Worksheet: Learning

Objectives:

This worksheet will help you:

- Design a learning plan that includes stakeholders, objectives, activities, and a process for using learnings.

- Ensure that learning processes inform decision making at multiple scales.

- Support adaptive management and the improvement of interventions.

- Explore any unintended results or outcomes stemming from an intervention.

- Build the environmental peacebuilding evidence base.

Designing a Learning Plan

In addition to institutional processes for learning, which apply across multiple interventions, you may develop a learning plan tailored to your intervention. A learning plan maps out your objectives, stakeholders, and process for learning. You should draft a learning plan prior to the start of an intervention to ensure you are gathering the information you need from the start; however, the learning plan can be updated as the context changes. Use the headings below as a template and consider the associated questions as you draft your plan.

Learning Stakeholders

List the relevant stakeholders and their needs vis-à-vis learning processes and outputs. The table below provides a template. You may want to review the personas exercise in the Design Chapter as you complete this section.

STAKEHOLDER	LEARNING NEEDS & INTERESTS	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Learning Questions

Include your learning questions here. These capture your learning objectives and expectations. Make sure they are specific enough to really guide learning activities and that there are not so many as to overwhelm the resources you have (time, people, money, etc.). Consider the following:

☐ What information would be most helpful for the current or future interventions?

☐ What parts of your theory of change need more evidence? Are there approaches or outcomes you are testing? In particular, how are you capturing the interaction or relationship between environmental and peace aspects of your intervention?

☐ What are your learning needs at the intervention and institutional levels?

☐ What are the specific learning needs of the stakeholders you have identified? How do they differ?

☐ What is there to learn about your assumptions or the context in which your intervention took place? What did you learn that was unexpected (what were the unintended effects of the intervention)?

Learning Roles & Responsibilities

Document how the learning process will be managed and by whom. This might be an individual point person or a committee/advisory group that includes local stakeholders. It should reflect your learning objectives, questions, and activities. You may want to document their specific tasks or responsibilities.

Learning Activities

Document specific learning processes and activities here. Consider the following:

☐ What do you need to do to answer your learning questions and achieve your learning objectives? For example, how frequently should you review your monitoring data? What will do you with the results of a planned evaluation?

☐ Revisit the Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation chapters to ensure that your learning needs are built into your broader plans.

☐ How will learning be captured? This may be an online wiki or discussion board where people can informally share, or notes taken during informal reflection sessions. Make sure there is a place and process for documenting learnings so that they are not forgotten.

☐ What different needs might the various stakeholders have vis-à-vis learning processes? For example, how can you incorporate those stakeholders into the learning process in a culturally appropriate and conflict sensitive way?

☐ How will you ensure that unintended effects or outcomes are explored?

Learning activities can be internal and informal, such as having a team meeting to discuss findings and recommendations from an evaluation. They can also be broader, involving consultative sessions with partners and community stakeholders to review monitoring data. For those who are interested in facilitating learning-focused meetings, USAID (2019) has a useful guide. Table 5.1, above, includes a list of other examples of learning and reflection activities that you may wish to pursue, including After Action Reviews, Brown Bags, Chalk Talks, Data Parties, Fishbowl Discussions, Knowledge Cafes, and Share Fairs.

While these ideas can help you get started, another step you can take is asking stakeholders how they might learn best. What approaches resonate most with those groups? What other ideas do they have?

Learning Outputs

List your learning outputs. You can use the table below as a template. When thinking through which learning outputs to prioritize, consider the following:

☐ What different needs might the various stakeholders (including your own organization) have vis-à-vis learning outputs? Will you need to create learning outputs in different languages or formats?

☐ What mediums are best to convey learnings to different stakeholders/audiences?

☐ When considering the transparency of learning outputs, what risks might there be? How can you ensure your learning outputs are conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive?

LEARNING OUTPUT	DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT	TIMING/ FREQUENCY	STAKEHOLDERS

Learning Use

Make sure your learning plan clearly states how the learning results will be used. Consider the following:

☐ Reflect on how can the learning results support the objectives of your current and future interventions? [This is important, as there is often institutional inertia, and a key to incorporating learning results is being able to show the value of change, whether it is in benefits or risk management.]

☐ If the intervention is still ongoing, how can you incorporate the learning results into the ongoing intervention?

☐ Should you develop a written action plan that incorporates the learning results and details the steps to take, who is responsible, and by what date?

☐ How will learning results be incorporated into the design and implementation of future interventions?

☐ Who will receive the learning results, and by what means? Will they be shared with the environmental peacebuilding community at large (to help build the evidence base)?

☐ How can you ensure your learning outputs are shared in a conflict-sensitive way?

☐ Is there an ongoing or existing institutional learning process that you can feed into?