

Integrated sustainable development programme

Domains of change checklists



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The success of integrated sustainable development (ISD) entirely rests upon a firm foundation of sound analysis of the following

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1. Start up assessment: the background of the project

The following information is vital for the team both locally and at headquarters to put together proposals to donors as well as briefing documents.

GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENTS

Describe the nature of the current situation.
How is poverty manifest in relation to:

- ▶ Food security
- ▶ Income
- ▶ School enrolment and achievement
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Access to water
- ▶ Social empowerment
- ▶ Insecurity

- 1 Describe the sequence of events and causal factors that have contributed to the current situation.
- 2 What problem(s) need to be addressed? What other specific assessments have been made and by whom?
- 3 Give a brief description of the social and political context, including any conflicts or disputes that impact on people in the area in question.

4 What is the geographical situation? What are the expected weather conditions (including temperature) area, region, nationally, now and during the rest of the year? Describe the physical environment, the accessibility of the area by rail, road, sea, air.

5 Who are the other groups in the area or region? How do they relate to the people in your project area?

6 What is the background of the affected group?

7 What is the approximate number of people proposed to be included in the project and their demographic characteristics? (Include a breakdown of the population by sex, and children under five. If available include numbers of 5–14 years, pregnant and lactating women and those aged 60 and over)

8 Who are the particularly vulnerable or marginalised people in this population group? (female headed households, unaccompanied children, disabled, sick, elderly, minority or ethnic groups, etc) Do they have specific needs? How have they been affected by the current crisis?

9 Are there any ethnic, family or clan based groupings among the target population?

10 Who are the key people to contact/consult with?

- i. Stakeholders as categorised
- ii. They currently face problems which the project may address
- iii. Their potential for coping with the problem
- iv. Links between stakeholders.

11 Are there any community elders or clan elders or are there any organised structures that can be part of decision making?

12 What are the current activities or levels of productive activities of the affected population?

13 What is the local/national authority/government capacity to respond to the situation? Describe available local resources (physical, organisational and human) which can be used in response to the current situation. Are they adequate?

14 What are the policies and procedures of host Government with regard to NGOs involvement in the area?

15 What other agencies/organisations are in the area – what are they doing and what are they likely to do in response to the situation?

16 Is there any active community group in the affected area? How do the people organise themselves to respond to the situation?

1. Start up assessment: the background of the project

17 Do indigenous systems or services already exist that would normally be expected to address the needs? Could these be strengthened and underpinned and could external intervention undermine them?

18 What lessons have been learnt from previous experience in this area or type of project?

19 Does Islamic Relief operate in the area or have any significant contact with local organisations?

20 What are the in-country capacities of Islamic Relief to implement the activities needed? Do we have a strategy for the country? What human and physical resources would the country programme require to initiate a response?

21 What are opportunities and strength that we have in country? Do we have any risks and threats that need a separate strategy to deal with?

22 What connects people across divisions? What are the sources of tension between people? What are the attitudes expressed about different groups?

23 Are there any security constraints/man-made dangers (war, mines, militias)? Would it be appropriate to do a detailed conflict mapping assessment?

24 Are there disputes or conflict between groups? If so what are the causes for these conflicts? What are the relationships between these groups and outside actors (relationship mapping)? (for a more detailed stakeholder analysis and relationship mapping appropriate for conflict or high fragility environments, see Islamic Relief's conflict transformation toolkit).

INFORMATION SOURCES

▶ Key informants

Women and men; local leaders; community members.

▶ Representatives of government

Ministry of health/water; sanitation/food; environment etc.

▶ Interested parties

Academics; journalists; local/international NGOs; UN representatives.

▶ Secondary information sources

Census reports; population estimates; media reports; observation.

2. Well-being and assets

WELL-BEING INDEX

How do local people prioritise their sense of well-being? What barriers to achieving these dimensions of well-being do they experience? A simple participatory rural appraisal exercise should be carried out with community leaders (and separately with female representatives if appropriate) to identify what elements of well-being they value in their lives and how they prioritise them. What do they see as the main barriers to their full realisation?

ASSETS, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND THE VULNERABILITY CONTEXT IN DETAIL

Assets are the resources that people use to achieve well-being, generate livelihoods and to weather crises and shocks. There are six basic asset categories defined in the conceptual framework:

- ▶ **Spiritual**
- ▶ **Human**
- ▶ **Social and political**
- ▶ **Physical**
- ▶ **Financial**
- ▶ **Natural**

2.1 Spiritual

Spiritual capital is summed up as the wealth of spirituality and faith that acts to infuse 'Islah' or righteousness, welfare and justice within the community. For instance:

- ▶ Support for and protection of the vulnerable
- ▶ The motivation to prevent violence and build peace
- ▶ The motivation to reduce corruption and crime
- ▶ The fulfillment of rights and obligations within the community
- ▶ The infusion of meaning and purpose.

Questions should include

- 1 What are the levels of religious knowledge, practice and wisdom?
- 2 How do faith institutions and the prevalence of faith practice influence the key elements of well-being in the community? I.e. Protection of spirituality, life, intellect, wealth and community? This may include negative elements such as misunderstandings of culture and religion, social fault-lines etc.
- 3 What services are provided by religious institutions? (i.e. feeding programmes, micro-finance, education, orphan care, health, shelter, peace building etc.)

- 4 What freedoms exist for people to practice and access information about their faith?
- 5 How does faith understanding impact upon the provision of human rights? I.e. Inheritance, provision of education, protection etc.

2.2 Human

Human capital includes those capabilities that each individual has to enable them to prosper. These include education, individual health, life experiences, skills and wisdom, intelligence, livelihood skills and physical strength.

Questions should include

- 1 What levels of literacy and numeracy does the community enjoy?
- 2 Basic data relating to the health status of the community – mortality, morbidity, maternal health, prevalence of disease.
- 3 What is the current nutritional and food security status? Has this shown signs of change?
- 4 What are the general life skills and experience of community member?
- 5 What levels of education and access to further or higher education are found in the community?

2. Well-being and assets

- 6 What skills do the community currently possess which enable them to survive and generate income (livelihoods skills)?

2.3 Social and political

Social capital includes those assets and capabilities that are peoples' social networks that support them and enable them to have power and control over their lives— family and friends, community organisations and civil society, religious groups to which they belong. Importantly it includes political assets that reflect the power people have in their communities and families. Political Assets are the capacity to influence decision-making, to advocate for resources or change, and ability to claim one's rights – for example to education, health care or voting.

Questions should include

- 1 How well does the family function and provide the support required for human nurture?
- 2 To what extent are different family members (including females and elderly people) able to raise their needs and be involved in decision-making?

- 3 To what extent are individuals supported by wider networks and social groups?
- 4 Do people have the skills and freedom to organise collectively and manage their development processes? Examples might include grain banks, credit unions, water management committees etc.
- 5 Do local civil society and community governance groups involve local people in decision making?
- 6 Do people have access and the capability to represent their needs to local and national government? Do they have influence in the decision making over major issues affecting their lives?
- 7 To what extent are the community involved in political decision-making?

2.4 Physical

Physical assets are tangible assets, and can include homes, equipment and tools, bicycles, vehicles, wells, clothes, etc.

Questions should include

- 1 What physical assets do individuals and households possess?
- 2 Is there affordable access to basic assets?
- 3 Are there any risks posed to those assets?

2.5 Financial

Financial Assets and capabilities are either cash, or items that can be converted to cash quickly and easily. Financial Assets might include grain, livestock, wool rugs, gold, income from a job or remittances from abroad. Financial capabilities may include access to affordable borrowing.

Questions should include

- 1 What savings are the community able to make in either cash or in-kind to enable resilience and pay for services such as education and utilities?
- 2 What access to markets does the community have to convert their produce to cash? Is it fair?
- 3 What access to borrowing does the community have? Is it affordable and fair?

2.6 Natural

Natural Assets include natural resources like fresh water, soil, plants, trees, animals, air, regular rainfall and oceans. Natural assets are particularly important in determining with the community what opportunities might be available for alleviating poverty should certain capabilities be provided (i.e. markets, skills etc). When considering assets,

2. Well-being and assets

it is important to also recognize the quality of those Assets (e.g., How fertile is the soil? How clean is the air?) Access is important because, although theoretically people may have access to these, in reality social structures or gender injustice may deprive people of them.

Questions should include

- 1 What natural resources does the community possess?
- 2 Which natural resources are managed sustainably?
- 3 Which natural resources are utilised in order to improve living standards? (i.e. clean water management). Are they sustainably used?
- 4 How do natural assets currently provide the basis for livelihoods & income generation?
- 5 What obstacles prevent the sustainable use of these resources? (i.e. lack of education, access, skills, access, power etc)
- 6 What opportunities are there for sustainably utilising natural resources?

INFORMATION SOURCES

▶ Key informants

Women and men; local leaders; community members.

▶ Representatives of government

Ministry of health/water; sanitation/food; environment etc.

▶ Interested parties

Academics; journalists; local/international NGOs; UN representatives.

▶ Secondary information sources

Census reports; population estimates; media reports; observation.

3. Structural causes of poverty

Very often poor people face obstacles to lifting themselves out of poverty as a result of structural factors present in society which are beyond their control. Examples include institutionalised discrimination related to class, gender, religion, ethnic group, or access to citizenship. It may relate to culture and deep rooted ways of decision making. It may relate to the way the economy is structured either locally or internationally. It may relate to a failure of systems, such as the legal system or market system. ISD programs can help communities to engage actively with structures and systems so that they can be an enabling force in their lives.

Some of the systems that organise and regulate behaviour and processes include:

- ▶ **Governance**
- ▶ **Legal** (e.g. laws)
- ▶ **Markets** (e.g. trade agreements)
- ▶ **Political** (e.g. policies)
- ▶ **Social and cultural** (e.g. caste, gender, age, cultural group etc.)
- ▶ **Beliefs and values** (e.g. prohibition of interest taking)
- ▶ **Infrastructure** (e.g. communications)

Questions should include

- 1 Do people within the community have access to their legal and human rights?
- 2 Do local people have fair access to the local market for jobs, goods and services?
- 3 Do local people feel that they are treated with justice where there is or has previously been a dispute or incidence of violence?
- 4 Can people raise their needs at a local or national level through the political system?
- 5 Can local people influence decision making about the allocation of resources?
- 6 Do social structures and culture limit legitimate freedoms to enjoy well-being, rights and capabilities? (e.g. access to land, education, inheritance etc.)
- 9 Do people have access to the basic utilities of fuel, electricity, clean water and sanitation?
- 10 Do people have access to communications infrastructure such as roads, rail, telephone and internet?
- 11 To what extent is the lack of infrastructure a barrier to well-being and capabilities? (e.g. access to markets, hospitals, employment)
- 12 To what extent does insecurity prevent the development or maintenance of systems and infrastructure?

Other structural barriers

- 7 Do people have access to key service infrastructure such as health centres, schools, universities and hospitals?
- 8 Does local government have the required skills, governance ability and resources to support development processes? If not, which areas require specific support?

INFORMATION SOURCES

- ▶ **Key information**
Observation; interviews and participatory rural analysis with members and leaders of the affected population (especially women and children).
- ▶ **Government**
Local government offices; ministry of health; ministry of Agriculture; other relevant bodies.
- ▶ **Interested parties**
UN representatives; NGOs; other agencies.
- ▶ **Secondary information sources**
Maps/aerial photographs; transect walks.

4. Vulnerabilities to shocks and climate change

Many of the communities we work with live in marginal and vulnerable environments where small changes to rainfall and temperature can tip the community into food insecurity and where sudden onset events can devastate whole communities made worse often through a lack of investment in infrastructure. Climate change in all its various forms often presents communities with the greatest threat to their survival. In addition many communities face severe risks from disease, economic shocks and conflict, much of which results from a lack of resources. The failure to mitigate and prepare for disasters is often the underlying cause of much poverty, since every disaster creates enormous losses to housing, assets and lives. For this reason we have integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as a key component and domain of change within our assessment criteria and project design.

Questions should include

- 1 How many people are affected (by what) and why? Where are they? How are they distributed? Settled or mobile?
- 2 What are the current or likely major threats?
- 3 What are the underlying environmental trends and what are their onset trends? (e.g. rainfall, floods, desertification)
- 4 How does the community currently manage resilience to environmental fluctuations and extremes, conflict, insecurity and other threats?
- 5 What critical skills and infrastructure is missing that might strengthen resilience?
- 6 What risks of conflict or insecurity exist either presently or in the future?
- 7 How could conflict be better mitigated and transformed?
- 8 Who else is working in Disaster Risk Reduction?

INFORMATION SOURCES

▶ Key information

Observation; interviews with women and community representatives.

▶ Government

Local authorities; ministries responsible for sanitation, water and the environment.

▶ Interested parties

Local and international NGO's and agencies; hospitals, clinics and health outposts.

▶ Secondary information sources

National level analyses on country-wide trends.

5. Opportunity analysis

The critical test of the project proposal is whether analysis of the above domains of change produces the possibility of sustainable change. The in-depth analysis should produce an accurate understanding around the causes of poverty from both structural and human assets perspective, as well as the vulnerability aspect. The challenge now is to construct a project strategy that addresses all the relevant domains of change

GENERAL

- 1 Develop a problem tree in relation to understanding the causes of poverty from the perspective of the three domains of change?
- 2 Isolate the causal factors into the three main domains of change and, if related to assets, which category of assets do they belong to?
- 3 Which stakeholders have capacity to encourage relationships and connections between groups?
- 4 With stakeholder involvement prioritise the main manifestation and causal factors of poverty with a percentage weighting
- 5 Convert this problem tree into an objective tree. Is this a successful vision of human development in relation to local aspirations and understanding of well-being?
- 6 Map the strategy for poverty alleviation by tackling the most fundamental causal issues in a linear logical way placing objectives in order of where in the project life cycle they need to be addressed. Do stakeholders agree with the logic of the roadmap?
- 7 What is the main catalyst for sustainable change?
- 8 Identify what barriers and risks exist to resolving issues and what stakeholders' views are around the practicalities of solving these issues. Are they prepared to own the responsibility for and consequences of change?
- 9 Will the wider structure of markets, economic and social change, infrastructure and governance allow change to be sustained at a local level?
- 10 Will there be any parties who may be negatively affected by these changes?

INFORMATION SOURCES

▶ Key information

Observation; interviews with women and community representatives.

▶ Government

Local authorities; ministries responsible for sanitation, water and the environment; gender and or women's ministries.

▶ Interested parties

Local and international NGO's and agencies; hospitals, clinics and health outposts.

Project review questions from an ISD perspective

ASSETS

- ▶ How will the project strengthen existing household and community Assets (quantity and quality)?
- ▶ Will the project have impact on one category of Assets only or several categories? How?
- ▶ Will the various categories of Assets that have been strengthened mutually reinforce one another? How?
- ▶ Are the Assets that will be strengthened priority areas as identified by the community? Why are they priorities?
- ▶ If the project is not multi-sectoral, will any priority areas of need that are not covered by the project benefit from other kinds of indirect support (e.g., referral to other NGOs)?

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

- ▶ How will project participants have increased access to services?
- ▶ How will project participants have a voice in managing the services (rights and responsibilities, subsidiarity)?
- ▶ How will the project increase the influence of people on Structures and Systems (subsidiarity)?
- ▶ How will the project increase the accountability of those in positions of authority (common good, stewardship)?

- ▶ How will the project improve equity and protect the most vulnerable (option for the poor)?
- ▶ How have gender considerations been taken into consideration in the project design, dignity and equality?

ACCESS AND INFLUENCE

- ▶ Has the proposal described the ways in which Systems and Structures influence how Assets are used, managed or allocated?
- ▶ Does the proposal include an analysis that describes the different ways in which men and women access Asset categories?
- ▶ Does the proposal indicate a good understanding of who controls various Asset categories and its implication for livelihoods?
- ▶ Has the proposal effectively addressed problems related to control over Assets that interfere with attaining sustainable development?



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