

Guidance Note on Evaluation and Do No Harm

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There are three distinct ways to think about Do No Harm (and conflict sensitivity more generally) in the context of Evaluation. First, is to evaluate for the use of Do No Harm by a project or program. Second, is to use DNH to develop indicators for the evaluation. The third way that Do No Harm is used is to make sure the evaluation itself is abiding by the principles of Do No Harm.

Key Issues for Evaluation in General

An evaluation is an intervention. Evaluators are part of the context. They are having an impact on both the situation and the organization.

An evaluation should focus on strengths and what is going right as well as any challenges and failures. Too often, evaluators feel their job is solely to find weaknesses so as to “help the program improve”. This style of evaluation loses sight of the fact that it can be even more important to build on strengths than to highlight, or paper over, supposed weaknesses. Evaluation is a learning opportunity.

It is important to remember that a project or program might be successful at being conflict sensitive without a formal DNH analysis or plan.

A program might have positive, conflict sensitive elements side-by-side with negative ones. Staff almost always do not intend to have negative impacts. An evaluator who sees negative impacts should be able to work with the staff to develop options to mitigate them, using the analysis by which s/he has identified negative impacts.

Section I

Evaluating for Do No Harm Use (Did the project or program use DNH?)

This is straightforward. Is there a Do No Harm analysis of the project or program? Has it been updated regularly? Based on the analysis, have staff implemented changes to their project or program? After changes have been made, has the analysis been updated to examine the effects of the changes?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no” then it is clear that the project or program is not making good use of Do No Harm. In this case, an evaluator will still need to explore whether the project or program is conflict-sensitive.

If the answer to these questions is “yes”, then a larger conversation can be held around the results of the analysis to see how well the analysis was done and if it made a difference both in reducing dividers and in realizing opportunities for positive support of connectors.

Key Issues in Evaluating for Do No Harm Use

1. Do No Harm *use* is often confused with the concept of adhering to Do No Harm “*principles*”. Do No Harm is a specific set of analytical techniques that support the practice of general principles. Too often, people believe that knowing the principles and vaguely trying to live them is enough. It is not.
2. Logframes often do not provide appropriate indicators for Do No Harm issues. Field staff often feel their incentives are directed toward what is in the logframe. They do not take up other, additional issues because they do not receive reinforcement or support to do so. Even if a donor has requested that DNH be part of a logframe, if it is not included (in the logframe accepted by the donor!), staff will ignore DNH.
3. Developing indicators for DNH requires the involvement of field staff. If a logframe is being produced in an office removed from the field site and without the input of the staff who will be responsible for DNH, then the indicators will very likely not be the right ones.
4. Cross-cutting themes, such as Do No Harm, almost always get short changed in the monitoring process. Staff are often unclear about who is responsible for a particular cross-cutting theme. They also may be unclear about how precisely to gather information about the theme.

Key Questions in Evaluating for Do No Harm Use

The following questions can be used to evaluate the depth of commitment to Do No Harm.

1. How do staff analyze the context? What framework(s) do they use?
2. How do staff analyze their intervention? What framework(s) do they use to examine the details of their project or program?
3. How is analysis reflected in project or program redesign? How is analysis reflected in daily work?
4. How often is analysis done?
5. Have changes to the project or program been made? Were changes based on analysis? How?
6. Where changes have been made (or suggested), are they connected with the patterns of the ABCs (Actions and Behaviors)?
7. Has the program reduced dividers and supported connectors? What is the evidence for this?

Section II

Using DNH to Develop Indicators for Evaluation (and also Evaluating for Conflict Sensitivity in the absence of a DNH analysis)

In order to determine if a project or program is conflict sensitive, an evaluator will need to develop indicators that apply to the particular context. Some of these may be indicators developed by the staff

to monitor their own performance, but evaluators should develop additional or supplementary ones to better inform themselves.

By far the most common situation an evaluator will find him or herself in is one where no indicators have been developed. In this case, the evaluator will have to do a DNH analysis of his or her own. While this is challenging, it need not take an extraordinary amount of time. (See the Annex: Quick Do No Harm Analysis for Evaluators.)

Key Issues in using DNH to develop indicators for evaluation

1. DNH has seen that interventions have impacts on the context in six key areas.

	Do we see	
Fragmentation	Group (inter- or intra-)	Cohesion (Cooperation)
Worse	Quality of Life getting	Better
Disrespected (Humiliated)	People feeling	Respected
Violent Behavior	We are Rewarding	Constructive Behavior
Decreasing	Government Capacity	Increasing
Increasing	Human Rights abuses	Decreasing

2. Observing changes in the six areas, an evaluator can use Dividers and Connectors to determine the specific factors that are having an impact on conflict.
3. What then is the relationship of the project or program to those factors? How should the indicators change if the project or program is conflict sensitive? How are they changing?
4. A project or program is a set of choices and decisions. Each decision can have an impact. A project or program should be analyzed to disaggregate the decisions made and their implementation.
5. Every decision is based on criteria. A project or program should be analyzed so that the criteria used in decision making are explicit.
6. The details of decisions and criteria matter.

Key Questions in using DNH to develop indicators for evaluation

1. Did you use the six areas?
2. Did you use Dividers and Connectors to see what factors in the context are influencing the six areas?
3. How do you know that changes have taken place in the indicators?

4. How do you know the organization is having an impact on the indicators? Have you analyzed the details of the project or program?

Section III

Evaluating with Do No Harm principles (how to do Conflict Sensitive Evaluation)

How do you evaluate according to Do No Harm principles? Again, an evaluation is an intervention. An evaluator is part of the context and as such has an impact on the context. Evaluators have to behave in certain ways in order to do the job in a conflict sensitive manner.

This requires close attention to the ABCs (Actions and Behaviors lead to Consequences). How does the evaluator interact with the staff of the project or program? How does the evaluator interact with the beneficiaries he or she interviews? An evaluator should always act according to the RAFT (Respect, Accountability, Fairness, and Transparency). The following chart categorizes positive and negative patterns of behavior. (See also the CDA papers on the ABCs.)

Negative Patterns of Behavior	4 Broad Categories of Behavior	Positive Patterns of Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Suspicion • Anger and Aggression (Belligerence) • Indifference • Fear • Telling others about themselves 	Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation and Collaboration • Trust • Calm • Sensitivity (to local concerns) • Courage • Listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerlessness • Impunity 	Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Action • Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different Value for Different Lives • Ignoring Rules • Unfairness 	Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of Value • Following Rules • Fairness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed • Decision making process unknown <p><i>Lack of transparency contributes to all above behaviors</i></p>	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Decision making process known <p><i>Transparency contributes to all above behaviors</i></p>

One evaluator who uses DNH begins every conversation emphasizing collaboration and how much there is to learn. This evaluator reminds people that they have learned important lessons that will help others in the future and that she is there both to collect and understand what they have learned. She also asks if she may at times during the evaluation present what she believes she is learning so that people can make sure she understands. Note how many of the positive patterns she hits in this introduction.

Key Issues in Evaluating with Do No Harm principles

1. Follow the ABCs.
2. Staff are often wary of evaluation, feeling that it will focus on their weaknesses. One challenge for an evaluator is helping people to be honest and forthright about their work. Showing respect for their hard work and acknowledging that they know the context of the project or program goes a long way toward creating an open conversation.
3. This does not mean that the evaluator should paper over real problems. However, how an evaluator presents serious issues does matter.
4. The staff of a project or program are often, in private, quite critical of the shortcomings of their work. If they can be engaged to discuss the challenges they have faced—and sometimes failed to overcome!—and given opportunities to discuss options, an evaluator can often find superb recommendations from the staff themselves.
5. Evaluators have to be seen as fair. This means being forthright about the parameters of the evaluation. Evaluators must be clear about what they think their role is and what exactly they are doing. It also means that they must understand (and be seen to be making an effort to understand) what it is they are evaluating.
6. When staff respond to an evaluation by saying, “the evaluator did not understand what we do,” that is an indication of an evaluator’s failure both to be fair and to be respectful.
7. Evaluators have to be accountable. A final evaluation report should not come as a surprise to those undergoing the evaluation. Comments on the evaluation by those being evaluated must be taken seriously. Defensive evaluators or ones who provoke anger without a subsequent conversation are refusing to be accountable for their observations and opinions.

Key Questions

1. Do you understand the project or program you are evaluating? Have you tried to explain it to the staff who are involved to see if you really do?
2. What have you done to overcome suspicion of you as an evaluator?
3. Have you taken responsibility for helping the staff to understand your findings? Have you committed to helping staff where you see shortcomings?
4. Will people learn from this evaluation? How will you know if people have learned?
5. Have you asked the staff for feedback on your findings? (Prior to submitting the report!)

ANNEX

Quick Do No Harm Analysis for Evaluators

The following charts can guide an evaluator through the process of a quick DNH analysis so that they can think rigorously about the conflict sensitivity of the project or program they are evaluating.

Evaluating the Impacts of a Project or Program on the Context

Evaluating the impact of a project or program on conflict is easy, essential, and seldom done.

Evaluators need to develop their own analysis of a context and then of the impacts of a project or program upon it. While this takes a bit of time (though less than often expected), there are tools in the toolbox that make it much easier than chopping down a tree with your bare hands.

In some cases (many cases!), there is no analysis from the project or program to build upon. The evaluator will be starting essentially from scratch. Even in these cases, where acquiring any sort of baseline data from the beginning of a project or program is impossible, it is still possible to see where a project or program is having an impact.

Areas of Impact

International organizations that intervene have impacts in six areas. Within these six areas, Dividers/Connectors Analysis is the key tool to get an understanding of the context.

This first chart shows the six areas of impact. Evaluators should mark down their observations within these six areas. What sort of situation do they see? Can they find out what sorts of changes have occurred over time?

Areas of Impact Chart

<i>bad</i>	Do we see	<i>good</i>
Fragmentation	Group (inter- or intra-)	Cohesion (Cooperation)
Worse	Quality of Life getting	Better
Disrespected (Humiliated)	People feeling	Respected
Violent Behavior	We are Rewarding	Constructive Behavior
Decreasing	Government Capacity	Increasing
Increasing	Human Rights abuses	Decreasing

Next, use Dividers and Connectors to review the six areas of impact. Using the following “Context Matrix” as a brainstorming aid, figure out what factors in the context are involved in changes in the six areas of impact.

Context Matrix

	Fragmentation or Cohesion Increasing or Decreasing	Quality of Life Worse or Better	Disrespect or Respect Increasing or Decreasing	Rewarding violence/threats or constructive behavior	Government capacity Decreasing or Increasing	Human Rights abuses Increasing or Decreasing
Systems & Institutions						
Attitudes & Actions						
Values & Interests						
Experiences						
Symbols & Occasions						

Organizational Behavior

Behavior matters. An evaluator should pay close attention to the way people talk and the way documents are written. Observe the way staff act in the field. How do they interact with the local population? How do they interact with beneficiaries? How do local people interact with them?

Use the following RAFT Chart to note how people within an organization act. Are they using the RAFT or behaving counter to it?

Organizational behavior takes place in three areas:

- Conduct is the personal behavior of individuals.
- Policy is the organizational documentation that influences, directs, and constrains conduct.
- Publicity is the organization’s presentation of itself and its work to the world.

The full chart of ABC patterns of behavior (see above) can assist an evaluator in interpreting the behaviors they observe and hear about.

The RAFT Chart

RAFT	Conduct	Policy	Publicity
Respect			
Accountability			
Fairness			
Transparency			