Example of Guidelines on How to Analyze Results
M4C

Principles for Analyzing Information

Analysis for decision-making: The most important principle is that M4C gathers information to help make particular decisions. Data is analyzed in such a way to help make those decisions, not to make long reports. So, data analysis focuses on a limited number of specific questions that will help make particular decisions.

Honest inquiry: M4C promotes an organizational culture that encourages honest reflection on results. It is human nature for staff to want the interventions they are involved in to succeed. Therefore, the challenge for M4C is that staff will naturally look for the positive aspects of incoming information. In order to achieve a balanced analysis leading to accurate conclusions and credible reporting, M4C ensures that:

- open reflection is encouraged and consistently rewarded,
- quantitative and qualitative analysis processes are consistently followed,
- the process of analysis is done jointly among the operations officers responsible for an intervention or sector and those not directly involved in specific interventions including MRM staff, managers and, if appropriate, peer operations officers,
- constructive questions, challenging and skepticism in analysis meetings are encouraged, and
- failure of interventions is accepted and followed by analysis and decisions on how to adjust an intervention or sector portfolio to improve results.

Averages and distribution of information: When looking at data on a sample of service providers or char households, a sector team calculates or estimates the average across the sample. The average is used for the calculation of estimated results. However, the team also examines the data to see if there is a norm – in other words if many of the service provider or char households have similar data - or if the data is very spread out – in other words if the service providers or char households in the sample vary a lot. If the data varies a lot, M4C looks for the reasons why. This helps the team determine, for example, if one similar service will be appropriate in all circumstances of if a service needs to be tailored to different circumstances (e.g. geographical, type of soil, type of service provider, type of char, type of household etc.)

Triangulation: Data from a single source or single method can be unreliable. Before drawing conclusions from data, M4C teams compare data on the same issues from several sources and/or methods, to the extent practical. For example, M4C looks at data from both service providers and char households on the amount, quality and characteristics of each service. When trying to understand how char households use and benefit from services, M4C will look at information gathered in different ways, for example observations of staff on household behavior changes, in-depth case studies on a few households and how they have received services, used them and benefited from them, and a survey which quantifies changes in getting services, behavior change and performance change. Triangulation helps M4C draw more accurate conclusions from information than would be possible relying only on a single source or method.

Qualitative and Quantitative Information: M4C uses both qualitative and quantitative information to

draw conclusions because, in the complex environments in which M4C works, both types of information are needed to understand project impact. Neither qualitative nor quantitative information is used more, but rather M4C uses both together to draw conclusions as much as possible. For example, when trying to understand the extent to which the performance of char household farms is changing as a result of using a particular service, M4C might look at the results of a small quasi-experimental survey that estimates, quantitatively, the change in households' performance as a result of the service alongside qualitative information on what households say about changes in performance and why they have happened.

Relationship Matrix (RM): Relationship matrix is used to monitor relationships among the actors. M4C is using this tool to monitor attitude and behavioral changes between char producers and other market actors. In all agricultural sectors M4C is currently working in (Maize, Chilli and Jute) have one intervention area called *"Supporting formation of producer groups and/or service points on the chars"*. The core objective of this intervention area is to organize char producers, increase interaction, bargaining power, relationship and trust between producers and other market actors. RM tool helps M4C to monitor changes of the above mention indicators. After setting a baseline and a target, relationships will be monitored and measured in a regular interval. From each upazilla one relationship matrix will be developed for monitoring. Sub-contractors will take the lead to collect information from the field with the help of outsourced firms if necessary.

Gender: Women and men generally have different roles in the various sectors M4C targets. For example in the handicraft sector, usually women produce the products but men purchase the inputs based on requests from the women producers. In another example, in maize, usually men plow, men and women sow and weed, and mostly women harvest and shell. Decision making about what to produce and how is sometimes done principally by men, sometimes by women and sometimes jointly. When analyzing MRM information, the M4C team aims to understand how the services they promote interact with this complex environment of roles and decision-making. The analysis focused primarily on two questions:

- *Are the services as effective as possible with respect to gender roles and decision making?* This is analyzed by examining if the services that are offered and, especially the way in which services are offered, effectively promotes behavior changes in char households that will result in improvements in households' performance. For example, if information is provided through input suppliers who primarily interact with men, but the information is primarily used by women, the M4C team will examine issues like: 1) Is the information given in such a way that it is easy for the men to transmit to the women? Would there be a way for the information to reach the women more directly? Will it be easy for the women to use the information effectively? This analysis will help M4C work with providers to ensure that the services are as effective as possible in promoting specific behavior changes among char women and men.

- *What effects are promoted services and the way they are offered, changes in household behavior and performance and changes in net income having on the roles, decision-making and relationships among women and men in char households?* This is analyzed to contribute to the M4C team's decisions on how to promote women's economic empowerment. The analysis focuses primarily on 1) Are project activities having any negative effects on the roles, decision-making and relationships of women and men in char households? 2) Are there particular opportunities to promote women's economic empowerment within the sectors M4C targets by adjusting or adding interventions?

DRR: DRR components are built within M4C interventions. M4C will analyze DRR related information by taking into account of the disasters that occurred during that period. In each disaster, M4C will monitor if

the precautions or remedies that are promoted through the interventions have worked or not. M4C will analyze if the coping mechanism for the producers, traders or any other market actors are similar to the assessment findings.

Process of Analysis

When M4C analyzes information both for decision-making and reporting, the focus is on the five key questions used to develop indicators:

Are expected changes happening? For example, if a box in the results chain says that char farmers are expected to plant maize earlier in the season, are char farmers' planting maize earlier than they were before the intervention?

How much is the change?(Extent of change) For example, if it is expected that char farmers will lower their input costs, *how much* lower are input costs in the season after the intervention as compared to the season before the intervention?

For how many people is it changing? (Scale of change) For example, if it is expected that char handicraft makers will get more advice on production, *how many* char handicraft makers are getting more advice?

How much of the change is due to M4C activities? (Attribution) For example, if it is expected that char farmers will improve their yields, *how much* of the yield increase *is due to M4C* activities (as opposed to other factors like weather changes)?

Is the change likely to last? (Sustainability) For example, if it is expected that large traders will provide information on chilli drying and grading , are the traders likely to continue (and expand) giving that information to chili producers year after year? Signs that is likely to continue are that chilli trader is happy with the quality of dry chilli, sell more to the processing companies, get better price.

*Is there any sign of systemic changes? (*Crowding-in, Copying) For example, are market actors considering chars a viable market for inputs and source of products? Are service providers continuing to adapt business model for chars? Are lead farms deploying more agents/employees to the chars? Are other lead firms and service providers replicating business models of the M4C partners? Are other producers copying improved practices from the directly affected producers?

M4C answers these questions through the following process:

Report from info gathering: When information is gathered, it is documented in a short report. For example, operations officers will prepare a short field report on their observations during a field visit. If in-depth interviews with service providers or char households are conducted, a report is written that details the information collected.

Pre-analysis: Often, information must be summarized in a convenient form in order to analyze it and draw conclusions. For example, if 5 in-depth interviews are conducted, the staff member in charge of the interviews will not only document the information gathered from each interview, but will also summarize the answers to the key questions across all the interviews. If a survey is conducted, the staff member in charge of the survey (together with an outsourced contractor if appropriate) will summarize the results of the survey including averages of data, distribution of data and other significant findings from the survey. Reports will be focused on key questions and reasonably brief in order to make the information accessible to other staff.

Joint analysis: Summaries of information gathered will be discussed in meetings within sector teams and including MRM staff and/or managers as appropriate. While this will happen frequently, it will also

happen consistently and formally every six months. Before this type of meeting, all staff who will be at the meeting will read any relevant summary or report. At the meeting, the staff member in charge of gathering the information will summarize the findings of the information gathering. The meeting may include several summarizes. For example, an operations officer might summarize his/her observations from a recent field visit and an MRM officer might summarize the findings from a recent survey. The information will be discussed with the aim of answering key questions to help make relevant decisions. The discussion will aim to make sense of the information in a balanced way.

Conclusion: At the end of each meeting where information is discussed and analyzed, one staff member will summarize the conclusions drawn during the meeting and these will be recorded. Those conclusions will be put into the relevant reports: intervention report, updated sector strategy and/or six monthly reports.

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