview. The interviewer takes the lead in facilitating the interview process, while the note-taker sits at a distance playing a more passive role. The note-taker will focus solely on taking accurate and meaningful notes that capture important information about the research questions.

For a description of these roles, see these sections in the Tips for Success chapter:

1. Characteristics of Our Team
2. My Main Roles and Responsibilities
3. How to be a Successful Interviewer
4. How to be a Successful Note-taker
5. How to do Meaningful Data Collecting
6. How to be a Keen Observer

THE PLAN

Two Types of Interviews

1. Group Interviews

These groups could have between <u>three and six interviewees</u>, all from the same priority group. The intention is to get the individuals to talk with each other, debate, and share stories—dialogue will uncover truths. The role of the interviewer is to sit back as much as possible and get the group to interact with each other's stories and reflections.

2. Individual Interviews

This is an interview with <u>one person</u> from the priority group. These individuals will ideally be an equal number of men and women. The role of the interviewer is to encourage them to share their experiences, challenges, successes, reflections, and ideas.

Eight Tools

To collect meaningful accounts, stories of change and struggle, connected to early warning systems, this guidebook includes the following PLA tools:

My Journey of Life. This is a drawing of a specific period of time, usually one's entire life. However, for this work, ask the interviewee to draw a time when there were many disasters. The quality of the drawing is not important. The focus is the explanation of the markings on the page—probing questions will be key. Drawing activities can facilitate access to memories and emotions in ways that even surprise the interviewee.

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words. This tool is a fun one and uses photos to get at wisdom and experience. It is best to have many images from which to select, and once the interviewee selects an image to communicate a feeling or situation, the questions start. The images should be clear, simple, and communicate across cultures. See Appendix for an example.

Real Stories. Stories are powerful and can hold many truths. When stories are real, relevant, and personal, they can open a well of emotions and memories. The stories are fictional but based on real situations. It is important to adapt these stories for each context and test them with local community members, or they will not be relatable for the participants.

Life as I See it. This is another visual tool to help access information stored in a different part of the brain. The ability to draw is not important here. But rather, the description of the drawing and questions about the details. The drawing is a tool to open the mind, memory, and heart. Probing questions will be essential.

Found Objects. This tool helps to uncover their experience in three distinct times: before, during, and after a disaster. The tool helps to focus the discussion and allows for easy comparing and contrasting in time.

Trust Circles. This tool helps to uncover who is trusted in the community and how they build trust.

The Words of Others. This tool is a "simple" one with few materials. Here we take the time to see what a new group of people or an individual thinks about what someone else said. This will not take long and is often at the end or beginning of a session. It can be useful for validating findings or discovering differences in opinions between one locality and another.

Community Resources Mapping. A community resources map is a drawing that shows important places in a community, such as churches or mosques, wells, markets, health services, schools, and places where pastoralists can meet and socialize. The tool also lets people show where they go for information or services related to drought (rainfall, water sources, pasture, etc.). This tool is a combination of a community map and a resources map.

A Few Words about Participatory Learning and Action Tools

PLA is an approach for learning about and engaging with communities. It has been used for a long time and combines an ever-growing number of techniques and methods with skillful facilitation to collect rich data to help planning, decision-**making, and programming.**

While a powerful consultation tool, it offers the opportunity to go beyond mere consultation and promote the active participation of communities in the issues and interventions that shape their lives. The approach has been used, traditionally, with rural communities in the developing world. PLA is extremely effective in tapping into the unique perspectives of the rural poor, helping to unlock their ideas, not only on the nature and causes of the issues that affect them, but also on realistic solutions. It enables local people to share their perceptions and identify, prioritize, and appraise issues from their knowledge of local conditions. More traditional, extractive research tends to "consult" communities and then take away the findings for analysis, with no assurance that researchers will act on the findings. In contrast, PLA tools combine the sharing of insights with analysis and, as such, provide a catalyst for the community themselves to act on what is uncovered. PLA approaches are increasingly used in a range of community-based poverty and regeneration projects—whenever the active participation of the community is prioritized. By utilizing visual methods and analytical tools, PLA enables all community members to participate, regardless of their age, ethnicity, or literacy capabilities.

PREPARATION

Regardless of which PLA tool facilitators use first, there are several things to do to prepare themselves, the space, and the interviewee(s).

READY YOURSELVES

1. Consider the people coming and try to put yourself in their shoes. What may help them feel comfortable and welcomed?
2. Arrive early. You do not want to be in a rush.
3. Work with your team to check in and plan (using Starting and Ending Well in Tips for Success)

READY THE SPACE

1. Visit the space in advance of the session(s) when possible. Every space has challenges and opportunities.
2. Determine how you will ensure *privacy* in advance.
3. Determine the most comfortable and appropriate place for everyone to sit.
4. Set up resources important for you, your team, and the interviewees.
5. Make the space "warm and welcoming" by bringing in things (like a plate of snacks) or taking things out (like extra furniture).

READY THE INTERVIEWEE

1. Greet people as they arrive in a way appropriate to their culture and region.
2. Tell interviewees where the bathroom is, along with the exit, water, materials, and other items of importance, if applicable.
3. Assure interviewees that they are in a private space and nobody can hear them.
4. Introduce them to the people in the room or outdoor space and explain what their roles are.
5. Ask each interviewee to sign a consent form for what they share, produce, and allow (i.e. photos).
6. Explain what the initiative is about, why you are doing it, and why they are of *great value* to your work and goals.
7. In general, take time to ensure they know why they are there and that you are keenly listening to all they have to offer. Creating a safe and comfortable setting can take time.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Each PLA initiative requires context-specific research questions. While these are *not* the questions to ask interviewees directly, they guide the discussions and the analysis of the data afterward. Below is a sample of the research questions that Food for the Hungry developed for this pilot process. (For the complete list of Food for the Hungry's questions, please see the research report.)

Introduction: Behavioral science literature suggests that identifying and promoting positive early action behaviors can improve the overall effectiveness of early warning systems. How do we identify those risk-reducing and resilience-building behaviors before warnings are issued?

General-Feasibility/Process Question:

1. Can PLA methodologies identify potential behaviors to promote in an early warning system?
2. How can existing PLA tools be adapted to this purpose?

Primary Research Questions:

1. What behaviors have pastoralist men and women tested to cope with drought and what were the results?
2. What were the barriers and motivators people encountered in doing coping behaviors?

Specific Research Questions: (disaggregated by gender)

Pre-Drought (information and preparation):

1. If pastoralists do receive early warnings, what preparations do they take to minimize the effects of the coming drought, if any?
2. What have been the results of the preparations they have made?
3. What preparations do pastoralists have favorable attitudes towards? Why? (perceived motivators)
4. What preparations do pastoralists have negative attitudes towards? Why? (perceived barriers)
5. Who approves of each drought-preparatory behavior? Who disapproves?

Drought (information and coping):

6. In the midst of a drought, what are pastoralists' highest priorities?
   - What actions do they take to achieve those priorities?
   - What sacrifices are they making to do so?
7. What have been the results of these actions?

8. What actions would pastoralists like to take but cannot?

   - What prevents them?

9. Where do pastoralists look for help during a drought?

Post-Drought (recovery):

10. What actions do pastoralists take to recover from a drought?

11. What have been the results of these actions?

12. What recovery actions would pastoralists like to take but cannot?

    - What prevents them?

13. Where (and to whom) do pastoralists go for help to recover from a drought?

14. Who approves of each drought recovery action? Who disapproves?

PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION TOOLS, PROCESSES, AND DESCRIPTIONS

TOOL #1: MY JOURNEY OF LIFE

THE TOOL

This is a drawing of a specific period of time, usually one's entire life. However, for the purposes of this work, ask the interviewee to draw the time when there were many disasters. The quality of the drawing is not important. The focus is the explanation of the lines and dots on the page—probing questions will be key. This drawing will open the mind and heart in ways that even surprise the interviewee.

THE PREPARATION

In advance:

- You will need to know what disasters occurred in the history of the place you are, their relative size, and some sense of the impact on place, people, and systems.

Materials needed:

- Large white paper.
- Colored thin markers, packet.

THE PROCESS

Individual Discussion Guide

Step 1: Welcome interviewee(s) and make sure each interviewee is comfortable. Explain why you are doing the interview, what the process will be and how long it will take.

Step 2: Explain the Journey of Life drawing they will do and give 20–30 minutes to draw. There should be no rush.

Life takes each person on a long and complex journey. To help me understand your journey with all the twists and turns and the things that have happened along the way, I am going to ask you to draw a part of your life from when [time] to [time]. We are especially interested in how you experienced specific disasters.

Here are some ideas for your drawing:

- ***The path*** *can be the passing time or journey in your life.*

- ***Rocks*** *can mean difficult times or problems along the way.*

- ***Winds, dust storms, gentle rain, or bright colors*** *can show how you were feeling—color can help this.*

- ***A big rock in the path*** *can show where you got stuck or stopped for a while.*

- ***The people*** *on or beside the path can show important people or events in your life.*

- ***The dry sandy places or green pastures*** *can show when you had to work hard or when things were easy.*

- ***The things on or beside the path*** *and around you can tell me something about what you were going through at the time.*

- ***A well or a spring of fresh water*** *can show where you learned something or felt refreshed in life.*

- ***Forks in the path*** *can show where your life took a new direction.*

- *… You decide what is important to show in this drawing.*

A few things to include in your journey of life drawing are:

- *Start with the time before the first event, the event itself, and everything after it.*

- *Include important people or decisions along the way.*

After you are finished, we will talk about your drawing and its meaning.

Step 3: Ask for the story of the interviewee's drawing and ask clarifying questions as they arise. As you do so, it will be important to share empathy along the way—they are sharing personal stories of their lives, and it may be the first time they share these with a stranger.

Okay, please tell me about your picture. (If working with a group, some may finish earlier than others may. It is helpful to wait until everyone is finished so the conversation can start together.)

Step 4: Probe for more detail using the questions outlined below.

Spend time unpacking, probing, and understanding the following parts of your life (using the drawing as much as possible):

- ***Living through difficult times and times of drought***

  o *Tell me more about the most recent drought.*

  o *Who were the people in your life at that time?*

  o *What effect did the drought have on the people in your life?*

- o *What are some of the things that helped your family or clan get through hard times / drought?*

- BEFORE...
  - o *What did you, your family, or clan do to **prepare for drought** that you feel would be helpful to others to do also?*
  - o *What did you see (or hear about) other people, families, or clans doing differently to **prepare for drought?** (What did they do? How well did it work for them?)*
  - o *What do you wish you had done to **prepare for drought?***

- DURING...
  - o *What did you, your family, or clan do **during the drought** that you feel would be helpful to others to do also?*
  - o *What did you see (or hear about) other people, families, or clans doing differently **during the drought?** (What did they do? How well did it work for them?)*
  - o *What do you wish you had done during **the drought?***

- AFTER...
  - o *What did you, your family, or clan do to **recover from the drought** that you feel would be helpful to others to do also?*
  - o *Is there anything you saw (or heard about) other people, families, or clans doing differently **to recover from the drought?** (What did they do? How well did it work for them?)*
  - o *What do you wish you had done to **recover from the drought?***
  - o *What advice would you give other people in a similar situation (living a pastoralist life, coping with recurring droughts)? Why do you say that?*
  - o *Tell me more about your future plans and how you hope to achieve your goals for preparing for future disaster or drought?*

Step 5: Thank the interviewee for sharing personal stories. Acknowledge how generous it is to share in this way. Let the interviewee know it helps us learn and gain understanding that will help other communities.

Step 6 (if needed): The note-taker should ask the interviewee any necessary questions or clarifications for the purposes of the note's accuracy and recording quotations.

Group Discussion Guide

Step 1: Invite interviewees to put their drawings up for others to see. Allow group members to look at all the drawings. Then, ask people to return to their own drawing and explain it to the group, briefly, in turns.

Step 2: Lead discussion questions with the group, such as:

- *How are your experiences similar?*
- *How are they different?*
- *What surprises you in seeing these drawings together?*
- *Please say more about that…*
- *What are the most important things you would want Food for the Hungry staff to understand about your lives and about drought?*

Step 3: Thank interviewees for their openness and generosity with their time to help us learn from their experiences and their stories. We hope this learning will help strengthen our work, build our understanding, and help us to build strong relationships with each other.

AN EXAMPLE...

Note: In some contexts this tool can be adapted and called "The River of Life" as in this example.

TOOL #2: A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS

THE TOOL

This tool is a fun one and uses photos to get at wisdom and experience. You need many images to select from and once an interviewee selects an image to communicate a feeling or situation, the questions start. The images should be clear, simple, and communicate across cultures. See Appendix for a sample.

THE PREPARATION

In advance:

- You need to collect a set of photos (for a single person, eight to 10; you will need more for a group).

Materials needed:

- Set of images (see images in Appendix).

THE PROCESS

Photo: Food for the Hungry

For this activity, I am going to show you a collection of pictures. They each seem quite simple, but they can also hold a lot of meaning, as pictures always do. When you look at the pictures, think about what they mean to you.

Some of them may also hold special meaning to you—like a symbol. By that I mean, what you see in the picture represents something totally different for you but is a powerful way to explain it. For example, if I see a picture of a cage it may be a perfect picture to describe how I feel right now: trapped, unable to get out, and without hope. Of course, I am not really in the cage, but I may feel like it.

This may feel a little strange to do, but I ask you to trust me.

Okay, select one (1) image that describes how you feel your community is doing <u>now</u> (in this year) when it prepares for disaster.

Individual Discussion Guide

- Why did you select this image?

- Which image would you like to choose/would you prefer to choose but can't?
Tell me about it.

- Which picture would you have picked up last year? 5 years ago? 10 years ago?
What has changed? Why?

- Who are involved now that were not involved in the past?

- What is more possible now that was not in the past?

- What has been lost over time that has had a negative impact? Why was this lost?

- Whose voice is listened to more now? Less?

- … Consider your research questions.

Group Discussion Guide

- Why did you choose the image you did? (ask one person)

- Who else can relate to that…?

  - What image did you choose?

- Who here cannot relate to this…?

  - Tell me about your image.

- Who here has an image that is similar? Tell me…

  - What does your image say to you?

- What would have to change in your life to pick up a different picture? Which picture would it be?

  - Tell me about the image you chose?

- Which image would you like to choose/would you prefer to choose but can't? Tell me about it.

- Ask the group:

  - What people are involved now that were not in the past?

  - What is more possible now that was not in the past?

  - What has been lost over time that has had a negative impact? Why was this lost?

  - Whose voice is listened to more now? Less?

Photo: Food for the Hungry

Photo: Food for the Hungry

Photo: Food for the Hungry

TOOL #3: REAL STORIES

THE TOOL

Stories are powerful and can hold many truths. When stories are real, relevant, and personal, they can open a well of emotions and memories. The stories below are fictional but based on real situations. If these are not relatable for your participants, you will need to write your own. The wrong story will not offer you much.

THE PREPARATION

Materials needed:

- Real stories from this PLA workbook or others that are more applicable.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Welcome interviewees and make sure they are comfortable. Explain why you are doing the interview, what the process will be, and how long it will take.

Step 2: Below are four stories and questions to go with them. The questions are there to guide you—feel free to adapt and adjust them as is helpful and meaningful for the conversation.

Step 3: Share the tool as follows:

I am going to tell you four short stories, and we will discuss each one. As you listen to these stories, think about your own story: What is the same or different and why do you think this might be?

NOTE: If you are conducting a one-on-one interview, follow the questions below and sprinkle in questions such as:

- Whom do you know that may think differently from you? What may they say?
- How has your thinking changed over time? What influenced this?
- How is your thinking unique to other people you know? Why may this be?

If you are conducting a group interview, sprinkle in questions like this to build one answer off another to drill down.

- [After one opinion is shared...] Who feels/thinks differently?
- Raise your hand if you share this thinking. [Then ask someone whose hand is not up to share a different point of view.]
- Who has something to add to what was just shared?
- Who has another example?

STORY #1: *Galgallo is a young adult man with a small herd of animals.*

The last four dry seasons have been especially hard on Galgallo and his family. Galgallo's father told stories of droughts only happening occasionally, but now Galgallo is losing several animals to the drought every year. The last drought was especially severe and reduced Galgallo's herd to only five cattle. He is forced to trek the herd farther and farther from home in search of available pasture and water. The task of finding pasture is increasingly difficult as rainfall patterns are increasingly unpredictable and competition over dwindling pasture increases with every dry season. The traditional warning signs that Galgallo's elders have used for decades are no longer effective in predicting when the dry season will start and end. Other clans are less interested in cooperating with one another to coordinate grazing patterns. Deciding when and where to trek his herd seems impossible.

Galgallo's friend has a cell phone and he heard there is pasture and water about a seven-day trek away. Galgallo's brother heard on the radio that the drought was expected to worsen for several more weeks. So, Galgallo decides to sell one of his cattle, leave one cow at home for his family, and trek the remaining three to the pasture and water his friend told him about.

Group and Individual Discussion Guide

Behaviors

- What do you think of Galgallo's decision?
- What do you think happened next?
- What else might happen?

People

- Who might criticize Galgallo or disapprove?
- Who might encourage him or approve of what he did?

Resources and Systems

- What else would have helped Galgallo? Who else could have helped him?
- Where could he get more information about pasture and water? (Where could he get a good price for the cow he wanted to sell?)
- What advice would you have given him?

So, how realistic was this story? How similar is Galgallo's story to your own, or to someone you know?

- What have you (or someone you know) done in the past in a similar situation? What happened?
- What would you have advised Galgallo to do?
- Whom would you advise Galgallo to speak to before making a decision like that? (How could that person have helped him?)

STORY #2: *Kabale is an adult female at her home*

The long rains have failed. Kabale's husband has been gone from camp with the herd for several months now. The weather shows no signs of improving and she has already lost several of her goats to dehydration, starvation, and disease. The cow her husband left behind has not produced milk for over a month, her nose is dry and her eyes appear sunken and dull. The cow lies around all day, refusing to stand. Kabale has heard from others passing by that the Kenyan government does not expect the short rains to arrive on time.

Kabale, after some prayer, decides to sell the cow and use the money to provide food and water for her children and water for the goats.

Group and Individual Discussion Guide

Behaviors

- What do you think of Kabale's decision?
- What do you think happened next?
- What else might happen?

People

- Who might criticize Kabale or disapprove?
- Who might encourage her or approve of what she did?
- What do you think her husband will think about her decision?

Resources and Systems

- What else would have helped Kabale?
- Who could have helped her?
- What advice would you have given her?

So, how realistic was this story? How similar is Kabale's story to your own or to someone you know?

- What have you (or someone you know) done in the past in a similar situation? What happened?
- What would you have advised Kabale to do?
- Whom would you advise Kabale to speak to before making a decision like that? (Why this person? How could that person have helped her?)

STORY #3: *Amina is a female youth at home*

Amina is 12 years old. The last few dry seasons have been particularly hard on her father's herd. Every year, it seems her father and brothers return home with fewer and fewer cattle. The family has been eating fewer and fewer meals during these dry seasons, and Amina hasn't been to school in over a year. Lately, she has overheard more conversations between her mother and her father about marrying her off to nearby clansmen. She knows that her family needs the animals and the income in order to survive, but the stories she is hearing from her former classmates about the way their husbands treat them, and the difficulties of having children so early are scary. She decides to plead with her father and mother to send her away to live with relatives in the city where she can work to help provide for the family's needs instead of marrying her off. She even enlists the help of her uncles to convince her father.

Group and Individual Discussion Guide

Behaviors

- What do you think of Amina's decision?

- What do you think happened next?

- What else might happen?

People

- Who might criticize Amina or disapprove of her actions?

- Who might encourage her or approve of what she did?

- What do you think her brothers and sisters will think about what she is doing?

Resources and Systems

- What else would have helped Amina?

- Who could have helped her?

- What advice would you have given her?

So, how realistic was this story? How similar is Amina's story to your own, or to someone you know?

- What have you (or someone you know) done in the past in a similar situation? What happened?

- What would you have advised Amina to do?

STORY #4: *Abudo is an adult male elder*

Abudo is the *hayu* of his Gabbra clan, enjoying the utmost respect as lead elder and judge in serious disputes. Lately, as the droughts continue to worsen year after year, raids on his clan's herd have become commonplace. The main culprit, he is told, are raiders from the Dassenetch tribe, the Gabbra's worst enemy to the north. These periodic raids have so diminished herds that his people are finding it more and more difficult to survive.

Amidst mounting pressure from his people to find a solution to these violent and sometimes deadly raids, Abudo seeks out a truce with the Dassenetch. He agrees, in exchange for a halt to any future cattle raids from the Dassenetch, that they be given access to several of the Gabbra's best producing wells in the border country between the two tribes' ancestral lands. He did this without consulting the Abba Ella or *Father of the Well* for each of these wells. Abudo hopes that putting a stop to the raids will outweigh the political outcries from each Abba Ella who will now have to share their watering holes with Dassenetch herds

Group and Individual Discussion Guide

Behaviors

- What do you think of Abudo's decision?
- What do you think happened next?
- What else might happen?

People

- Who might criticize Abudo or disapprove of his decision?
- Who might approve of his decision?
- What do you think the Abba Ella will say or do about this decision?

Resources and Systems

- What else would have helped Abudo?
- Who could have helped him with this decision?

So, how realistic was this story? How similar is Abudo's story to your own or to someone you know?

- What have your elders done in similar situations? Or, what do you think they might do in a similar situation? What advice would your elders have given Abudo?

Photo: Food for the Hungry

TOOL #4: LIFE AS I SEE IT

THE TOOL

This is another visual tool to help access information stored in a different part of the brain. The ability to draw is not important. But rather, the description of the drawing and questions about the details. The drawing is a tool to open up the mind, memory, and heart. Probing questions will be essential.

THE PREPARATION

In advance:

- You will need to know what disasters occurred in the history of the place you are, their relative size, and some sense of the impact on place, people, and systems.

Materials needed:

- Large white paper to draw on, 4 sheets per person.
- Colored thin markers, packet.
- Pencils, 3.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: *Welcome interviewee and make sure they are comfortable. Explain why you are doing the interview, what the process will be, and how long it will take.*

Step 2: *We are going to start our time with you drawing <u>three pictures</u>: one of how you remember the situation before the last disaster, one during the disaster and one two to six months after.*

- *Draw how you feel in each picture and what is around you to make you feel this way.*
- *Draw important people, items, or events that are meaningful for each time and picture.*
- *Use images, words, or other things to show what life was like in all three pictures/times.*
- *Let your drawings tell me how you see your situation before, during, and after the disaster.*

Don't worry about how beautiful your drawings are or aren't, or whether your people look real or not. Just draw what is important in any way you wish.

After you are finished, we will talk about each drawing and their relationship.

Drawing #1	Drawing #2	Drawing #3

Wonderful. Now please tell me about your three drawings…

Individual Interview Guide

Behaviors

- So, tell me more about…
- What do you think about what you did before, during, and after the disaster?
- What would you do differently if you went through this again?
- What else did you do for the first time that worked well that you would do again?

People

- So, tell me more about…
- Who liked what you or others did?
- Who didn't like your decisions or was initially critical?
- What have others done that you want to try next time?

Resources and Systems

- So, tell me more about…
- What did you or others around you use that was helpful?
- What other resources would have been helpful?
- What do you know you need, but are not sure how to get?

Behavior

- ...Similar questions to those used with an individual.

- What did you do differently from others here in the group? Why was this?

- What do you see that most people did in the group that helped the success? Why might this be?

- What do you see that most people didn't do in this group, but you are wondering about? Why might this be?

People

- ...Similar questions to those used with an individual.

- Whom did you involve that others did not? Why might this be?

- Who seems to be mentioned in most of the drawings?

- Who seems strangely missing from our drawings? Why might this be?

Resources

- ...Similar questions to those used with an individual.

- What resources did you involve that others did not? Why might this be?

- What resources seem to be mentioned in most of the drawings from our group?

- What resources seem strangely missing from our drawings today? Why might this be?

TOOL #5: FOUND OBJECTS

THE TOOL

This tool helps to uncover their experience in three distinct times: before, during, and after a disaster. The tool helps to focus the discussion and allow for easy comparing and contrasting in time.

This tool is very similar to *Life as I See It* and you should not use them together.

THE PREPARATION

Preparation/Materials:

- You will need to collect items for interviewees to select from (putting five to 10 things in a basket may be helpful).

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Welcome everyone warmly.

Step 2: Explain what you will be doing in this activity and why you are doing it. Stress that this is not a test, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

Step 3: Invite the person(s) to select one object that somehow represents the time BEFORE the disaster.

Step 4: After a number of questions, invite them to select one object that represents the time DURING the disaster.

Step 5: After a number of questions, invite them to select one object that represents the time AFTER the disaster.

NOTE: You may wish to invite them to select all three objects at once, but that may be challenging for some people.

Object #1	Object #2	Object #3

Interview Guide

Object #1

- Tell me what this object means to you. How does it represent the time BEFORE the disaster?

- Why did you select an object that is [character]?

- What people were involved at this time?

- What were you doing at this time to prepare for the disaster coming?

- How was it different (or the same) from the disaster before?

- What resources did you have this time that you didn't last time? Why?

- … And continue the probing.

Photo: Food for the Hungry

Object #2

- Tell me what this object means to you. How does it represent the time DURING the disaster?

- Why did you select an object that is [character]?

- What do you wish you had done to prepare, but didn't? Why was this?

- What were you happy you had done (or didn't do)?

- What surprised you about this disaster that was different from others?

- … And continue the probing.

Object #3

- Tell me what this object means to you. How does it represent the time AFTER the disaster?

- Why did you select an object that is [character]?

- What lessons did you learn this time around? With whom did you share this?

- … And continue the probing.

Group Interview Guide

The key in group-interviews is to have people talking among themselves and to each other. This means you need to sit back and slowly hand over the space. It can be helpful to ask questions such as these:

- Whose object or experience is quite different from the one we just heard?

- Whose object or experience is similar but with a difference?

- Whose object echoes what was just shared?

- Whose object can add to what we just shared?

- Who can think of another person important in this experience?

- Who can think of another resource important in this? What was missing?

- Who can name a big challenge in all this?

- Who can name a feeling they had but may not have said about this experience?

- … And so on.

TOOL #6: TRUST CIRCLES

THE TOOL

This tool helps to uncover who is trusted in their community and how they build trust.

This is a great tool to follow the *Journey of Life, Community Mapping or Life as I Know it*.

THE PREPARATION

Materials needed:

- Different sized circles on paper, in the sand, or made with string.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Welcome.

Step 2: Explain how the Trust Circles activity will work and begin.

We have just discussed your drawings from the Journey of Life *or* Community Mapping *or* Life as I Know it*. NOTE: If you have not used these PLA tools before this, you can still use this one.*

Now, let's think about some of the people or organizations that were important in your journeys.

*Part A: We are going to use these circles to represent the important people or organizations we have just listed. **A bigger circle** shows more trustworthiness: more trust and respect for the person or organization. **A smaller circle** shows smaller amounts of trust, less trustworthiness.*

As a group, please discuss and agree among yourselves how big of a circle to use for each person or organization, and draw a different image to represent them on the circle. Let's also write the name on the back to help us remember.

Part B: Now, we'll draw concentric circles about 30 cm apart. In the very middle, let's put a stone that means: we are here.
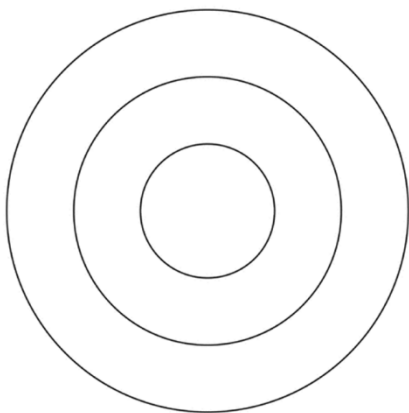
If something is close to us, no more than a one-day walk away, we'll place that circle in the inner ring. If it is farther away (1 to 5 days walk), it goes in the second ring. Finally, if it is very far away, more than a 5-day walk, we place it in the outer ring.

Now, go ahead and place your circles by location (near, farther, and very far away). Please discuss among yourselves until you agree on the location.

Do the circles seem to be the right size to you? Do we need to make any of them smaller or larger? If so, let's take a new circle and make the change.

Let's discuss the circles.

- *This person (or organization) has a large circle and is far away. How did someone so far away earn so much trust?*
- *What is the impact of having a trusted person or organization who is very far away?*
- *This small circle is very nearby. Why does this person or organization not have much trust?*

Part C: Now, we are going to vote with small stones (or beans or seeds). Each of you will have ten. Thinking about the last drought, put the stones on the circles that represent people or organizations that were most helpful to you in coping or recovering from the drought. You can place all of your stones on one circle or divide them across several circles as you wish.
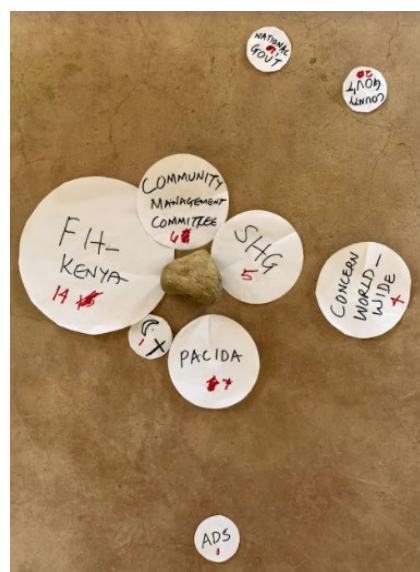
Photo: Food for the Hungry

Photo: Food for the Hungry

Once every member has placed their stones, count them and write the number on the circle.

Now that everyone has placed their stones let's talk about who is trusted and who is not, and why.

For circles with the most votes:

- *Why were these people or organizations relied on so much? What did they provide? When did they provide it? Why did you go to them?*

- *For any large circles with just a few votes: What did they provide? When did they provide it? Why did you go to them?*

- *For any small circles with many votes: What did they provide? When did they provide it? Why did you go to them?*

- *For far away circles, of any size, with many votes: What did they provide? Why did you choose to travel that far for it?*

Step 3*:* Take note of disagreements or agreement about trustworthiness among group members and ask probing questions about that.

Step 4: Ask probing questions throughout as needed, and especially after placement of the circles and after voting.

Step 5: Take photos of the finished diagram from as many angles as possible and save the circles for the note-taker.

Step 6: Thank the group for sharing their experiences, thoughts, and insights. Tell them you appreciate their openness and willingness to help us learn about these important things.

Step 7 (if needed): The note-taker should ask the group any necessary questions of clarification for the purposes of accuracy of notes and recording of quotations.

Photo: Food for the Hungry

TOOL #7: THE WORDS OF OTHERS

THE TOOL

This tool is a "simple" one with few materials. Here we are taking some time to see what a new group of people or an individual thinks about what someone else said. This will not take long and is often at the end or beginning of a session.

This is a great tool to follow the *Trust Circles* or *Journey of Life*. It works well for a closing task.

THE PREPARATION

Preparation:

- Collect quotes from other groups and interviews or other times in the field.
- Idea: During the debrief activities the day before take note of three quotes from community members that stood out to you and seem that they would spark discussion. The purpose of this activity is to test perceptions.

Photo: Food for the Hungry

Materials needed:

- List of quotes you have collected.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Welcome everyone warmly.

Individual or Group

For the last thing we are going to do together, I will share with you some things we heard in the communities we visited yesterday. Their situations are different from yours in some ways and similar to other ways. We would like to hear your thoughts on these words from other people.

Here are three sentences we heard yesterday. We invite you to tell us about the one that you relate to most and why. (Optionally, especially if the group doesn't relate to the quotes easily, tell us about the one that you disagree with most and why.)

Read the three quotes and open the discussion to anyone who would like to speak. Encourage all participants to share their thoughts. Use appropriate probing techniques and reread the quotes as needed.

The Steps

Step 1: Explain that <u>Quotes from Other Communities</u> will be our last activity, what the process will be, and how long it will take.

Step 2: Explain how the <u>Quotes from Other Communities</u> activity will work and begin.

Step 3: Ask probing questions throughout, remembering the people and factors of influence we seek.

Step 4: Thank the group for all their personal sharing, thoughts, and insights. Acknowledge how much courage it takes to share in this way, especially in a group.

Step 5 (if needed): The note-taker should ask the group any necessary clarifying questions for the notes' accuracy and recording quotations.

Interview Guide

- What do you think about these thoughts? Do you agree?
- What do you agree with?
- How is your experience different? Why might this be?
- What would have to happen for your experience to be the same? Different?
- How common do you think these ideas are? Why might this be?
- Who is in your life or community that may be a reason for your different experience?
- Who are you able to get (or not get) that makes your experience different?

Photo: Food for the Hungry

TOOL #8: COMMUNITY RESOURCES MAPPING

THE TOOL

A community resources map is a drawing that shows important places in a community, such as churches or mosques, wells, markets, health services, schools, and places where pastoralists can meet and socialize. The tool also lets people show where they go for information or services related to drought (rainfall, water sources, pasture, etc). This tool is a combination of a community map and a resources map.

THE PREPARATION

Preparation:

- You will need to collect items.

Materials needed:

- Items to do the mapping.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Welcome group members and make sure they are comfortable. Explain why you are doing the interview, what the process will be, and how long it will take. Ask for verbal consent.

Step 2: Explain Community Resource Mapping activity they will do and give 20–30 minutes to draw.

A community resources map is a drawing that shows important places in a community, such as churches or mosques, wells, markets, health services, schools, and places where pastoralists can meet and socialize. The tool also lets people show where they go for information or services related to drought (rainfall, water sources, pasture, etc.). This tool is a combination of a community map and a resources map.

In your small group, we would like you to draw a map of important places for you during the time of the most recent drought:

Here are some ideas:

- *Houses.*
- *Schools.*
- *Health post or clinic.*
- *Markets.*
- *Pastures or good forage for your animals.*
- *Watering holes or wells.*

- *Other communities and people who were helpful or not helpful.*

You decide what is important to show in your life and in this drawing.

A few things to think about as you make your map may be:
- *Did you go places you didn't usually go to before the drought?*
- *Where or to whom did you go for information, for example, to find out when the long rains would come?*
- *Where did you go for help or to help someone else?*
- *Where did you want to go but couldn't go?*

After you are finished, we would like you to tell us about your maps.

Step 3: Invite the group members to explain their map and ask clarification questions as they arise.

Okay, please tell me about your map.

Step 4: Probe for more detail using the question outline and where needed.

Let's spend some time reflecting on your map and understanding your map. After the group tells the story of their map, ask some clarifying and probing questions. (*Please explain… tell me more about…*)

Ask these or similar questions (as appropriate):
- *Did you go places you didn't usually go to before the drought?*
- *Where or to whom did you go for information, for example, to find out when the long rains would come?*
- *Where did you go for help or to help someone else?*
- *Where did you want to go but couldn't go?*
- *What resources do people in your community have to help cope with drought? Which do they use? Which don't they seem to use?*

Step 5: Thank the group for all their personal sharing and acknowledge how generous it is to share in this way to help us learn and gain understanding of your way of life.

Step 6 (if needed): The note-taker should ask the group any necessary clarifying questions for the notes' accuracy and recording quotations.

STARTING AND ENDING WELL

BEFORE THE INTERVIEWS START

Starting well is key. You want to start and end as a team. Of course, you will each have distinct roles, but clarifying and checking in about each role each day will ensure you get what you need from the process and PLA tools.

Step 1: Arrive at least an hour early so you have lots of time to set up, check that you have everything you need, and meet with your team for final preparations.

Step 2: Sit with all members of your team and do the following:

- Share insights, wonderings, and questions since you last met.
- Share team guidelines and make requests for strengthening.
- Share your response to this question: "It would really help me if …"

Step 3: Name one or two research questions to really watch and listen for today.

Step 4: Wish each other well.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS FINISH

Step 1: Wait until everyone has left.

Step 2: Take the time you need to review your notes, the data, and your files to ensure you finished everything and everyone can read it clearly.

Step 3: Sit with all members of your team and do the following:

- Share insights, wonderings, and clarifying questions
- Share your response to this question: "It was really helpful for me when you…"

Step 4: Confirm the time and place for your next day and when the team will arrive.

DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

QUANTITATIVE DATA VS. QUALITATIVE DATA

Quantitative data is information about *quantities*—numbers and measurements.

Qualitative data is descriptive about *qualities* and descriptions—things that can be seen, heard, or felt but not measured, such as tone of voice, body language, or stories.

Qualitative research can provide us with information to help us understand the feelings, values, and perceptions that underlie and influence behavior.

Data collecting is very different for qualitative work–such as using PLA tools.

Data analysis is quite different as well–it is *much messier and takes time to consider!*

Here is an example of both types of research:

- Quantitative…
  Underline What percentage of pastoralists in this cluster destock when they are informed that a serious drought is coming?

- Qualitative…
  Why do some households with the same resources as others, get through droughts more successfully than others? What are they doing differently from their neighbors?

Gathering both qualitative and quantitative data can ensure that understanding is improved by integrating *different ways of knowing*. It helps us dig in deeper into what lies beneath the surface. Collecting both usually enriches research findings and recommendations.

HOW DO WE DISPLAY THE DATA?

You need to post the data display on the walls…

- To share common messages from the data.
- To put up all the common generalizations and observations.
- To synthesize the data (visual, and otherwise) and see connections.
- To be able to work with it, cluster, add, take away, and synthesize into findings and then recommendations.
- To make it easy to see all the data at once.

The Steps to Take

Step 1: Post ideas from data reduction process.

- Individually or in small groups.

Step 2: Walk and talk.

- With a partner, walk around the room and discuss what you see there and what is missing.

Step 3: Reflect and add.

- On your own, reflect on your walk-and-talk and add to the walls.

Step 4: Read and wonder.

- In small groups, read part of the notes that you are wondering about or need to share. Add to what is on the walls.

Step 5: Question and share.

- On your own, offer your questions and reflections to what you see on the walls to carry into your work tomorrow.
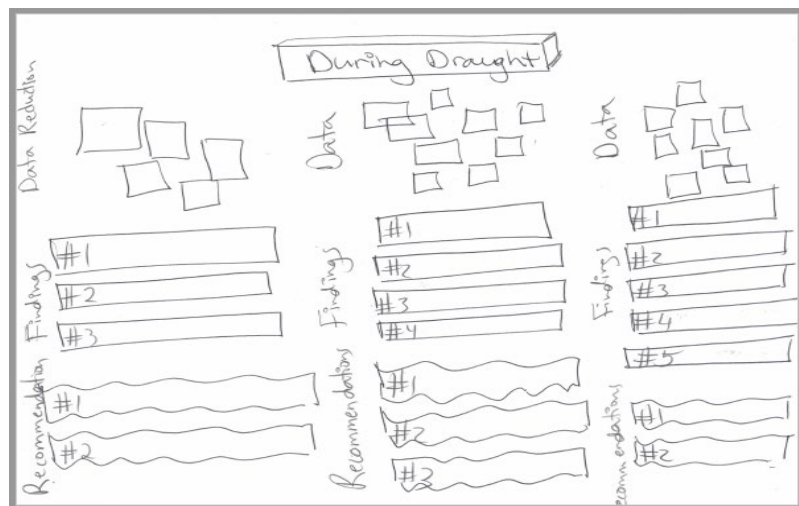
Photo: Food for the Hungry

WHAT IS DATA REDUCTION?

Things to consider:

- Research questions are set out to help us know what to ask about and look for. However, we need to be open to new meaning, ideas, and questions.
- We need to examine everything we collected that may have meaning: notes, photos, drawings, sketches, objects, recordings, body language, etc. Everything.
- Our task is to uncover and unpack what people do, why, and with what outcomes.
- We want to uncover and unpack the data by looking at multiple interviews with a variety of people so that we can compare and summarize common and helpful wisdom.
- We are looking for patterns, rules, or a commonly understood language for doing what they do.

- Our task is to use multiple data sources, <u>summarize them into findings,</u> and then use those findings to <u>determine recommendations.</u>
- We need to decide what to leave, what to highlight, and what main ideas are important.

Steps to Take

Step 1: Code your field notes.

- Research questions (RQ#).
- New idea (NI).

Step 2: Sort and sift through material.

- Similar phrases, patterns, themes, differences between groups (men/women), common sequence of events, etc.

Step 3: Note frequency & intensity.

- Take note of how often an issue is raised and the intensity in how it is shared.

Step 4: Reduce your data.

- Create a small set of generalizations from all you have read—writing new notes to share out.
- Post these on walls (or other surfaces), so you can group them later; you will need space.
- Post them under headings.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR TEAM

As a team, we want to remember these things:

1. We are story collectors.
2. We are the voice for others.
3. We care enough to hear the good, the bad, and the ugly.
4. We are a team and need each other.
5. We will find what we are looking for.
6. We are genuinely curious to listen and learn.
7. We will stay focused on our goals.
8. We will stay open to whatever we hear from each other and the interviewees.
9. We do not have a hidden agenda.
10. We need to leave our assumptions and preconceived ideas at the door.
11. We are not politically motivated.
12. We are fully present and fully focused.
13. We are prepared.
14. We are not in a hurry; it will take as long as it needs to take.

"We are only as strong as our weakest member."

MY MAIN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is a list of main roles and responsibilities for a "basic" team:

Interviewer

- You are facilitating the entire interview process.
- Encourage the interviewees to share *deeply* their information, thoughts, and stories about the following:
    o Answers to research questions.
    o Factors that influence change.
    o Influencing groups and people.
    o Presence or access to resources.
    o Role of feelings and desires in influencing factors.
- Ask probing questions and listen deeply.
- Be fully present so you ask questions in response to what is being shared.
- Take brief notes only if it will help you with the interview.
- Personal stories add depth and texture to numbers.
- Active listening shows you care.
- Don't talk to others on your team unless you need to check something. You need to trust your team.

Note-taker

- You have a passive yet critical role in the interview process,
- Accurately record the following:
    o Answers to research questions.
    o Factors that influence change.
    o Influencing groups and people.
    o Presence or access to resources.
    o Role of feelings and desires in influencing factors.
- Record powerful quotations.
- Record observations that are important to what is being shared.
- Record body language and changes in behavior.
- Don't interrupt the interview process or interviewer. You are not part of the dialogue.
- Ask for clarification *at the end* of the interview if needed.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH ADULTS

The following is a list of the core principles that are useful while conducting interviews:

1. **Safety**. Adults will not participate in something if the environment feels threatening. We need to work on ensuring a person feels safe before and during the session.

2. **Respect**. Adults will not share personally or deeply if they don't feel respected. Respect needs to be earned and needs constant attention.

3. **Inclusion**. Adults need to feel included in the process, to see that their perspective matters, and to trust that their voice is invited and heard. An interviewer must be sensitive to how the dynamics of gender, age, physical/mental ability, education, culture, religion, ethnicity, and community position (e.g. power) influence participation in any given session.

4. **Engagement**. An individual may *participate* in a session, but this is not the same as *engagement*. You need them to open up, share deeply, and be willing to make themselves vulnerable. This takes gentle and ongoing invitation.

5. **Relevance**. Adults need to see and understand that something is of value to them or others. They will not engage deeply if they don't understand why they are being invited in.

6. **Authenticity**. If an individual feels you are not genuine or that you don't really care about what you are doing, they will unhook or not share much.

7. **Autonomy**. Adults want to feel in control of their own life and decisions. Being told what to do will often lead to push back or resistance.

8. **Transparency**. Explaining why something is being done in a certain way can help minimize resistance i.e. "I would like to ask you more about [---], to better understand [---]."

"I'm surprised I shared so much about myself with you.
But, you made me feel so safe."
(From an interviewee)

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION TOOLS

The following tips will help you use PLA tools:

PRINCIPLE 1: **Invite full participation**. Individuals have the right to play an active and influential part in shaping decisions that affect their lives. This will enrich the findings and help cultivate a sense of ownership.

PRINCIPLE 2: **Value local knowledge and experience**. Each person is an expert on what it means to live and be a member of their community. Use the resources they offer you to check assumptions and verify meaning-making.

PRINCIPLE 3: **Commit to empowerment**. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.[1] Adults want autonomy over their lives.

PRINCIPLE 4: **Invite group analysis and learning**. It is only through people and organizations working closely together that a full understanding of a situation can happen and the most appropriate action be taken.

PRINCIPLE 5: **Use a mixture of visual and verbal tools**. Through diagrams, drawings, and sharing experiences, all people can take part in complex analyses and learning. Offering a diverse collection of tools will help everyone offer their best selves in the process.

PRINCIPLE 6: **Seek the unheard voice**. There are many reasons why some individuals feel they have a voice in a given situation and others don't. Find ways to ensure you invite all voices in and hear them.

> *"I was able to share so much because of the tools that were used. I have never drawn a picture for someone before…and I was nervous. I was amazed that we could have such a long conversation about a few lines and Xs on a page. Even I was surprised at what I shared."*
> (From an interviewee)

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[1] World Bank (2003)

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWER

The following tips will help you facilitate a successful interview:

1. Be prepared.

2. Welcome your guest warmly (appropriate to customs) and introduce yourself.

3. Check how they would like you to address them.

4. Address the person by name.

5. Know what your roles and responsibilities are.

6. Come with some understanding of whom you are interviewing.

7. Clarify anything that is unclear.

8. Use positive and inviting body language.

9. Smile.

10. Honor confidentiality and privacy.

11. Have the time in clear sight.

12. Be casual yet professional.

13. Take time after each interview to review and revise your notes.

14. Check in with your note-taker immediately after each interview to see if anything needs to be clarified.

> *"What else can you tell me about the part in your story when you [---]?*
> *It sounds important to understand."*
> (Interviewer)

TYPES OF PROBING QUESTIONS

The following questions will help you encourage your interviewee(s) to share more detailed stories, answers, and events. Probe for information.

1. Help me understand…

2. Tell me more about…

3. It must have been very difficult for you to… Tell me more about how you…

4. What else can you tell me about…?

5. What else…?

6. Why do you say that?

7. Can you give me another example of…?

8. Tell me why…

9. So why do you think that…

10. I'm not sure I understand… Could you tell me more about that?

11. I'm not certain what you mean by… Could you give me some examples?

12. What stands out in your mind about that?

13. So what I hear you say is… What am I missing?

14. What makes you feel that way?

15. You just told me about… I'd also like to know about…

16. What would… say about what you just said?

17. How do *you* feel about that?

18. What exactly did you mean by…?

19. And what happened after that?

20. Why do you think that is/happened?

21. For you, what prevented… from happening?

"Be genuinely curious to learning and be surprised."

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKER

Below are some tips for taking meaningful notes:

1. Take notes on <u>what you hear</u> of interest to the research:

   - Answers to research questions.

   - Factors that influence change.

   - Influencing groups and people.

   - Presence or access to resources.

   - Role of feelings and desires in influencing factors.

2. Take notes on <u>what you observe</u> that may give more meaning to what the interviewees are sharing.

   - Looked nervous talking about…

   - Seems happy telling me about…

   - Refused to tell me about…

   - Seemed proud of…

   - Spent a lot of time…

3. Avoid unnecessary or unhelpful words or information.

4. Make sure your notes are clear.

5. Use point form.

6. Include powerful quotations, especially connected to research questions.

7. Ask for clarification at the end.

8. Write time of interview and interviewer's name and the number of the interview.

9. Review and revise all notes immediately after the interview.

10. Review and revise all notes immediately at the end of the interview day.

"I noted that the interviewee used the phrase 'I tried' 15 times in the 20-minute interview."
(Shared by note-taker with the interviewer after the participant leaves)

HOW TO DO MEANINGFUL DATA COLLECTING

It is all about the data, so we need to do all in our power to collect, store, and protect it. Below are some tips to help:

1. **Date everything**. Data may be informed by when it was collected. It also helps you ensure you know the situation and people involved.

2. **Include information about the people and places**. Meaning is made by not only what a person says but also who the person is saying it. Include as much data possible, including gender, age, role in the community, etc.

Photo: Food for the Hungry

3. **Number your participants.** For ethical reasons, you should number your participants and only refer to them by that number.

4. **Organize data**. This is key. We recommend using file folders or binders. Label anything holding information by data, location, and types of tools.

5. **Name the members of the team.** You can create a coding system for this but knowing each person who was present and the roles they had is critical.

6. **Store data carefully**. Don't leave data unattended, and always know where your data is. You are responsible for the safekeeping of the data, so have a system(s) or space(s) to secure it.

7. **Verify the data collected with the team immediately**. After the participants have left, reconnect with your team. You need to verify the data each person has, that it is properly labeled, and who is responsible for the safekeeping.
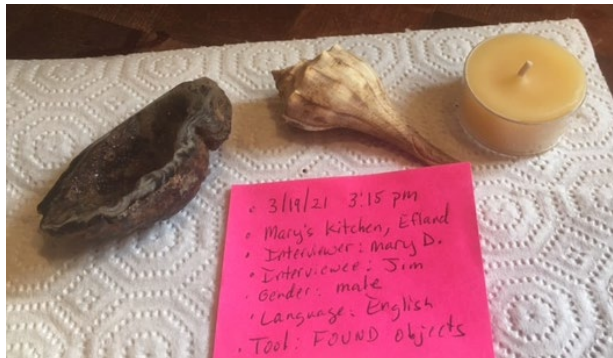
> *"I need a bag with a lock to carry my papers in when we go into the field."*
> (Interviewer preparing her supplies before going into the field)

HOW TO BE A KEEN OBSERVER

Often you will not have that luxury of having a person whose sole task it is to observe. However, if you do, it is worth having. Whether you have a person for this or whether you are all holding this responsibility, below are some tips to guide you.

1. **Start the minute you see the interviewee**. Interviewees are communicating feelings and thoughts every second, so start observing as soon as you meet.

2. **Finish after they leave**. Interviewees are communicating long after the questions are finished. Notice what they share after the session is finished.

3. **Watch body language**. As humans, we sometimes share more with our bodies than with our words. Check if they are saying the same thing and where the body can reveal truths.

4. **Observe their posture and eye contact**. Eyes can say a lot. See if there are patterns that reveal insights.

5. **Take photographs**. You don't want to do this during the session much, but you can ask permission to take a few. Photographs are also important data that may hold important information to consider.

> *"I noticed that Fati became nervous when you started talking about [situation].*
> *He then seemed to calm down when you asked him about [the situation]."*
> (Interviewer talking to the team after the interview)

TIPS FOR ENSURING SAFETY

Participants need to feel safe to share. When talking about their personal lives, family, challenges, and unique situations it is even more critical. Here are a few tips to consider:

1. **Ensure a private space.** For people to speak freely, they need to feel safe and out of earshot of others. Reserve the space in advance and protect privacy.

2. **Warmly welcome each person as they arrive**. How they are greeted can set the tone for what happens throughout the session. Ask how to do this well.

3. **Affirm all answers and stories shared.** Paraphrase and say, "thank you," even to those tougher more negative responses. Interviewees need to know that you welcome and appreciate every answer and story, regardless of how strange or different. When an interviewee knows that all answers are valid, even if they are uncommon, they will be more open to speaking their minds.

4. **Keep the session tightly focused.** Interviewers should always keep the research questions in mind and although you want to go where the interviewee wants to go, keep your goals in mind.

5. **Be patient.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are interviewing. However, people need time to think of what they want to say and how they feel. Sometimes they need to gather the courage to speak, and that's okay. "Good things come to those who wait."

6. **(Group interview) Encourage crosstalk.** People are accustomed to the "facilitator" as the focus of a session and all discussion. Interviewers need to encourage the group to answer and respond to each other's ideas and questions, while avoiding having some participants feel like their comments or opinions are being challenged or disregarded.

TIPS FOR SHARING GRATITUDE

Gratitude can be wonderfully affirming, surprisingly life giving, noticeably motivating, and importantly respectful.

Human beings need to feel affirmed. When using PLA tools, gratitude can help allow for deeper sharing, invite a feeling of pride in the contribution and allow for a feeling of co-ownership. However, many of us need to learn to give and receive it. As an interviewer, share your gratitude often and aloud.

Here are a few tips to consider:

1. **Don't hold back**. When you think of something you are grateful for, share it.

2. **Be specific**. Saying "thank you" is great, but it doesn't go far. It is especially helpful when we tell someone we are grateful, why. This way, the person knows what they can work on repeating.

3. **Be authentic**. There is nothing worse than inauthentic gratitude. Say it and mean it.

4. **Call people by name**. Using a person's name when sharing something you are grateful for makes it personal.

5. **Offer it often**. Most of us are not at risk of being "too grateful." Share gratitude widely and share often.

"Fati, I am so grateful you came today. You offered a number of very specific examples of [situation] and what you did to prevent a potential disaster that I want to think about more. Thank you for your openness."

HOW TO BE A SKILLED INTERPRETER

Below are some tips for taking meaningful notes:

1. **Check in with your team early.** The sooner you meet, the sooner you can start getting to know each other and plan your work.

2. **Clarify key words and phrases that will be used**. Every type of interview will have its own special language. Make a list of key words and concepts.

3. **Ask for all documents in advance**. This will give you time to study what the team will use and make note of special language.

4. **Share how you like to work**. Don't assume everyone knows what you need and what your *ideal* way of working is. Make your needs known.

5. **Scope out the space in advance**. You need to decide where you should sit carefully, so you can hear what is being said, are close enough to interpret, and are not in the way. This may take some moving of furniture or selecting a different space.

6. **Prepare your materials**. You will need a notebook and two pens (one for backup). Ensure you have all you need to feel comfortable and able to do good work. A bottle of water and glass is essential. What else may be helpful?

7. **Ensure you know where you need to be and when**. It is not enough to have the address—know the room number and location in the building or village. Having all the specifics will help you arrive on time and be ready.

8. **Be included in the pre- and post-interview team time**. You will have critical information for both sessions but are especially valuable in the clarifying questions post-interview.

9. **Ask questions and share insights post-interview**. Although this is not your specific role, you may have things to share in the post-interview debrief.

"It was interesting to hear person X used two words interchangeably…"
"I noticed that anytime you used the word X, she would use the word Y to mean the same thing."

HOW TO ADDRESS STRONG EMOTIONS

The dialogue you will have will not be easy and may trigger the interviewee or re-traumatize them in unexpected ways. Below are things to consider.

Key Principles

- Strong emotions are normal when facing disasters, a natural human response to life-changing events, and as predictable as getting wet after jumping into the ocean.

- The interview itself can become a healing experience because being heard and understood is therapeutic. You need to do the interview correctly, carefully, and with boundaries.

- Demonstrate the ability to respond to interviewees' emotions with empathic statements: Name ("this may make you feel sad, disappointed, weary…"). Understand ("I can't imagine how difficult this must be."). Respect (do not object to what they're feeling). Support ("I can pray with you if you would like. You are very strong to have gone through that…").

- Respond to interviewees' strong emotion with empathic statements and gestures. They will strengthen the alliance and promote healing.

- Your interviewee may think that you do not understand their experience or that it does not matter to you if you try to "fix" their strong emotions. Strong emotion needs your empathic response, not "fixing."

- Show interest in comprehending the interviewee's emotions and experiences by making empathic statements that acknowledge those emotions or experiences. Your empathic responses communicate and demonstrate that you care about the interviewee's experience and your interest builds trust and safety into the relationship. In turn, trust helps them join with us to explore their stories and to generate alternatives and options more efficiently and effectively.

CHALLENGING SITUATIONS AND TIPS TO CONSIDER

Things do not always go smoothly when interviewing groups and individuals. PLA tools can bring strong emotions as well as other challenging situations. These challenges can compromise the data we collect, so we need to address them carefully and calmly.

Below are tips to consider:

Participants are Confused

1. Remember how confusing you may have found the tool when you were first experiencing it and learning to use it.

2. Repeat the instructions. Find a different way to explain the instructions.

3. Model the activity if possible—show them what you mean.

4. Ask a participant to repeat back to you what they understood you said.

5. Patiently clarify until the group or individuals are comfortable and ready to begin.

Participants Go off Topic

1. It is normal that groups and individuals find that one thought triggers another, and it's hard to stop. This can be fruitful, but we need to stay in control—don't compromise the direction you need the conversation to go.

2. Be patient to see if they will connect back to the topic at hand.

3. Use your probing skills to redirect them: "Thank you. Early you talked about_____. What else can you say more about [idea]?"

4. Ask another question at an appropriate point to see if you can bring the discussion back.

One Person Dominates

1. Thank the person speaking, and then redirect: "Thank you. Let's now hear from someone we haven't heard from yet. Who else would like to share their thoughts?"

2. Gently stop the sharing, by saying something like, "I'm going to hold this conversation now, but I want to ensure there is time for [topic]. Thank you for your thoughts, and I would love to continue this with you during lunch."

Long Silences

1. Wait patiently while the group or individuals gather their thoughts. It may help you to be patient if you count to 10 silently in your head.

2. If no one still is speaking, try a probe or ask if the question you asked may have been unintentionally disrespectful or inappropriate.

3. If one question is not working for the group or individual, you can thank them and move to another question.

Very Short or Very Long Answers

1. With very short answers:

   - "Say more about that?"

2. With very long answers:

   - Be patient.

   - Thank the person for what they are sharing, and note on what you want to ask clarifying questions about it afterward.

Overcome by Emotions

1. Assure the person that this is a normal response.

2. Encourage the person to take as much time as they need.

3. Ask gently if they feel comfortable telling you more about it.

4. Use some of the suggestions from your tips sheet: *How to Address Strong Emotions.*

Distractions

1. *Cell phones:* At the start, ask everyone to turn off their cell phones. If you forget, you can request this if a phone goes off. Setting ground rules at the start is important.

2. *Noise close by:* Close the door, if possible, or ask someone close by to deal with this challenge.

3. *Someone talking nearby:* Kindly ask this person(s) to move further away to have their conversation.

General

1. *What do you do if you ask one question and they answer many questions at once? Do you ask the questions again?*

   No, the important thing is that data is being offered—it doesn't have to follow the sequence of your questions. Sit back and listen, because it sounds like this interview will be quite easy! Be grateful. <u>It is important that this is natural and authentic dialogue</u>. People will be frustrated if you repeat questions repeatedly—it suggests that you were not listening.

2. *Something is unclear*.

   Don't leave it that way. Ask probing questions that help clarify what the interviewee just shared. We need to be clear about what the interviewee is offering so we have data that we can consider later.

3. *How do we manage time?*
   - Use multiple timepieces and put them in places where all can see.
   - State the timing at the start. Transparency is helpful.
   - Ensure you don't go overtime without asking permission to do so. This is an element of respect—people have planned for a certain time, and you need to stick to this as much as possible.

THE MATERIALS

Training

- Basket for supplies on table
- Markers
- Pens, one each
- Tape, two
- Notebook for each, two each
- Flip chart paper (two) and stand
- Sticky notes, ten pads
- PLA Tools Booklet, one each + two extra
- Highlighters, one each
- White copy paper, one ream
- Camera (or phone with camera)

Fieldwork

- Printed images, 10–15
- Large white paper, two per person
- Colored thin markers, packet of 10–20
- Notepad (for interpreter and note-taker), two each
- Pens, one each
- PLA notebook, one per team member
- Consent forms, one per interviewee
- Clip board, one each (optional)
- Camera (or phone with camera)

Data Analysis

- Large Post-it notes, four packets
- Camera (or phone with camera)

"The more prepared you are, the more flexible you can be in the moment."

TEAMS AND TOOLS PLAN - *AN EXAMPLE*

The Field Work

Due to various complications around the COVID-19 pandemic, Food for the Hungry conducted fieldwork in two communities with four data collection teams over two days. While the initial plan involved more extensive data collection, the results showed high consensus among respondents, indicating that the data collectors achieved saturation.

Considerations for organizing the fieldwork, including lessons learned, are included below:

The Data Collectors

- Data collection teams should include at least two members but will preferably have three: interviewer, note-taker, and observer.
- Interviewers and note-takers should speak the local language fluently. If necessary, a non-speaker may play the role of observer. The teams may engage a trained translator if necessary.
- The teams will stay the same throughout the data collection process.
- Because this was a pilot, Food for the Hungry tried to allow teams to facilitate as many of the different tools as possible. Under different circumstances, it may be useful to have teams specialize in one to three tools.
- Food for the Hungry assigned women to facilitate interviews and sessions with women and vice versa to encourage respondents to share openly.

The Interviewees

- Because of the gendered nature of drought experience and response, Food for the Hungry conducted sessions with men and women separately.
- Groups consisted of at least four men or women, with a maximum of six, or with individual interviewees.

Data Collection Sessions

- To respect the time of interviewees and to allow for travel between communities, Food for the Hungry limited sessions to two hours.
- Two teams traveled to each community so that sessions could take place simultaneously. (One team facilitated the men's group while the other team facilitated the women's group.)

Food for the Hungry Field Work Schedule:

Kargi	Team 1: group WOMEN x4	Team 2: group MEN x4	Team 1: 1-1 WOMEN (2)	Team 2: 1-1 MEN (2)
	Roles: Interviewer Note-taker Observer	Roles: Translator Interviewer Note-taker Observer	Roles: Interviewer Note-taker Observer	Roles: Translator Interviewer Note-taker Observer
DAY 1 Mar. 24	3. Real Stories 2. Pictures	3. Real Stories 2. Pictures		
DAY 2 Mar.25			1. Journey 6. Quotes	1. Journey 6. Quotes

Qachacha & Segel	Team 1: Group WOMEN x4	Team 2: Group MEN x4	Team 3: 1-1 WOMEN	Team 4: 1-1 MEN
Qachacha Mar. 24	2. Pictures 4. Object	2. Pictures 4. Object	3. Real stories 1. Journey	3. Real stories 1. Journey
Segel Mar. 25	1. Journey 5. Trust Circles	1. Journey 5. Trust Circles	2. Pictures 4. Objects	2. Pictures 4. Objects

APPENDIX

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

The following images were used in the group and individual interviews. They are printed larger for the purpose of the activity.

FOUR TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Used with permission from Global Learning Partners www.globallearningpartners.com.

A Resource

FOUR TYPES OF QUESTIONS	
CLOSED questions	• Usually yes/no answers • Don't invite dialogue • Often used to check something • Are often a great way to poll a group
OPEN questions	• Answers are unpredictable • You ask with genuine curiosity to understand or learn something • You ask ready to take the time to listen • Often used to invite meaningful dialogue with groups • Wise to list these *in the learning design* itself so you can rememberwhat you wanted groups to engage around AND is a visual tool or reminder for learners • Invite dialogue
DIGGING DEEPER questions	• Used to push dialogue and thinking to a deeper level • Help to get more clarity or information about something beingshared • Usually used by facilitator and not in the learning design or invisuals • Are a helpful facilitation skill to push/deepen thinking, sharing, orreflection
POWERFUL open questions	• There are no easy answers • Are usually personal and complex • Point to or invite thinking about the desired change or impact as aresult of the learning or learning event i.e. it is easy to name change you want but what is needed to get there • These are questions that have people pause to reflect what theycould say

A Tool

How and where did you use each of these types of questions, and what was the impact?

CLOSED questions	
OPEN questions	
DIGGING DEEPER questions	
POWERFUL open questions	

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit contains comprehensive implementation instructions for the Participatory Learning and Action approach, including eight specific tools. This set of tools and resources will equip Early Warning System designers, implementers, and stakeholders with a simple methodology to identify behaviors that are potentially impactful and feasible for the affected populations and to identify the determinants that support or inhibit the adoption of these behaviors.

ABOUT REAL

The Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award is a consortium-led effort funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. It was established to respond to growing demand among USAID Missions, host governments, implementing organizations, and other key stakeholders for rigorous, yet practical, monitoring, evaluation, strategic analysis, and capacity building support. Led by Save the Children, REAL draws on the expertise of its partners: Food for the Hungry, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International.