



Defending dignity.  
Fighting poverty.

---

# Guidance for designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding projects:

---

using theories of change



# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 The problem we seek to address	3
1.2 The research that developed the guidance	3
1.3 Definitions	4
<b>2. Theories of change</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 What is a theory of change?	6
2.2 Why is it important to explicitly state theories of change?	6
<b>3. Using theories of change for project or programme design</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Carry out a conflict analysis	8
3.2 Design an intervention	8
3.3 Develop a results hierarchy	9
3.4 Articulate the theories of change	10
<b>4. Monitoring and evaluating of a project or programme based on its theories of change</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 Identify / refine the theories of change	11
4.2 Assess a project or programme's relevance	11
4.3 Decide what you want to learn: choose which theory of change	12
4.4 Undertake outcome evaluation	13
4.5 Design a research plan using the monitoring and evaluation grid to assess whether the theory of change is functioning as expected, and collect data according to the plan	13
4.6 Data collection methods	18
4.7 Helpful hints to manage data collection and analysis	18
4.8 Analysis of data	19
<b>5. Present your findings and ensure their use</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex 1:</b> Questions to ask to review a conflict analysis	<b>21</b>
<b>Annex 2:</b> A selection of conflict analysis tools and frameworks	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex 3:</b> Additional resources	<b>23</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>24</b>

# Acknowledgements

**Our special thanks to all the research team member organisations and their representatives for providing their time as well as continuous support in the overall process to accomplish the research and pilot the steps which resulted in this guide. The full list of research team members are: Archana Aryal, Bhasker Kafle, Bishnu Khatri, Punya Bhandari, Dipendra Tamang, Prakash Bastola, Shaligram Sharma, Shiva Dhungana, Kumud Rana, Shraddha Rayamajhi, Jackson Omona, Paddy Musana, Narcisio Bangirana, Mark Amucu, Ayub Muhammad, Donnah Atwagala, Joseph Besigye, Patrick Adupa, Rebman Kahima, Richard Businge, Mashanda Murhega, Amos Cishunguluka Kanan, Saidi Alo Ibya Sango, Bertin Bisimwa Kabomboro, Solange Lwashiga Furaha, Anne Bisimwa Faid, H el ene Nabintu, Giresse Obed Kakozi, Marie Misukyo and Jeanine Mukoko.**

We would like to acknowledge all the interviewees / respondents from the district-level institutions and participants of the focus group discussions for providing information for the research. We are grateful to the respective project teams in all the districts who spared their valuable time and supported the entire research team during the fieldwork and piloting.

We would like to thank International Alert, and in particular Ndeye Sow, who is our partner in this endeavour.

The lead writer for this guide was Heidi Ober. Input was also provided by Carlisle Levine and Cheyanne Church.

Finally, our sincerest thanks go to the volunteer project steering committee members Hans Giessmann, Diana Chigas, Peter Woodrow, Rachel Goldwyn and Mark M. Rogers for their technical support and guidance on this guide and during the entire project.

This project has been possible due to the support of the European Commission.

*This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of CARE International UK and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.*

For more information, please contact +44 (0)207 091 6000; [ConflictTeam@careinternational.org](mailto:ConflictTeam@careinternational.org); [www.careinternational.org.uk](http://www.careinternational.org.uk)



International Alert.

---

*This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of CARE International and International Alert and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.*

---

# 1 Overview

## 1.1 The problem we seek to address

As peacebuilders, we want to know that our interventions contribute positively to mitigating conflict and building peace. To accomplish this, we must understand the conflict context in which we are working and clearly articulate the changes we seek to promote within it. We must select monitoring and evaluation approaches that can help us assess changes in the conflict context, the on-going appropriateness of our interventions, and the results – intended and unintended – to which we are contributing.

One of the long-standing challenges to successful peacebuilding has been the difficulty of measuring results and generating evidence that can help identify what types of interventions work best. Part of the challenge is that peace itself is an elusive concept, made up of innumerable factors that can be hard to define. Peacebuilding projects or programmes often seek changes in people’s perceptions, attitudes and behaviours – areas that are less tangible than, say, their health or access to credit, and often more difficult to measure. If an intervention is successful in preventing a conflict, a further challenge is demonstrating the counterfactual (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of the initiative). Moreover, agencies have struggled to demonstrate how interventions that target grassroots level actors add up to building peace at the national or even regional level.

Achieving peace is a lengthy, complex process that involves many actors and interventions, some of whom work toward peace, while others promote the continuation of conflict. Conventional development models do not typically contemplate working with stakeholders for whom recourse to violence is the norm. Opportunities for peacebuilding evolve with shifting conflict dynamics. In peacebuilding, one step forward is often followed by steps backward. This guide seeks to help practitioners address these challenges.

## 1.2 The research that developed the guidance

To advance the use of theory-based inquiry within the field of peacebuilding, CARE International and International Alert decided to undertake a two and a half year research project to develop light touch methods to monitor and evaluate peacebuilding projects, and pilot these in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nepal and Uganda. This guide emerges from the efforts of peacebuilders who field tested the processes to define and assess the changes to which they hoped to contribute. Members of research teams, each representing a peacebuilding project, and a steering committee of advisors, developed this guidance together for designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding projects.

In the course of the piloting, 19 projects of varying size and ambition were selected and 38 theories of change were reviewed. Projects have multiple theories of change within a hierarchy of results, but it would have been too large an undertaking to review them all. We asked partners to select one to three theories of change to review over the life of this project. Prior to the start of the project, only three of the 19 projects had explicitly stated theories of change. For the other projects retrospective theories of change were articulated and reviewed by the country teams.

In this project we journeyed with peace practitioners to assist them in becoming self-reflective in their interventions and the wider context. As a result, useful tools and tips emerged, including the development of the ‘grid’ (diagram 4,5 and 6) for developing research questions and documenting findings. In its complete form the use of this grid and the wider guidance in this guide is anchored in theory based evaluation – i.e. it entails gathering rigorous data and making clear judgments about programme effectiveness.

In the piloting of this guidance our research teams struggled with the step of identifying alternative explanations for the observed results, and similarly struggled to undertake the steps to eliminate these. The lesson to draw for others who are using this guidance is to ensure adequate resources and analysis is dedicated to this critical step. With such a focus, and with equal attention paid to other elements in the grid and wider guidance, the process described contains important components of monitoring and evaluation using a theory based approach.

The main audiences for this guide are conflict transformation and peacebuilding practitioners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donor agencies. Other actors in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding field may also find it useful.

# 1 Overview continued

## 1.3 Definitions

Below are some useful terms which will be used throughout the guide.

### Peacebuilding

There are many definitions of peacebuilding, but this project used the following:

“Peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct.”<sup>1</sup>

### Results

Results include ‘the output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and /or negative) of a development intervention’.<sup>2</sup> While *activities* describe what is being done, results describe ensuing changes. *Outputs* usually refer to products, goods, or services delivered through an activity. *Outcomes* refer to changes in behaviour or initial changes in how a conflict system functions resulting from an activity. *Impact* refers to the long-term effects of an intervention.

While activities and outputs are usually under the control of programme implementers, outcomes are less so, and impact even less so.<sup>3</sup>

### Monitoring

Monitoring is an internal process conducted, at agreed intervals, to check on the progress of interventions against designed activities, outputs, etc. It is important to monitor both the quality of activities and their ongoing relevance in addressing the conflict.

### Evaluation

Evaluation is different to monitoring in terms of depth, scope and purpose. Evaluations are usually more rigorous than monitoring and often involve search for evidence-based progress towards the project / programmes’s outputs, outcomes, etc. There can be developmental, formative, summative and impact evaluations. This guidance demonstrates how theories of change can be used for formative and summative evaluations.

Cheyenne Church and Mark Rogers offer a helpful comparison of monitoring and evaluation in their book *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*.<sup>4</sup> This has been adapted in Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1: Distinguishing monitoring and evaluation**

	Monitoring	Evaluation
<b>What is it?</b>	Ongoing collection and analysis of data on progress toward results, changes in the context, strategies, and implementation	Reviewing what has happened and why, and determining relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, etc.
<b>Why do it?</b>	Inform day-to-day decision making, adjust project design, and inform periodic planning  Accountability and reporting	Strengthen future programming  Provide evidence of success  Deepen our understanding of how and why things work
<b>Who does it?</b>	Programme staff and /or partners and /or participants	External consultant, staff, participants or combination of these groups
<b>When to plan</b>	At design stage	Core decisions taken at design stage and refined prior to implementation
<b>When to implement</b>	Throughout the programme – periodically, frequently or continuously	Mid-term (formative) Completion (summative) After completion (impact)

1 Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press States Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

2 OECD DAC’s Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, p. 33. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

3 Levine, Carlisle J, *Catholic Relief Services’ (CRS) Guidance for Developing Logical and Results Frameworks*, Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 2007. [http://dmeformpeace.org/sites/default/files/Levine\\_Logical%20Results%20Frameworks.pdf](http://dmeformpeace.org/sites/default/files/Levine_Logical%20Results%20Frameworks.pdf)

4 Church, Cheyenne, and Rogers, Mark M., *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005.

**Attribution**

Attribution is when an outcome or a portion of an outcome can be solely attributed to a particular intervention we are observing. We determine this by establishing a counterfactual: if everything were the same, except the intervention did not happen, how would the outcome have been different? That difference is the change we attribute to the intervention. This level of confidence is difficult to attain, except in contained and limited settings.

**Contribution**

Contribution is when an intervention contributed to an outcome achievement, or that intervention was one of the factors that helped bring about a particular change. We determine contribution by establishing an evidence-based

and carefully analysed cause-and-effect chain that links the intervention to the outcome, possibly noting other factors that may also have contributed to the change.

In peacebuilding we rely more on contribution than attribution. Due to the complexity of peacebuilding processes, it is rarely feasible to prove a counterfactual that would establish that the change was brought about by a particular intervention. In most cases in peacebuilding multiple interventions and factors bring about change over time. These effects can be undone or changed by other interventions, factors, and uncontrollable events. It is more realistic to establish a logical cause-and-effect chain that describes an intervention's contribution within a complex system.

## 2 Theories of change

**Theory-based evaluation is a promising approach to help explain how lower level results influence higher level results, an area of weakness in many peacebuilding projects. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) has found that peacebuilding work in particular is often based on ‘approaches and tactics that are rooted in implicit theories of change’, but that in many cases ‘such theories are subconscious and unstated.’<sup>5</sup> Research conducted by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and CARE in Kosovo<sup>6</sup> found that many peacebuilding interventions were ineffective because of inadequate theories of change.**

### 2.1 What is a theory of change?

Peacebuilding programming is built on numerous assumptions, or ‘theories of change’, about how interventions contribute to peace. In its simplest form a theory of change can be stated as, ‘We believe that if we do x (action), then it will achieve y (progress towards peace).’ For example, ‘if we train key leaders in negotiating skills, then they will become more effective advocates for their interests through nonviolent means.’ Or, ‘if we generate jobs for unemployed youth, then they will be less available to be recruited to violence.’

A theory of change clearly articulates the intended activity (the ‘if’ part), and the expected change it will bring about (the ‘then’ part). Articulating a theory of change offers a clearer picture of the intended result from an action, and explains how programme activities and results are connected with each other and contribute to achieving results at different levels. In other words, a well articulated theory of change is a testable hypothesis of how the planned activities will contribute to achieving the desired results for the programme.

An example of a peacebuilding theory of change that was researched in this project, developed by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction in Nepal, is: ‘If there is evidence of an increase of peaceful resolution of conflicts by local peacebuilding mechanisms, then confidence in and acceptance of the mechanisms will be increased.’

5 Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities. DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation, and DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2008.

6 Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo? Cambridge, MA, USA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and CARE; July 2006.

7 See Annex 3 for a list of useful references for understanding and developing theories of change

Every action we take, from the overall goal of the project to each single activity, has a theory of change behind it. Theories of change, therefore, can be used to explain and articulate the logical connection between a lower level result and a higher level result. Theories of change can be used to design, monitor and evaluate social change initiatives, including peacebuilding.

### 2.2 Why is it important to explicitly state theories of change?

When theories of change remain implicit or unstated, assessing whether a project’s underlying theories of change are appropriate to a context becomes more difficult, often leaving them untested long into implementation. In these cases, when things do not work, it might take extra analysis to determine whether we are working on the wrong theory, or whether we are working on the right theory but the programme is poorly implemented. In one example, in-depth research on peacebuilding programming in Kosovo<sup>8</sup> identified that many interventions were based on inappropriate theories of change, which resulted in many peacebuilding projects failing to contribute to the prevention of violence, which was their primary goal. Had project designers and implementers clearly articulated their theories of change, they might have recognised this earlier, revised their theories of change, and adjusted their project designs to better respond to the context.

**A critical success factor for a theory of change:** Theories of change can help to explain the process of change, but a theory of change cannot stand alone; it needs to be embedded and considered within a specific context. Efforts that contribute to a desired change in one context may have a different effect in another.

When we articulate the theories of change underlying our work, we make them available for examination, monitoring and evaluation. We can create specific indicators<sup>9</sup> to measure the change that we expect to see from our actions.

#### Hint!

Adding ‘because’ to a theory of change will strengthen it. In addition to the ‘if ... then’ format presented above, try adding a ‘because’ phrase to the theory of change. ‘If we do x, then we will see y result, because z.’ (See example following.) We do this for two reasons. First, it will add additional logic to the programme design. Second, someone reading the theory of change will more easily understand why you feel that result will be achieved.

8 Has Peacebuilding Made a Difference in Kosovo? Cambridge, MA, USA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and CARE; July 2006.

9 According to the OECD DAC’s Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, an indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

An example, reflecting the 'hint box' advice above, we may believe that working with political youth groups on community level conflict resolution in Nepal will bring about reduced violence. With this logic clearly stated, we can try to properly assess it. This example can be stated as a theory of change: 'If we train political youth groups in skills for facilitating local community disputes, and we gain community acceptance of their new conflict resolution role, then youth will be less likely to engage in violence, because they will see themselves, and will be seen as making, a positive contribution to conflict reduction.'

In any project, there will be multiple theories of change interacting with each other in a chain of results. For each theory of change, we might find a follow-on theory of change. Building on the above example of working with political youth groups in Nepal, the theory of change makes clear that the goals of the project go beyond just training and coaching the youth to engaging other members of the community –

the community also needs to be aware of this new role for the youth in community conflict resolution. With this new awareness, the theory states, they will accept and not resist the youth's new role. In a parallel and complementary logical chain, a further theory of change might involve encouraging the community members to use the youths' local dispute resolution services. Finally, we might find another theory about trust in their mediations and decisions, leading to lower levels of violence etc. The interactions of results and theories of change can be seen as a results chain or a hierarchy of results comprising the programme logic. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

By articulating anticipated project results and by making explicit the underlying relationships or theories of change linking the results to each other, we are better able to critically analyse our project design, monitor our implementation progress and evaluate programme results. We address each of these points in greater detail below.

# 3 Using theories of change in project or programme design

**This next section will detail how to carry out project / programme design using theories of change. Developing a project's theory(s) of change should happen at the initial design stage.**

It should be carried out with implementers and project partners and where possible with beneficiaries. The process will require someone to lead the process and approximately 2–5 days depending on the amount of participants and time availability.

Designing a project using theories of change requires four steps. First, a conflict analysis maps the existing conflict in all of its complexity and serves as the basis for project design. Second, the intervention design responds to this conflict analysis, as well as the organisational expertise and mandate. Third, by developing a results hierarchy we can reflect on the changes to which we hope an intervention will contribute, starting with changes emerging immediately and directly from an intervention and ending with much longer-term and larger changes less under our control. Finally, by articulating the theories of change related to the results hierarchy, we make explicit how we think the different results relate to each other and will come about and redesign as necessary. Each of these steps is described in the sections that follow.

## Hint!

Once a theory(s) of change is developed, it should be captured for periodic review. This would clarify the logic behind a proposed intervention and provide a platform for mid-term and final evaluations. Many current donor tools do not allow for the capture of these. One way around this problem would be to use the 'assumptions and risks' column of project logframes to articulate the theories behind each intervention, perhaps with theories of change shown in different typeface to differentiate them from risks.

## 3.1 Carry out a conflict analysis

The first step in designing a peacebuilding intervention is to undertake a conflict analysis. Whilst a context analysis looks broadly at the environment in which an intervention may take place, a conflict analysis focuses specifically on factors contributing to and affected by conflict. The conflict analysis should identify incentives for violence; forces and opportunities for peace; institutional capacities that support conflict or peace; conflict resources; and regional and global dynamics influencing the conflict. A conflict analysis should identify deeper structural causes of a conflict, as well as more proximate causes and triggers, and should be carried out at micro, meso and macro levels. There are many conflict analysis tools available. For a partial list of basic practical tools, see Annex 1: A selection of conflict analysis tools and frameworks. Conflict analysis can be either an empty exercise or a crucial step in the development of effective interventions depending on the quality and depth of the analysis.

Conflict analysis is essential for several reasons. First, theories of change must be grounded in the realities of the context and the specific dynamics of the conflict in question; we cannot simply import assumptions and theories from other settings. Second, we might construct a robust theory of change, but unless the intervention addresses key driving factors of conflict, programming may miss the mark.

## 3.2 Design an intervention

Based on the conflict analysis, project / programme designers identify which problems can be meaningfully addressed, given available expertise, organisational mandate, and the expertise and mandates of any partners.

To make sure that a project design addresses critical aspects of a conflict, designers should ask themselves the following questions, with the goal of identifying positive responses for as many as possible:

- Has the project been designed based on different levels of analysis: international, regional, national and local?
- Will the project engage primary actors in the conflict?
- Will the project address priority issues and /or key drivers of the conflict?
- Does the project take advantage of any windows of opportunity for promoting peace (e.g. the signing of peace agreements, constitutional development, and initiatives by others)?

### 3.3 Develop a results hierarchy

A results hierarchy captures all of the changes a project aims to achieve in sequence, starting with the results that are most directly under the project’s control and ending with higher-level results that are most dependent on factors beyond the control of the project. The hierarchy also follows a logic: it is assumed that shorter-term results will lead to medium- and longer-term results, and longer-term results will depend on medium- and shorter-term results for their achievement.

A results hierarchy can, at first, appear linear: most well-developed results chains include a variety of branches, as multiple outputs contribute to an outcome, or as an output contributes to more than one outcome. At this point, it is important to consider the ‘because’ section of the theory of change, as additional elements of the project rationale will be revealed. Some outputs may contribute to more than one outcome, and outcomes can depend on more than one output. In some instances, when reviewing, project implementers may find that a step has been skipped in achieving a longer-term outcome, leading to a gap in logic. In other instances, the achievement of an outcome may loop back and influence the achievement of an additional output.<sup>10</sup>

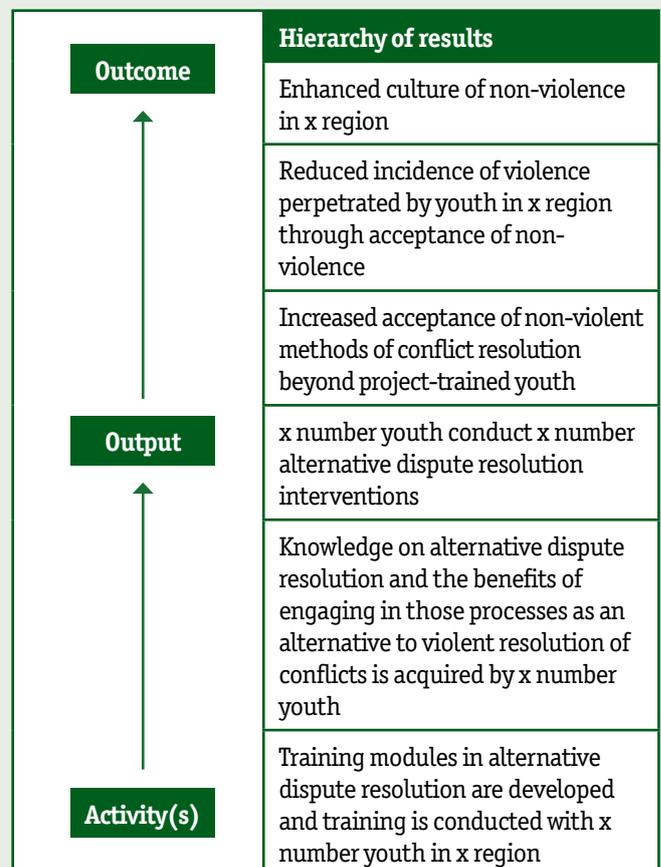
The first step in developing a results hierarchy is to determine the highest level or most significant change (goal) that we hope to achieve. We then ask repeatedly how the goal will be achieved, in order to identify the outcomes that will contribute to the goal. Then by subsequently repeatedly asking how each of the outcomes will come about, we can identify all the outputs required from the project. In this manner, we identify how each result is expected to emerge from shorter-term results and contribute to longer-term results.

Having constructed a results hierarchy, we can look up the chain to explain why we are trying to achieve a shorter-term result (to contribute to longer-term results); and look down the results chain to explain how we achieve longer-term results (as a result of shorter-term results). See Diagram 2: Hierarchy of Results.

#### Hint!

One way to go about identifying a logical hierarchy is by writing each project activity, output, and outcome on separate cards. Place these in sequence in a vertical hierarchy, with activities at the bottom and outcomes at the top. Each card can then be moved around freely to test the logic of one influencing or being influenced by another. This makes it easier to see if there are missing or weak activities planned. We suggest using index cards (3” x 5”) or A5 sized cards.

Diagram 2: Hierarchy of results



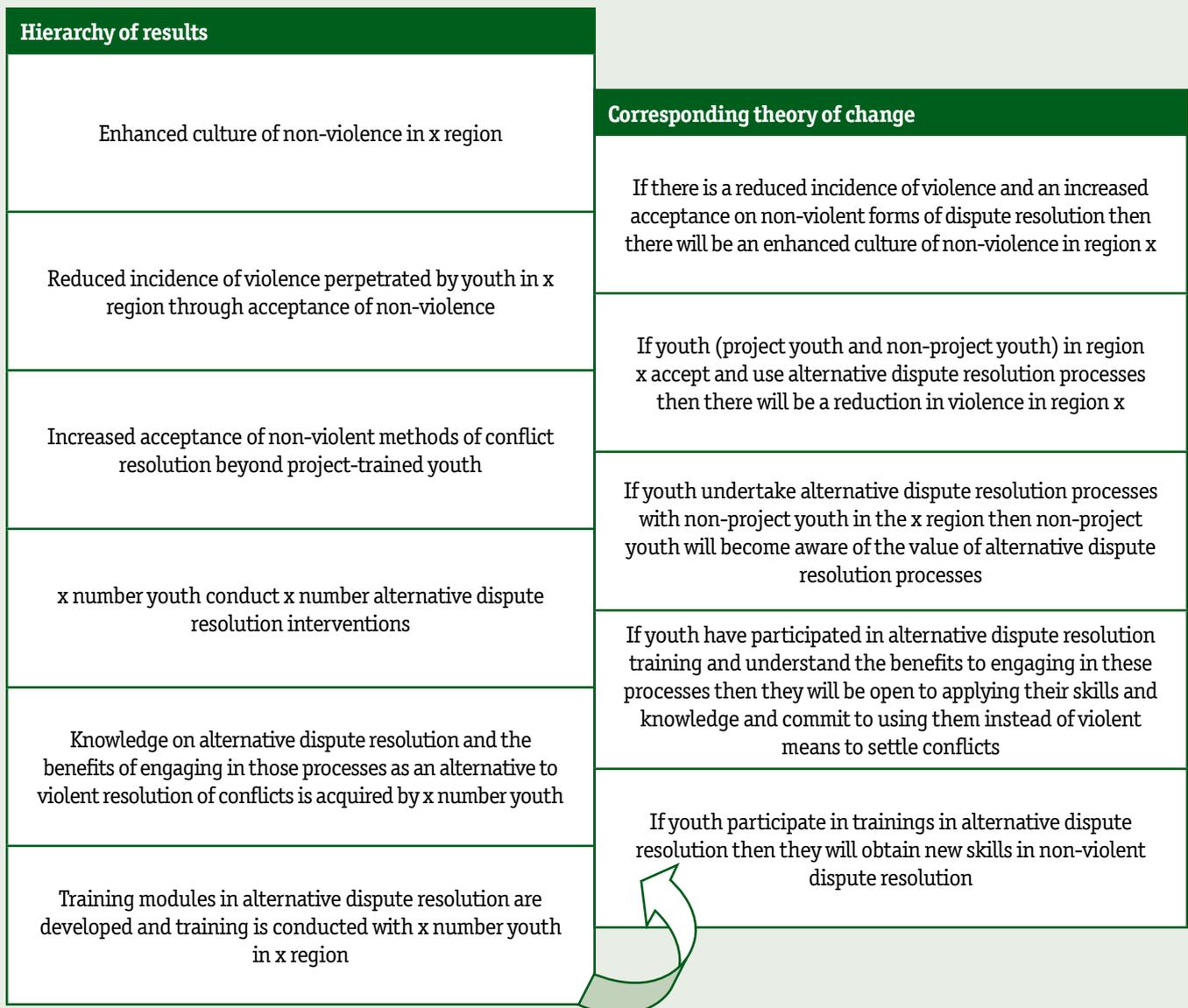
<sup>10</sup> Funnell, Sue C. and Patricia J. Rogers, Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011, 176-195.

### 3 Using theories of change in project or programme design continued

#### 3.4 Articulate the theories of change

Theories of change connect each level of results, explaining how programme designers believe that lower-level results will contribute to higher-level results.

**Diagram 3 : Hierarchy of results and corresponding theories of change**



The example below presents the hierarchy of results and its corresponding theories of change. In each row, the right-hand box explains how the lower level results are expected to contribute to the result in the left-hand cell.

#### Hint!

Be specific in your language. State exactly the results intended. For example, rather than simply writing 'capacity building', explain that 'youth in x district will be given community-level mediation training'. This is important for designing an intervention, and later for monitoring and evaluating it.

It is very helpful to monitor how well the theories of change are working during the course of the project, and reflect on their accuracy in an evaluation. The next section describes how to do this. At project design stage it is important to include budget and time in the proposal to undertake such analysis during the lifetime of the project.

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation of a project or programme based on its theories of change

In this section we introduce the grid for research design and data collection. The grid can be used for both monitoring and evaluation.

To monitor or evaluate a project or a programme, it is important to understand the underlying theories of change, since these reveal how project designers' and implementers' envisioned activities are contributing to results. If the project you wish to monitor or evaluate did not articulate theories of change at the design stage or later stages, then you need to work with project implementers to make them explicit.

When using the grid for monitoring, the research questions will be established at project start up, and then data collection can be integrated into other monitoring systems. Thus the steps to identify the theories of change, review the conflict analysis and deciding what you want to learn will be undertaken only once – in the project start-up phase – when the research questions are established. The questions will be framed in the present tense. When using the grid for evaluation processes, the research questions can be established as part of the evaluation design, and data collection is undertaken then.

### 4.1 Identify / refine the theories of change

Theories of change may be found in project and programme proposal documents. Even when theories of change have been articulated in project proposals it may be that implementers have different understandings of them, and may have developed their own theories of change in their heads implicitly. Reviewing the written documentation in conjunction with consultation with implementing staff will help highlight these possible differences, and generate a consensus on what the actual project logic is. The index card process noted previously is an excellent way to do this.

In the context of a project review or assessment, it is helpful to review the theories of change and the results chains with implementers to determine whether what was planned has happened, or whether the theories of change need to be revised based on what has emerged during implementation. Involving project implementers in these processes is essential, since they are best informed about the programme. Further, by reviewing the results chains and underlying theories of change, implementers can gain important insights into what aspects of their project are well designed for the context and on track to contribute to the project's goal, and what aspects might require new analysis and revision. It will also help reveal if there are any activities that are being undertaken that are not reflected in the results hierarchy. If any are found, add them to the results hierarchy, along with the theories of change that explain their relevance to results the projects seeks to achieve.

#### Hint!

Even if you are not planning to establish a full monitoring process, you can build the review and monitoring of theories of change into your normal reporting cycles. For example, if you articulate a few of the theories of change and the results you expect to see, you can add them into the normal quarterly or bi-annual narrative and financial reporting cycle for donors.

However often theories of change are not articulated in proposals. In this event they will need to be (re) constructed. Again the index card process is suggested as the means to do this. Please refer back to Section 3: Using theories of change in project or programme design.

### 4.2 Assess a project or programme's relevance

As with the first step in designing a project, we need to check that the theory of change is appropriate for the context. If the understanding of the conflict was flawed or inadequate when the project was designed, then it is probable that the theories of change will not be efficient and effective, and a flawed conflict analysis is a poor yardstick against which to review existing programming. Checking the relevance of the intervention to the conflict involves reviewing the quality of the conflict analysis that was carried out, and then checking that there is a strong linkage between the conflict analysis and the expected results and theories of change.

#### Review the conflict analysis

The following questions can help determine the quality of a conflict analysis. The monitoring or evaluation team will need to review the answers to these questions and make a judgement: does the conflict analysis adequately analyse the conflict, or must it be revised prior to using it in monitoring or evaluating a project?

- **HOW** was the conflict analysis done?
- **WHO** does the analysis include?
- **WHEN** was the conflict analysis done?
- **WHAT** does the analysis cover?

In Annex 2, you will find a list of more detailed questions to review a conflict analysis and in Annex 1, you will find a selection of conflict analysis tools and frameworks. We did not want to advocate one way to do a conflict analysis but rather stress its importance and provide a list of resources. Secondly, we found that conflict analyses are often done but done poorly. We wanted to offer guidance on how you can review it.

If, based on the questions above, a conflict analysis is determined to be adequate, then it can be used to assess the relevance of a project design and its underlying theories of change because it will provide sufficient insight into the dynamics of a conflict.

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation of a project or programme based on its theories of change *continued*

If a conflict analysis related to the project of interest cannot be found, one can be created in any of the following ways:

- Conduct a new conflict analysis;
- Collect and compare conflict analyses done by other entities, such as donors, NGOs, UN agencies and academic institutions, and create a composite conflict analysis based on these;
- Look for substitute forms of analysis for projects that focus on complementary sectors, issues or regions. Using those relevant to the programme of interest, create a composite analysis.

If the conflict analysis related to the project of interest is deemed inadequate, the analysis can be strengthened by identifying and filling those gaps. Use the questions from Annex 2 to develop a plan for obtaining that information or, if it is more appropriate and the gaps are too large, conduct a fresh conflict analysis.

### **Determine the relevance of the project or programme to the conflict**

Once you have established a 'good enough' conflict analysis against which to compare the project, you need to determine whether the results hierarchy and theories of change for the project actually address significant factors within the conflict environment. A simplified method for doing this is to review whether the theories of change include any of the following:

- Primary actors within the conflict;
- Root causes or priority issues of the conflict;
- Current drivers of the conflict; or
- Windows of opportunity that may exist in the current environment (e.g. elections, peace agreements, constitutional development).

Often there are differences between a project's design and implementation realities. Changes in context, new understandings of the dynamics the project is trying to influence, and changes in resources available to undertake a project (e.g. time, funds, skill sets, logistics) can all affect analyses of how best to influence change and project implementation decisions. So it may be that theories of change that were appropriate at the time of the project's design are no longer appropriate.

### **4.3 Decide what you want to learn: choose which theories of change you will analyse**

This guidance is a blend of theory-based evaluation with utilisation-focused evaluation.<sup>11</sup> Strict theory-based evaluation is not based on what the practitioner wants to learn but takes the more classic hypothesis testing approach. We chose to combine the two approaches, which we decided was appropriate for learning.

A results hierarchy contains a number of theories of change. Monitoring and evaluation, rather than trying to assess all of the theories, must focus on a few that are most relevant to learning and strategic decision-making.

The following guidelines can help you select the theories of change on which to focus monitoring and evaluation activities:

- Clarify what you need to learn about the project, choose theories of change relevant to those learning needs. For example, if you want to learn about the contribution of community-level dialogue then focus on the theories of change around that initiative;
- If the project combines peacebuilding with development, make sure the theories of change chosen are explicitly about peacebuilding and not about development;
- Pick theories of change that are consecutive steps or feed into each other in a results hierarchy. For example, it might be interesting to examine theories of change that feed into each other so you can review the causal path;
- Don't select theories of change related to the lowest-level activities, since how change comes about at these levels is usually well established;
- If you want to critically review theories of change near the top of the hierarchy, or at goal level, proceed with caution – these are much harder to analyse as the results may not be achieved until after the completion of the project. Consider whether there are going to be measurable results within your timeframe and within your sphere of control / influence;
- If this is a monitoring exercise and its purpose is to assess whether or not implementation is on track and changes are taking place as anticipated, then focusing on the lower to middle part of the results hierarchy and related theories of change can be useful;
- If the purpose of an evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of a project, then focusing on the middle to upper part of the results hierarchy and related theories of change can be useful.

11 Patton, Michael Quinn. Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Saint Paul, MN: Sage Publications, INC, 2008.

## 4.4 Undertake outcome evaluation

In order to get to the analysis on the quality of implementation, it is essential to complement theory based evaluation with another form of evaluation. Theory based evaluation looks at how a change occurs and needs to be supported by an outcome evaluation, which captures the results (the ‘then’ part of the ‘if’ / ‘then’ statement). One such form of outcome evaluation could be Outcome Mapping, which attempts to depict the relationship between strategies and intended results. These results will include both short- and longer-term outcomes and may also reflect changes at different levels.<sup>12</sup>

Outcome Mapping is explained elsewhere in monitoring and evaluation literature so is not detailed in this guide. A useful resource for Outcome Mapping can be found in Annex 3: Additional Resources.

## 4.5 Design a research plan using the monitoring and evaluation grid to assess whether the theory of change is functioning as expected, and collect data according to the plan

At the core of this guidance is the monitoring and evaluation planning and data collection grid. It examines the relationship between the ‘if’ and ‘then’ part of the theory of change. The grid is used to design the research plan for the monitoring or evaluation process, and to capture the data and analyse it.

This grid will be used for monitoring or evaluation planning, data collection, and analysis. Following is guidance to help you develop the research plan (guidance titled ‘planning’) and guidance to help you fill out the grid with your collected data (guidance titled ‘data collection’). These are essentially two rows in the grid – with the research plan as the upper row and the collected data as the lower row. Please note – there is a subsequent section on data collection methods.

### Column one: theories of change

In the first column list the theories of change on which you will focus. List only one theory of change per row. This is the same for both planning and for data collection.

### Column two: lines of inquiry

This column is where you develop and respond to your key lines of inquiry.

#### Planning

For research design this involves unpacking the theory of change into its component parts and developing questions which will assess each part of it – both the ‘if’ part and the ‘then’ part. You will probably develop two to five questions.

As an example, for the theory of change:

‘If groups A and B are provided with agricultural instruments which they must share in order to have usage of them then they will start to communicate across lines of conflict because their concerns for their own individual economic benefit will over-ride political and ideological divisions’.

Research questions could be developed such as:

- Did groups A and B use the shared agricultural instruments?
- What mechanisms were established in order to facilitate the use of agricultural instruments between the two groups?
- What level and what types of communications occurred between groups A and B?
- What economic benefit was generated for each group?
- To what extent did political and ideological divisions change?

Another example, for the theory of change:

‘If x former combatants are trained in legitimate income generation activities then they will no longer use weapons to extract resources from others because they will chose to pursue legitimate means to generate an income’.

**Diagram 4: The monitoring and evaluation planning & collection grid**

1 Theory of change	2 Lines of inquiry – research question(s)	3 How does the theory of change contribute to its related results in the results hierarchy?	4 What is your evidence of the result being achieved?	5 Did the activities and lower-level results indeed lead to the anticipated higher-level results?	6 Were there changes in the context?	7 What other external factors could have contributed to the result?	8 What could have made the theory of change and / or the results more successful?
--------------------	---	---	---	---	--------------------------------------	---	---

<sup>12</sup> Earl, Sarah, Carden, Fred and Smutylo, Terry, Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2001.

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation of a project or programme based on its theories of change *continued*

Research questions could be developed such as:

- Did the former combatants become trained in legitimate income generation activities?
- Did the former combatants engage in legitimate income generation activities?
- Were the income generating activities successful enough to sustain the former combatants financially?
- Did the former combatants continue to use weapons to extract resources from others?

Investigative questions are better when they are more rigorous. Ask probing questions with as much detail as possible. Avoid vague words such as ‘capacity building’, ‘empower’ and ‘civil society’. State specifically who exactly, what was developed, for what purpose, etc.

### **Data collection**

Precise and concise answers to the lines of inquiry should be captured in this column when collecting data. In the first example above the data could be:

- Both A and B accessed the shared agricultural instruments;
- A community based organisation was established;
- Groups A and B met and spoke with one another in a series of 3 meetings in order to set up the community based organisation and determine who would use the instruments when, but then did not interact further.
- Group A had access to better seeds and fertiliser so was able to generate more economic benefit than group B, however both groups were able to meet their basic needs for food.
- It was not clear to what extent political and ideological divisions changed because their interactions were largely around sharing agricultural instruments and interactions did not go beyond that.

### **Column three: how does the theory of change contribute to its related results in the results hierarchy?**

This column examines the internal logic of the theory of change – the ‘because’ statement. Once again, clearly state why you believe the theory of change will achieve this result. Giving the ‘because’ specific focus in this column prompts us to consider the evidence we need to gather in order to assess the expected linkage between lower level and higher level results.

### **Planning**

In this column you should explain the ‘because’ of the theory of change statement. Consider the theory of change’s internal validity: Is the logic clear? Does the theory of change adequately explain how its lower-level result is expected to contribute to its higher-level result?

For example, if the theory of change is ‘if x women’s negotiation skills are increased significantly and they identify their political needs then they will engage male powerholders in dialogue to assert their political needs’ then in this column you can capture the internal logic as:

‘Because increasing the technical ability of x women to articulate and negotiate their political needs will lead to their empowerment and willingness to challenge power holders, in particular men’.

### **Data collection**

Once you have completed your data collection process for the other columns you should revisit this question and assess whether the internal logic to the theory of change is appropriate.

### **Column four: what is your evidence of the result being achieved?**

This column examines the evidence for the achievement of the two results linked together in the results hierarchy by the theory of change.

### **Planning**

Given the research questions you have now developed, and the linkages you have highlighted in column three, you should now list what you would consider evidence or indicators of the results that are linked above and below the theory of change being achieved.

Carefully note what indicators will allow you to measure to what extent the results are being / were achieved. These indicators can possibly be drawn from documents such as proposals and logframes if the information necessary is there. They should also be discussed and agreed with project implementers.

### **Data collection**

Once you begin your data collection process you can capture the findings of these indicators in this column.

Diagram 5: Grid with questions / evidence for monitoring and evaluation

1 Theory of change	2 Lines of inquiry – research question (s)	3 How does the theory of change contribute to its related results in the results hierarchy?	4 What is your evidence of the result being achieved?	5 Did the activities and lower level results add up to the needed results?	6 Were there changes in the context?	7 What other external factors could have contributed to the result?	8 What could have made the theory of change and / or the results more successful?
<p>If youth, (project youth and non-project youth), in region x accept and use alternative dispute resolution processes <b>then</b> there will be a reduction in violence in region x</p>	<p>Did youth accept and use alternative dispute resolution processes?</p> <hr/> <p>Was there a reduction in the incidences of violence?</p> <hr/> <p>Did youth consider non-violent means of conflict resolution a preferred option to violent means?</p> <hr/> <p>Did the youth that used the alternative dispute resolution processes continue with violent methods of resolution as well?</p> <hr/> <p>Did youth accessing the alternative dispute resolution processes previously use violent means to resolve conflict?</p>	<p>The theory of change indicates that when youth are aware of alternative dispute resolution processes then they will choose them over violent methods. This indicates that knowledge and understanding of other alternatives to violence will lead to non-violent action</p>	<p>x number of youth attended trainings</p> <hr/> <p>x number of youth cited accessing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms</p> <hr/> <p>x number of youth said they would not use violence as a result</p> <hr/> <p>Was there a percentage decrease in incidences of violence?</p>	<p>Did non-project trained youth accept and use the alternative dispute resolution processes?</p> <hr/> <p>Did those who used the alternative dispute resolution processes previously use violent means to resolve conflict?</p> <hr/> <p>Were the trainings of a quality that allowed youth to capably develop skills in alternative dispute resolution?</p> <hr/> <p>Were there any unintended results of youth accessing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms?</p>	<p>Were there any changes in the context that could have contributed to the success or failure such as an election? Mass migration? An outbreak of violence on a large scale?</p>	<p>Was there anything else that could have made this theory of change successful?</p> <hr/> <p>Were there other non-violence training programmes operational in the area?</p> <hr/> <p>Were there cultural factors for the use of violent means of conflict resolution? – e.g. Issues of masculinity</p>	<p>What could have been done to strengthen the theory of change or the result?</p> <hr/> <p>Were the groups selected appropriate?</p> <hr/> <p>Was the region where the activities took place appropriate?</p> <hr/> <p>Were there others networks that the project / programme should have collaborated with? – e.g. engaging local communities beyond targeted youth – on non-violence and acceptance of alternative dispute resolution</p>

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation of a project or programme based on its theories of change *continued*

### Column five: did the activities and lower-level results lead to the anticipated higher-level results?

Thinking back to your hierarchy of results, you will remember that lower level results are meant to feed into higher level results. In this column we explore the connection between the lower level result and the higher level result.

#### Planning

In this column identify the higher level result that should be achieved as a result of the lower level activities. Note: The question(s) may include a repetition of one of your research questions. For example, if you believe that youth will facilitate dispute resolution mechanisms, you must first note if the trainings were developed and youth participated in them. If these first two steps in the hierarchy did not occur it is unlikely your results will be achieved.

#### Data collection

When you collect your data, you should consider and note in this column whether any activities or lower-level results were missing from the design which were important to achieving the higher-level result. Also consider whether the activities and lower-level results led to any unanticipated higher-level results.

When documenting findings in this column do not just state 'yes' or 'no'. Explain why you believe the results were achieved. Also document in this column the approach used to analyse the soundness of the results hierarchy.

### Column six: were there changes in the context?

#### Data collection

Were there external factors that could have affected the functioning of the theory of change? Perhaps these factors could have undermined it, for instance an election in the area could have provoked an increase in tension that overwhelmed the trust that had been developed through the project? Or perhaps the environment had changed such that the theory of change was no longer valid? Trust building between ceasefire groups may no longer be feasible if there is a resumption of hostilities for instance? There also might have been a positive change that could have affected the theory of change such as a sporting event uniting disparate groups. This is the column to document these external changes and how they could affect the success or failure of the theory of change.

### Column seven: what other external factors could have contributed to the result?

This column explores alternative explanations for the result – what else could have caused the results observed? This column differs from column six, in that it focuses on the intended result and not the theory of change. It also differs in that it does not focus on contextual change but actors / initiatives that could have contributed to the attaining or not attaining the result.

#### Planning

In the planning process you should list alternative theories of change which could have contributed to the result being achieved. Your plan needs to consider these as well as your

theory of change and see if these alternative theories can be ruled out. It is important to note that more theories may emerge during the data collection process.

#### Data collection

Your data collection should capture whether there are other reasons / factors that could have contributed to the positive and negative achievement of the result. This is one of the most difficult steps in the process, and careful consideration is needed for your data collection here. Data collection, for this column, requires more inductive methods, such as open-ended interview questions posed to people knowledgeable about the context, project and result. These people could include programme participants, formal and informal leaders who live where the project is taking place, project implementers, and other organisations trying to influence similar changes or similar populations in the same geographic area.

### Column eight: what could have made this theory of change more successful?

This column is used to provide additional review into strengthening the theory of change. If the theory of change was found to be insufficient or the result lacking, is there anything else that could have made or could make the theory more successful or strengthen it? This is particularly good for learning about the theory of change under review and enhancing critical thinking for future theory of change development.

This column differs from the previous one because it is asking about the theory of change and not the result. Are there any other factors which could have contributed to the success or the shortfall of the theory of change?

For example, the theory of change could be flawed but it appears to be true because the result was achieved. Are we sure that it was our initiative alone that caused the theory of change to be successful? Were the initiatives of others that contributed in our theory of change being successful?

#### Data collection

Depending on whether you are using this grid for monitoring or evaluation, it will be used slightly differently. If you are using this grid for monitoring or formative evaluation purposes, you will look for information that will tell you the best way to revise your theory of change. You will specifically look for information that will give detail on how you can tighten your theory of change and use that as you progress with your project / programme. If you are using this grid for summative evaluation, then this column will be used more for reflection of the appropriateness, effectiveness, and accuracy of the theory of change.

Like the previous column, this one requires more inductive methods of data collection. Again, open-ended interview questions can be posed to people knowledgeable about the context, programme and result, such as those listed above.

Diagram 6: Grid with data collected

1 Theory of change	2 Lines of inquiry – research question (s)	3 How does the theory of change contribute to its related results in the results hierarchy?	4 What is your evidence of the result being achieved?	5 Did the activities and lower-level results indeed lead to the anticipated higher-level results?	6 Were there changes in the context?	7 What other external factors could have contributed to the result?	8 What could have made the theory of change and / or the results more successful?
<p>If youth, (project youth and non-project youth), in region x accept and use alternative dispute resolution processes <b>then</b> there will be a reduction in violence in region x</p>	<p>15% youth in region x have used the alternative dispute resolution processes</p> <hr/> <p>20% reduction in incidence of violence compared against original figures</p> <hr/> <p>60% of youth accessing alternative dispute resolution processes considered it a preferred option to violent means</p> <hr/> <p>8% of youth that accessed alternative dispute resolution processes still continued to use violence as a method of conflict resolution</p> <hr/> <p>10% of youth using alternative dispute resolution processes previously resolved conflict violently</p>	<p>20% of youth who were aware of the alternative dispute resolution processes chose not to use them and instead continued to use violent means to resolve conflict – e.g. they did not accept the non-violent means. Additionally, 7% of youth used both alternative dispute resolutions processes and violent means to resolve conflict</p> <hr/> <p>Thus there are flaws in the internal logic of the theory of change as there are youth groups who do not see the value of alternative dispute resolution processes</p>	<p>100 youth attended trainings</p> <hr/> <p>356 youth cited accessing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms</p> <hr/> <p>326 youth said they would not use violence as a result</p> <hr/> <p>20% decrease in incidence of violence</p>	<p>It was recognised that there was a missing activity – the success stories of non-violent dispute resolution processes were not communicated to non-project youth in x region using appropriate media. Thus there was not wide awareness of the alternative dispute resolution processes</p> <hr/> <p>Those accessing the alternative dispute resolution processes were pre-disposed to non-violence: only 10% of those using the processes had previously resolved conflicts violently</p>	<p>There were elections held in the spring that could have contributed to the failure of the theory of change. This electoral violence caused the figures to increase</p>	<p>There was a non-violence training programme being implemented in the area. This may have contributed to reduced violence</p> <hr/> <p>Violent dispute resolution is strongly linked to cultural issues of masculinity</p>	<p>It was found that youth was an appropriate target group but working with local communities – beyond youth – to engage on non-violence and acceptance of alternative dispute methods would have made the theory of change more successful. There was resistance by community elders and some others for the youth to lead on conflict resolution</p>

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation of a project or programme based on its theories of change *continued*

### Hint!

Do a dummy, or practice, data run to test and revise the data collection plans i.e. Invent data for the project and use it to fill out the grid. This will reveal whether the questions you have developed are good enough, and will highlight other useful additional or alternative questions to probe.

### 4.6 Data collection methods

To facilitate data collection and analysis of the results, it can be helpful to create a table for each result and theory of change that captures data sources, data collection methods and data analysis methods. The one below can serve as an example:

**Diagram 7: Data collection and analysis table**

Theory of change	If youth, (project youth and non-project youth), in region x accept and use alternative dispute resolution processes then there will be a reduction in violence in region x because they will see the value of choosing non-violent methods over violent methods		
Desired result from the hierarchy of results	Sources of data	Method of data collection	Method of organising data
Reduced incidence of violence perpetrated by youth	*Security situation updates *Human rights violation reports *Key informants	*Perception surveys *Focus group discussions *Document review	*Dis-aggregating data by type of violent incident, types of youth, location

### 4.7 Helpful hints to manage data collection

Data collection and data analysis can be tricky especially for people who are new to monitoring and evaluation. The research teams in DRC, Nepal and Uganda encountered similar challenges, following are some hints for providing support in the process of data collection and analysis which are drawn from their experiences.

**Set clear parameters for your evaluation.** The number of questions you select for your lines of inquiry, the amount of time and resources you have, reasonable geographic areas you can cover and which population segments to include are

necessary considerations in setting parameters. These are not easy questions to answer and practitioners must assess what realistically can be done with the resources available to them. Answering a smaller number of questions well will produce more credible evaluation findings than answering more questions weakly.

**Focus your sources of data, possibly using purposive sampling.** Purposive sampling is when the evaluator selects the sample based on who they think would be the most appropriate at providing information for learning. It contrasts with random sampling, and is used primarily when there are a limited number of people that have experience in the area being researched and where there are limited resources available for data collection. It can also be effectively used when there are risks of aggravating tensions through a widespread random sample<sup>13</sup>. Purposive sampling is not a panacea for data collection in conflict areas, but it is frequently used by experienced peacebuilding evaluators as a means to ensure that all relevant views are captured without the expense and risks of big random samples.

If you choose purposive sampling then there are special considerations to avoid bias:

- Include a variety of different perspectives in your sample to ensure the credibility of your findings – that is, data source triangulation. A quick actor mapping can identify the different parties who should be represented within the sample. Taking into account roles, gender, ethnicity, religion, geographic location and other factors important to the conflict, consider the different perspectives that need to be captured in the sample.
- Where all relevant perspectives cannot be captured in the sample, be transparent about whose perspectives are, and are not, included in the evaluation report.

**Select a sample size that balances credibility of the evaluation process with feasibility.** When using qualitative methods, determining a sample size that is large enough to produce credible results is a matter of judgment. The following questions can help you determine how many people to include in your sample:

- Are all population segments of interest (see paragraph above on purposive sampling) included in the sample?
- Develop the sample with the help of people with diverse perspectives to make sure that your sample includes people with different points of view. If you rely too heavily on one or a few people to identify who will make up your sample, chances are you will only hear from people who share their perspective.
- If you are unclear how many different perspectives need to be captured within a population segment the snowball method may be useful. This method involves asking

in conflict, the insertion of resources into the beneficiary community and the non-insertion of resources into the community being interviewed could aggravate the situation as there may be jealousy and a sense of exclusion.

13 Random control trials in areas of significant violence could risk contributing to tensions. For example if a non-beneficiary community is interviewed about a programme in another community with whom they are

each respondent to identify other potential additional respondents, and so reaches out to a wider sample within that segment. With the snowball method, once you begin to hear the same responses from people representing the same population segment you have included enough people from that population segment.

**Select your data collection methods carefully.** There are two considerations in selecting data collection methods.

First, which data collection methods are appropriate for the context and the kind of information you are seeking to learn?

The research teams in DRC, Nepal and Uganda involved in this project experimented with different methods of data collection. Those using surveys tended to draw limited information about the conflict and people’s perspectives – the survey tool was often too rigid to explore the perspectives respondents had, particularly as some level of trust is needed to unearth the data sought. Research teams using participatory methods<sup>14</sup>, using more open ended questions and the opportunity for more back-and-forth discussion and probing, found they generated trust and thus more useful data. Additionally participatory methods had further benefits – the data collector him / herself found that he / she was challenged to think more critically about the programming, as the participatory method put him / her into a more reflective role and mindset. But it is important they are done in a conflict-sensitive way<sup>15</sup>.

Observations were trialled by one of the research teams. They found that observations provided insights into the unintended consequences of programming that might not have been captured by other data collection methods. For example, with training local women in mediation skills, they observed that the women that participated also became more confident because they felt respected by their communities in their new roles. However observations can be difficult to interpret correctly without intimate knowledge of the conflict, setting and population, making data analysis difficult. It is important to check the interpretation of observations with others.

Second, how many different kinds of data collection methods are required to gather the data you need and to ensure the credibility of your findings?

Some methods used together, such as document review and interviews or participatory methods, complement each other well. Using two or three methods tests whether your findings remain constant regardless of the method used. This is data method triangulation. Having more than one evaluation team

member undertake data collection also helps triangulate and strengthen the credibility of your findings.

**Form a data analysis team.** The data analysis team ideally should include evaluators, project implementers and other stakeholders, such as local leaders and project participants. Each will provide unique insights into the data collected. If all team members will be involved in every aspect of data analysis, then the team should be limited to four to six members. If the evaluators will maintain the lead on data analysis, turning to the team for input along the way, then the analysis team can be slightly larger.

## 4.8 Analysis of data

With the monitoring and evaluation planning and data collection grid now completed you can analyse your findings. Making comparisons can further help with interpretation of evaluation findings.<sup>16</sup>

**Diagram 8: Comparisons that can assist analysis**

Comparison	Analysis
Theories of change included in the project design vs. theories of change actually used in project implementation	Was the project well designed for the context and change it hoped to influence?
Planned activities vs. actual activities	Was the project successfully implemented as planned?
Project targets vs. actual results	Were the theories of change relevant to addresses the causes of conflict in the context?

In other words, conducting these comparisons can tell us about project design appropriateness and relevance, how well the project was implemented according to the original design, and effectiveness of the approach.

Return to the grid and review what you had written in the columns. In particular reflect on the ‘because’ logic in column three and see if that logic was found, sound or insufficient.

This is an important last step in the process. This is the step where the richness of the reflection should be captured. What is your reflection based on the data analysis of the project’s theory of change?

14 For example, see Chambers, Robert, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Analysis of Experience. Brighton, USA: Institute of Development Studies, 1994.

15 Being conflict sensitive in data collection means thinking through the potential negative impacts of the data collection process. When asking questions about conflict, the conflict itself may rise to the surface, creating tension. This needs to be considered beforehand, and mitigating actions taken (for example deciding about who should form part of a focus group discussion very carefully).

16 Funnell, Sue C. and Patricia J. Rogers, Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011, 434-438.

# 5 Present your findings and ensure their use

## Present your findings in both grid and report form. Below is some guidance on how to present findings so they will be clear.

Monitoring and evaluation reports should be concise and structured, and generally include the following sections:

- Project context;
- Evaluation methods, including an explanation of any limitations within the methods;
- Data and analysis;
- Recommendations;
- Annex: completed grid.

Yet every evaluator and practitioner knows that evaluation reports are too often not fully utilised. The following recommendations may improve the chances that the evaluation findings will inform project decision-making:

- As noted earlier in the guide, project stakeholders should be included in as many aspects of the evaluation as possible. While we discussed their participation in data collection and analysis in this guide, they can also be included in evaluation design;

- Present evaluation data to as many groups of project stakeholders as possible. These may include project implementers and their managers, project participants, other project stakeholders such as local leaders, and donors;
- Make evaluation use a part of the evaluation – don't let the evaluation end with the submission of the report. Rather, plan to work with project stakeholders after the evaluation to help them respond to its findings. This could be done as a workshop for learning and review or next phase planning.

Contributing effectively to peacebuilding requires constant attention to context, project theory and results being achieved. In peacebuilding there are no maps. In their place project theory provides a compass, guiding implementers in the right direction. As with a compass, project theory must be frequently reviewed to make sure that its North is correctly set and that the guidance it is providing will lead to the intended destination.

This guidance is meant to support peacebuilding implementers by offering a process that is engaging and useable. We would welcome feedback from your experience of using the guidance, so that as a field we can continue to improve our practice and learn from each other.

## Annex 1 A selection of conflict analysis tools and frameworks

Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building: tools for peace and conflict impact assessment, Africa Peace Forum, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, Saferworld, and International Alert, January 200, Chapter 2. [http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1053/Conflict\\_Sensitive\\_Approaches\\_Ch2.pdf](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1053/Conflict_Sensitive_Approaches_Ch2.pdf)

Leonhardt, Manuela, Conflict Analysis for Project Planning and Management. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, August 2001. <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-conflictanalysis.pdf>

Goodhand, Jonathan, Vaux, Tony and Walker, Robert, Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA). London: Department for International Development (DFID), January 2002. [http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Media/Topics/Peacebuilding\\_Analysis\\_\\_Impact/Resources/Goodhand\\_Jonathan\\_Conducting\\_Conflict\\_Assessments.pdf](http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Topics/Peacebuilding_Analysis__Impact/Resources/Goodhand_Jonathan_Conducting_Conflict_Assessments.pdf)

Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF). Washington, DC: World Bank, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Team (CPR), Social Development Department, April 2005. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCPR/214574-1112883508044/20657757/CAFApril2005.pdf>

Verstegen, Suzanne, Conflict Prognostication: Toward a Tentative Framework For Conflict Assessment (Revised Version). The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations – Clingendael, 1999. [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/1999/19990900\\_cru\\_paper\\_verstegen.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/1999/19990900_cru_paper_verstegen.pdf)

Fisher, Simon, Ibrahim Abdi, Dekha, Ludin, Jawed, Smith, Richard, Williams, Steve, and Williams, Sue, Working with Conflict: Skills & Strategies for Action. London: Responding to Conflict, 2000. <http://www.respond.org/pages/publications.html>

Programming Framework for International Alert: Design, Monitoring and Evaluation. January 2010. [http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/library/Programming\\_Framework\\_2010.pdf](http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/library/Programming_Framework_2010.pdf)

## Annex 2 Questions to ask to review a conflict analysis

### HOW was the conflict analysis done?

- Is the analysis comprehensive in breadth and depth?
- Which stakeholders were consulted in the analysis?
- Did the analysis process give stakeholders sufficient say (input, feedback, as individuals and groups)?
- Does the analysis address the complexity of and the inter-relationships between different issues relevant to the conflict?
- Has the conflict analysis been validated by reviewing similar conflict analyses from other sources?

### WHO does the analysis include?

- Does the analysis include the stakeholders relevant to the aspects of the conflict that you are trying to address?
- Does the analysis specifically include (a) those who are supporting conflict actors and the on-going conflict and (b) those who are supporting peacebuilders and peacebuilding activities?
- Do those who conducted the analysis have sufficient impartiality or have they compensated for their biases?

### WHEN was the conflict analysis done?

- Is the conflict analysis updated periodically?
- Is the conflict analysis updated when the context changes?

### WHAT does the analysis cover?

- Are there different levels of analysis – international, regional, national, local dynamics?
- Does the conflict analysis cover structural and cultural violence?
- Does the conflict analysis cover trends and windows of opportunity?
- Does the conflict analysis examine power?
- Does the conflict analysis cover causes and triggers of conflict?
- Does the conflict analysis identify issues, interests and values of the primary stakeholders?
- Are gender considerations explained in the conflict analysis?

## Annex 3 Additional resources

### Theories of change

Bloomfield, David, Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle, eds., *Social Change and Conflict Transformation*. Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation Dialogue Series Issue No. 5, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_sochange\\_complete.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_sochange_complete.pdf).

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs*. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005, 10-24. [http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt\\_manualpage.html](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html).

Funnell, Sue C. and Patricia J. Rogers, *Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Levine, Carlisle J., *Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Guidance for Developing Logical and Results Frameworks*. Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 2007. [http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/me/dev\\_logical.pdf](http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/me/dev_logical.pdf).

Patton, Michael Quinn, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002, 162-164.

Shapiro, Ilana, 'Extending the Framework of Inquiry: Theories of Change in Conflict Interventions,' *Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management – First launch Aug 2006, [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_shapiro\\_comm.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_shapiro_comm.pdf).

Weiss, Carol H., 'Theory-Based Evaluation: Theories of Change for Poverty Reduction Programs.' In O. Feinstein and R. Picciotto (eds.), *Evaluation and Poverty Reduction*. Washington, DC: Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank, 2000.

### Impact evaluation and causality

Baker, Judy L. *Evaluating the Impact of Development Projects on Poverty: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2000.

Earl, Sarah, Carden, Fred and Smutylo, Terry, *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2001.

Funnell, Sue C. and Patricia J. Rogers, *Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011, 469-499.

Gertler, Paul J., Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings and Christel M. J. Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2011.

Khandker, Shahidur R., Gayatri B. Koolwal and Hussain A. Samad, *Handbook on Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Methods and Practices*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010.

# Notes



