



TOOLKIT

**For the implementation of the Interpeace
approach in Mali and Côte d'Ivoire**

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INTRODUCTION

Why do we need this manual?

This manual aims to provide Interpeace staff, donors, partners and all otherwise interested or involved individuals with a better understanding of how Interpeace and its partners in Côte d'Ivoire (Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire) and Mali (Institut Malien de Recherche Action pour la Paix) implement their programmes and processes¹.

Interpeace and its partners in West Africa advocate a global approach based on inclusive principles, long-term engagement, local ownership, and confidence-building. The implementation of these principles within the programme framework is an adaptive process with continuous monitoring of its navigation. This ensures the ability to react rapidly to the evolving dynamics of the local space-time continuum. Accordingly, implementation is not restricted to predefined time frames or rigid planning, rather it is much more flexible and adaptive.

¹ This manual was written and edited drawing on the accumulated experience gained from five (05) projects carried out in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali since 2012. In Côte d'Ivoire, these projects targeted local conflict management and violent youth gangs. In Mali, a process of participatory analysis of the obstacles to peace was conducted, which allowed Malians to develop their own implementation of responses to these obstacles. For more information about Interpeace and its partners as well as their programmes, go to their respective websites: www.interpeace.org; www.indigo-ci.org; www.imrap-mali.org

It is an ongoing challenge for Interpeace and its partners to explain the way in which a process orientated approach to project planning is implemented. Moreover, it can be challenging for the uninitiated reader (donors, partners, new staff) to understand all the nuances of a programme's concrete implementation.

Often, new colleagues who may be unfamiliar with the process, join the programme personnel in the field and often ask themselves how to concretely apply the principles of inclusiveness, ownership, etc. within the planned activities. This is not helped by the fact that at this time Interpeace does not have a consolidated documentation of the process and its implementation. This manual represents the first consolidated document of such nature.

The aim of this manual is to aid these persons in understanding the manner of implementation of Interpeace programmes in West Africa by providing a concise and practical description of the variety of tools (methods, activities, etc.) available to the programmes. However, neither the list of tools nor their description should be considered as exhaustive. While the true know-how of the implementation process is acquired and consolidated in the field over time, this manual provides an introduction to the approach developed by Interpeace and its partners in West Africa.

How to use the manual

The manual has been structured so the reader can easily choose the tools of greatest interest to him/her through the table of contents. Each tool can then be studied in relation to the four dimensions of pertinence, activities, know-how and practical illustration (see below). Each dimension will shed light on its usefulness in a different way:

- a) **Pertinence:** The reasons why this tool is used to contribute to peacebuilding are presented.
- b) **Activities:** The key steps for the tool's implementation are listed.
- c) **Lessons learned :** Key points based on past experience are presented with the aim to further understanding of how the tool may be adapted and used to navigate its implementation in accordance with the principles of inclusiveness, long-term engagement, local ownership, and confidence-building.
- d) **Practical illustration:** Stories drawing on concrete experience in the field illustrating either a fundamental reason, an activity or a key point concerning the tool under discussion in order to promote our understanding of its usefulness and facilitate its memorisation.

This manual should be considered as a work in progress to be enriched with your experience of programme implementation over time. Interpeace welcomes all forms of feedback, which will allow us to correct, nuance and expand the content of this document. Please share your thoughts with

hoff@interpeace.org.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND *TRACK 6*

Participatory action research (PAR) is at the core of all Interpeace processes. The concept is quoted in the majority of Interpeace project documents and it structures the contents of the present manual.

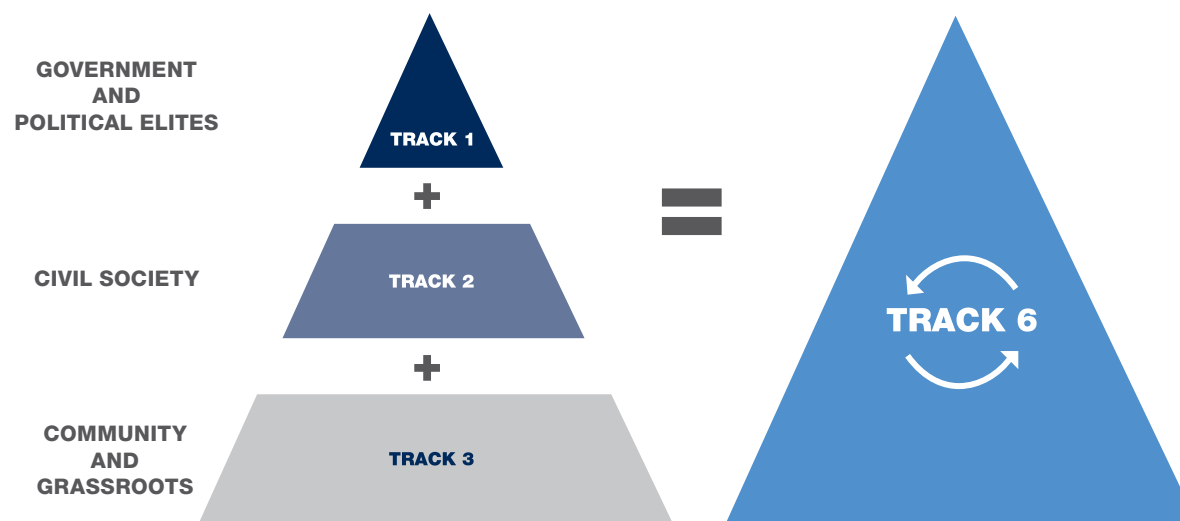
The objective of participatory action research is to directly engage individuals experiencing problematic peace and conflict situations and understand their views and needs in order to develop the most pertinent solutions to the case at hand. By integrating this methodology into the core of its activities, Interpeace seeks to support the persons affected by the conflict and assist them in becoming their own agents of change by developing solutions to the conflict situation. Thus, action research only becomes participative when the choice of participants, the orientations and the research results are validated by the process participants. Instead of extracting information from participants and analysing this data, field researchers accompany participants in discussion and analysis of their various points of view. Thanks to this reflective process, participants acquire a deeper understanding of their own *status quo*, a step which subsequently allows them to develop and implement their actions for change. In effect, this is how the “action” element of PAR expresses itself.

Participatory research is not just a research technique, above all it has the merit of being the first of a series of actions aimed at consolidating peace. In this process, researchers create spaces for confidence-based dialogue, thereby allowing all participants to express themselves

without any hesitation. Interpeace considers increased dialogue between individuals and community groups as fundamental to a solid and sustainable peace.

Regardless of the context for the implementation of participatory action research, Interpeace takes care to promote multi-actor dialogue as a means of linking local communities (*track 3*), civil society (*track 2*), governmental authorities (*track 1*), and international actors (*also track 1*). As described above, the objective is to facilitate a process which allows the various components

of society to create confidence-based relationships among themselves and to develop a common understanding of the challenges they share as well as of the collective action they can take to overcome them (*tracks 1+2+3=6*). Interpeace has established the Track 6 approach because it deliberately highlights the importance of local realities and expertise as a decisive contribution to high-level political decisions. Thus, legitimising their decisions in the eyes of the population and ensuring their sustainability.



PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

SELECTING COMMUNITIES TO CONDUCT FOCUS GROUPS

Why?

Selecting localities which are concerned by a specific topic, namely including communities which are frequently excluded from formal processes, **adds general pertinence to understanding, solutions and the actions promoting peace.**

Mali and its 13 regions

In Mali, instead of sticking to the official breakdown of 8 administrative regions, the team working on the programmatic axis of “societal values” divided the country into 13 cultural regions based on method of education and mother tongue. In parallel, the team working with defense and security forces mapped its zones according to the distribution of military bases.

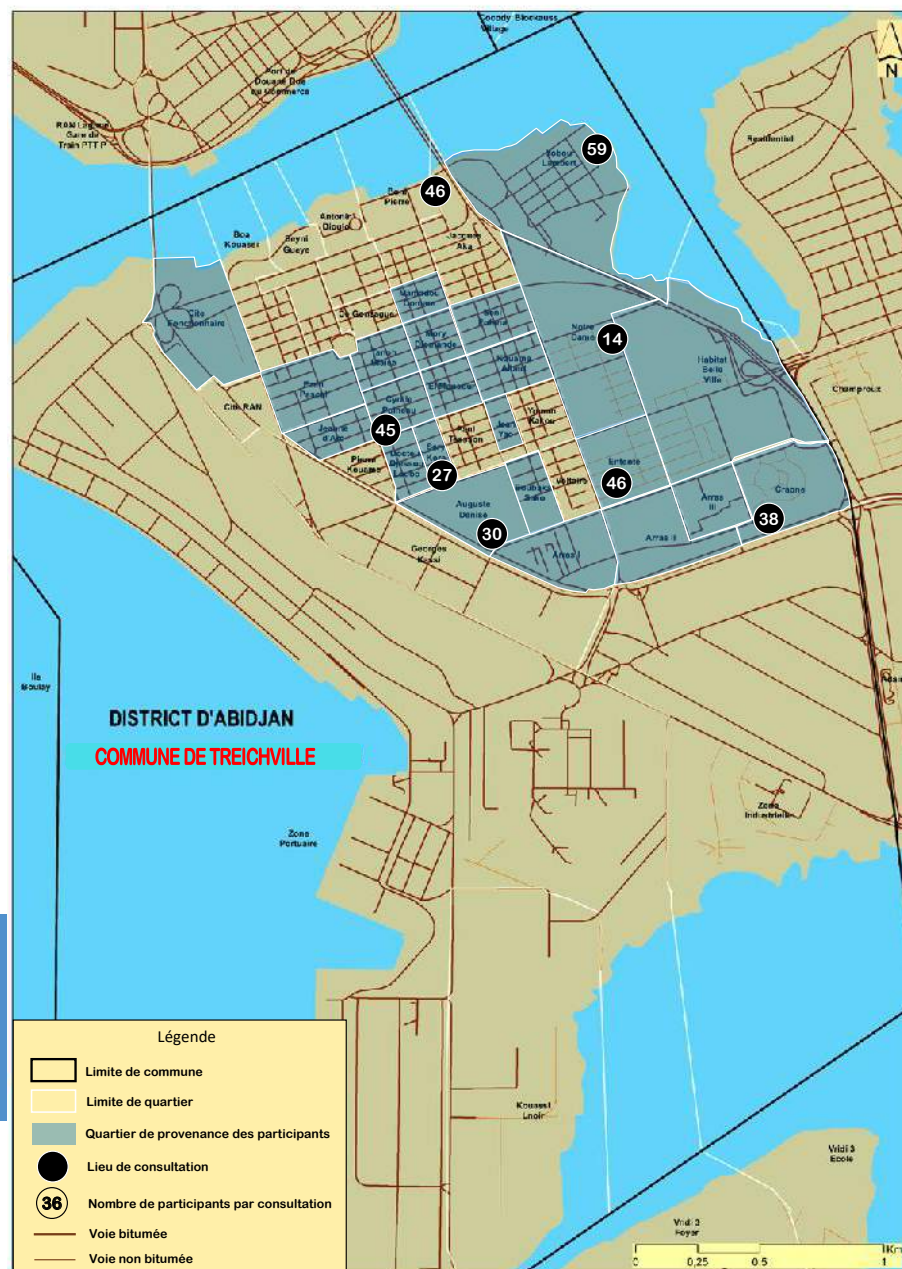
Steps

1. Define the key dimensions according to the programme’s themes (e.g. culture, military presence of armed groups, conflicts, language, etc.).
2. Draw up a map which divides the geographic area of intervention into meaningful zones by taking into consideration the key dimensions.
3. Define the number of localities where consultations will be conducted in each of these zones according to available resources (time, budget, personnel).
4. Define the selection criteria of localities for each zone (e.g. urban/rural, frequency of surveys conducted, security).
5. Identify specific localities in each zone based on the validated criteria.
6. Define the order in which the various zones and localities will be visited, taking into account logistics, among other things, and the potential for virtual dialogue (see Lessons learned).

Lessons learned

- Consider the distance between localities in order to be able to choose a locality which makes it easy for participants from surrounding towns and villages to participate (at the same time paying attention to sensitivities potentially linked to certain localities).
- Present the comments collected in one locality to the people of another locality via examples of conflict diagnoses or proposed solutions using audio-visual documentation, thereby inviting comment (virtual dialogue) and stimulating the debate.
- Explain to focus group participants why their locality has been chosen (in relation to the subject under discussion), helping them to understand why they are important and motivating them to share their views on the subject.
- Keep the map in mind when editing the videos, in order to ensure a balanced representation of the geographical zones of consultation.

Map of focus groups conducted in a neighbourhood of Abidjan in 2015, including the number of participants per focus group and the sector of residence of all participants



ACTOR MAPPING FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Why?

- Mapping the actors in the process helps to **understand local dynamics**, power relationships, peace supporters and detractors. This enables the team to know who must be included in the dialogue.
- Mapping enables the team to identify the potential participants in the dialogue, who are effectively concerned by a given topic, including persons or groups often excluded from formal processes. This **promotes a general feeling that the process of understanding, solutions and peace-related actions are pertinent to all**.

Ways to solicit “unheard voices”

In Burundi, following a focus group in an urban centre, the CENAP team decided to climb a nearby hill with no road to access the dwellings on its slope. As they interview a chance encounter, more people gather around them, attracted by the video camera. As soon as a sufficient number of people have been drawn to the scene, the team organises a spontaneous focus group session. For most of these people it was the first time they had been invited to a meeting or been consulted on anything.

Steps

1. Identify the focal points (peace supporters who live in the focus group locality and who have good knowledge of societal conditions and community members).
2. Develop very clear criteria and sub-criteria for the selection of participants among team members (e.g. not just any women, but rather women who are not often consulted or who have relevant experience to share), thereby ensuring the group’s representative balance as well as the presence of those whose voice is never heard. Categories for consideration include, among others; the administration, police and military, civil society, traditional chieftains, religious leaders, representatives of political parties, all ethnic groups, youths, and women.
3. Explain the criteria to the focal points.
4. Revise the list of participants proposed by focal points according to the stated criteria and after consulting other members of the community.
5. Discuss subsequent observations concerning the list with the focal point.
6. Agree on the final list and draw lessons from the process for future reference.

Lessons learned

- Allow for sufficient time for the identification process of participants as well as time to revise the list.
- Choose focal points of recognised legitimacy to draw up a diverse list of participants in terms of type and profile. Should a focal point prove to be biased and therefore unable to mobilise a suitable diversity of community members, the team must organise additional focus groups in order to safeguard the principles of inclusivity and impartiality.
- Avoid soliciting “professional debaters”, i.e. individuals who enter all and any workshops and training sessions and use them to deliver partisan or “politically correct” messages. It is not easy to circumvent them completely, for they frequently play a central role in their community and exert a degree of influence. One strategy is to consider them as experts, for whose “wealth of expertise” the focus group cannot provide an adequate platform. By inviting them to participate in individual interviews, the team can both record their point of view and prevent them from unduly influencing the focus group dynamic.
- Limit the number of participants to no more than 30 in order to ensure every single participant is able to make a meaningful contribution.



Participants in the group process drawing a map of the dynamics of violence in Abidjan

- If necessary, compose a homogenous group (e.g. only women, only youths, exclusively police and military) when this is the only way to ensure that all participants in the group feel at ease and free to speak their mind on sensitive or delicate issues (e.g. sexual violence, drug use, institutional power structure), which they are very unlikely to do in the presence of outsiders.

ORGANIZING A PARTICIPATIVE FOCUS GROUP

Why?

Promote conditions which help lift barriers, promote togetherness and create mutual understanding through dialogue between actors of frequently diverging points of view.

Enable the team to **anticipate practical difficulties / techniques to deal with situations** which may unexpectedly arise during a focus group session due to time constraints, preparing them to deal with all eventualities. The objective is not, however, to prepare an elaborate plan predefining each step of the focus group process.

Build the confidence and assurance required for focus group facilitation: **session participants** will observe these qualities and **will feel assured** that the facilitator can manage the discussion smoothly.

Allowing free expression

When staging discussions with members of the armed forces (Forces de Défense et de Sécurité – FDS), it is a good idea to invite officers for one-on-one interviews in another room, leaving the rank and file free to express themselves without feeling inhibited by hierarchy.

Steps

1. Define the research objective according to the needs and priorities previously expressed by the participants in the process.
2. Determine the locality and the groups represented (see *choice of locality* and *mapping the actors*, above).
3. Find a neutral and secure venue which is dialogue-friendly and easily accessible to participants.
4. Define the roles of each team member (co-facilitators, note takers, logistics, welcoming participants, managing participants' transportation expenses etc.).
5. Mobilise/contact participants.
6. Arrive at the activity venue before the participants turn up in order to prepare the space (preferably arranging the seating to shape a circle or a U, install Padex/Flipchart, etc.).
7. Be very welcoming towards each participant as they arrive, making them know that you value their presence and that they are important and respected actors in the coming exchanges.
8. Make sure you have sufficient refreshments for the participants.

The importance of focus group composition

In Kidal, IMRAP had organised a focus group with representatives of two alliances of armed groups, the *CMA* and the *Plateforme*, who do not see eye to eye. One group had already arrived and was waiting in the meeting room. When the second group of participants arrived, they noticed that they were outnumbered, the first group having turned up with more people than planned. They promptly announced that they would not go ahead with the meeting under these conditions. IMRAP then negotiated with the first group until it agreed to reduce the number of attendees inside the meeting room. Once parity of participants was achieved, the meeting could begin.

9. Avoid spontaneous forming of sub-groups by personal affinity by leading each participant to his seat.
10. Adapt your methodology to your target group (e.g., seating – men/women – should respect participants' religious customs).
11. Request participants to sign an attendance sheet which may include socio-demographic information (age, origin, profession, etc.).
12. Begin the exchange with an introductory question.
13. Take notes throughout the session (make the notes chronological, use them for the summary, extract information for the data base), including points raised by participants which should be investigated in-depth during the rest of the process.
14. Share a meal with participants, a good way to promote bonding.
15. Conduct a debriefing immediately following the focus group session and fill out the summary form.



Focus group in Mali

Lessons learned

- In order to ensure that all participants show up, it is a good idea to inform each participant formally and personally of the time and place of the planned group discussion, what the objectives and approach are, and that you are looking forward to their contribution. Discuss this with them.
- Establish the rules of discussion, either with the facilitator announcing them or by asking participants to contribute to setting them down. Typical rules are: each participant has the right to speak, all must show mutual respect, everyone is free to express disagreement as long as it is done respectfully, please wait for the facilitator to give you your turn, do not “hog the mike”, ask everybody to turn off their cell phones.
- Be very understanding towards participants (people arriving late, someone inadvertently blocking the camera angle, inviting people who move to pass behind the camera, etc.).



Focus group in Côte d'Ivoire

FACILITATING A PARTICIPATIVE FOCUS GROUP

Why?

- *“Dialogue is not the time for advocacy but for sharing information; it is not the time to develop an argument but to explore, not to seek to convince but to discover.”*
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy
- Accompany the participants in the expression of their ideas and **analyse varying perceptions** and develop a **shared understanding** of a theme which has been recognised as important in the course of the participatory action research process.
- Improve relationships between participants, namely by building mutual confidence.

Steps

1. Prepare “strong questions” to stimulate and deepen the collective process of reflection, gently guiding the direction of the discussion.
2. Acquaint yourself with participants’ profiles in order to identify allies and potential trouble-makers.
3. Acquaint yourself with the space (seating arrangement, Padex, camera position, etc.) before participants arrive.
4. Begin your introduction with “thank you for having us”, not with “thank you for accepting our invitation”.
5. Introduce the team and participants to each other.



An Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire facilitator as she facilitates a heated exchange of opinions

6. Present the process, the research objective, the theme for discussion, the way in which research results will prove useful, and the role of video-taping.
7. Obtain the consent of every single participant prior to video-taping the event.
8. Validate discussion rules with the participants, including the choice of language(s) for facilitation and the discussion proper.
9. Ask for participants' observations or reservations.
10. Begin the exchange with a precise question and follow a sequence:
11. Invite participants to express themselves.
12. Ask if anyone would like to complement a point or add a different view.
13. Sum up the interventions.
14. Invite participants to contribute questions.
15. Ask "strong questions" which lead to deeper discussion.
16. Validate key ideas and conclusions (points of agreement and disagreement) with participants before closing the discussion.

Lessons learned

- Develop "strong questions" with the following characteristics: a strong question is a question which is relevant to participants' lives, a real, open question for which we have no answer as yet. The question must be clear and easy to understand, phrased in a way which stimulates the imagination, willingness to engage, or the energy required to generate action, and make room for other, new and different questions to emerge.
- Readily accept criticism. Should a participant point out that the facilitator has forsaken his/her impartiality or offer other criticisms, recognise the fact and thank him/her.
- Then retake your role of facilitator. Never attempt to justify yourself and never respond to provocation. Remain calm throughout.
- Pay attention to individuals who do not speak up, yet at the same time respect the voluntary nature of participation in the discussion, inquire if the person is ready to say something.
- Avoid letting anyone dominate the discussion by inviting other participants to react to what has just been said and be careful to give equal speaking time.
- Remain impartial vis-à-vis the various positions expressed, remain objective with regard to the subject at hand.
- Be aware of your identity as facilitator and how this affects the discussion's dynamic. It may prove useful to replace a facilitator by another team

member if tensions are not resolved or if a subject may cause the facilitator to become too intimately involved and prevents him from maintaining his/her impartiality. If facilitators themselves are seen to represent a variety of ethnic, religious or political interests, participants will interpret their diversity as a safeguard against partisanship.

- Regularly consult your assistant and/or the cameraman, who have more freedom to observe events in order to better understand the group dynamic, and if possible redirect the discussion.
- If necessary, following a particularly emotional contribution calm the atmosphere by rephrasing what has just been said and keeping the central idea expressed while removing any aggressive language of value judgement from the rephrased statement.
- Manage trouble-makers during intermissions with the help of other team members.
- Do not respond to questions related to the subject, even if they are addressed directly at the facilitator, rather redirect questions to participants, inviting them to provide answers.
- Talking about sensitive or controversial issues can provoke strong emotions and reactions from participants. These emotions and reactions are often a sign of something important which should not be dismissed or played down. They are an expression of the group dynamic and not the unique responsibility of the person expressing them. They must be taken seriously and respected, and their underlying message should be discussed. It is up to the facilitator to ensure that the group feels at ease and safe whenever

these moments of intense disagreement or tense reactions occur. The facilitator must show that the group members can count upon his/her authority in calming the situation.

- Put words on what is happening by telling the group how you perceived this moment, what you just observed and felt, and ask the group whether your perception is correct. As the facilitator, simply speak in the first person singular, using “I” when asking questions, underscoring that this is your point of view and thus showing that you are prepared to accept other interpretations of what just happened. In this manner, dialogue is opened up to include discussion of the event, rather than shutting it out as something to ignore. For example: “Is it just me or has everyone gone quiet? I wonder if someone would like to add anything?”



Qualities of a “good facilitator” identified during an IMRAP team brainstorming session

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Why?

- **Making contact** and **confidence-building** with a certain type of actor/stakeholder when dealing with sensitive subjects or topics which people tend to shy away from (e.g. a government minister or a prestigious personality who would be unwilling to join a focus group).
- Collect **information** and **opinions** which would not surface during a focus group (e.g. coming from an expert who will have a better occasion to go in-depth during a one-on-one interview).
- Provide a degree of **intimacy** to discuss certain aspects of a subject in greater detail with actors who would not be at ease in the more public environment of a focus group.

Steps

1. Determine the subject for discussion, the specific questions and the interviewee (based on the cartography of actors/stakeholders).
2. Find an appropriate location for the discussion.
3. Approach the interviewee.
4. Make an introduction with an exchange of courtesies and other civilities.
5. Present the process and the subject of the day.
6. Begin the exchange with an introductory question.

Lessons learned

- Extend great courtesy to your interviewee.
- Be suitably neutral on the discussion topic.
- Show tact when broaching sensitive subjects.
- Be attentive to detail and able to synthesise ideas.
- Move beyond the conventional stereotypes of legitimisation. Have the patience to listen to conventional or politically correct discourse (no one will open up before you have heard and acknowledged his/her justification), but then do not hesitate to dig deeper and push open the doors in the line of argument.
- Be able to gently readdress where the conversation is heading, and reframe your line of questioning, either in order to go back to a previous conversation point or to steer the conversation in another direction.
- Do not show any emotion in reacting to the person's discourse.
- Always show interest in the interviewee's words, be willing to prolong the discussion beyond the time frame, showing pleasure in continuing the conversation informally while video-taping or note-taking continues.

Individual interview in Mali



Individual interview in Côte d'Ivoire



TAKING VISUAL NOTES ON A PADEX/FLIPCHART

Why?²

- Allow participants in a dialogue session to develop the **same understanding** of emerging ideas by documenting them visually in the instant. From the process of agreeing on the form of the visual note a shared understanding emerges. This shared comprehension of the obstacles and solutions to peace is the prerequisite to **acting together**.
- Ensure that the notes are **understood by participants who do not necessarily read the language**.
- Make note-taking a demonstration of process **transparency**, increasing participants' confidence in the loyal documentation of their words by the facilitation team.

Steps

1. Choose the structure of your Padex notes to reflect the format of the exchanges (e.g. list, circle, division or rectangles).
2. Prepare your tools (felt pens, colours, adhesive etc.) and invent illustrations and pictograms for the most frequent expressions (e.g. peace, conflict, dialogue) and ensure that they can be unequivocally understood by all participants.
3. Explain the function and objective of visual note-taking to the assembled participants before launching the session, so that they can use the notes to their advantage.

Documentation “to go”

Visual note-taking during a focus group session in Abobo, Côte d'Ivoire produced two Padex sheets summarising the key ideas which surfaced during the dialogue. When the session closed, about half of the participants used their phones to photograph the Padex/Flipchart both as a memory aid and to show to friends who had not participated in the session.



Visual notes from an Abidjan focus group

² Visual note-taking guidelines are inspired by bikablo® publications, www.bikablo.com

4. Take visual notes during the exchanges.
5. Hang the filled Padex/Flipchart sheets up when completed and ensure that they can be easily seen by all participants.
6. Take photos of all Padex/Flipchart sheets and invite participants to do the same and take away this documentation.
7. Use the photos in discussion analysis and if possible share the event photos with all participants via email.

Lessons learned

- Ensure the visibility of Padex/Flipchart at all times: stand close to the participants, taking care not to block their view of the charts.
- Make sure visual notes are understood: in case of doubt or growing tension, ask participants to confirm that you agree on the words used in the charts.
- Make participants feel valued: write down at least one element (word or pictogram) for every contribution/phrase, conveying that the contributors' words are appreciated.
- Do not collect Padex/Flipchart sheets: once you have photographed them for documentation and are sure that they will not be used in a subsequent activity, destroy them.



Participants taking photos of visual notes after an Abidjan focus group

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATIVE RESEARCH

Why?³

- Deconstruct linear and simplistic explanations of violence and resilience in order to better recognise and **understand the complexity** of the phenomenon.
- Identify the **programmatic entry points** to the complex system represented by the phenomenon, points capable of at least partially changing its dynamics (e.g. to transform a vicious cycle into a positive and constructive one).

³ Systemic analysis was inspired by publications and training material from CDA - Collaborative Learning Projects, <http://cdacollaborative.org>

Looking beyond simple explanations

A participant in the Gao restitution and validation session remarked: *“This analysis is quite challenging for us non-specialists to understand. But one must admit that it shows up the various concrete factors which play a role and highlights the key points and the structural dynamics, allowing us to get a better grasp of the research subject. Thanks to this research we were able to understand how we can dig deeper, beyond simplifications.”*

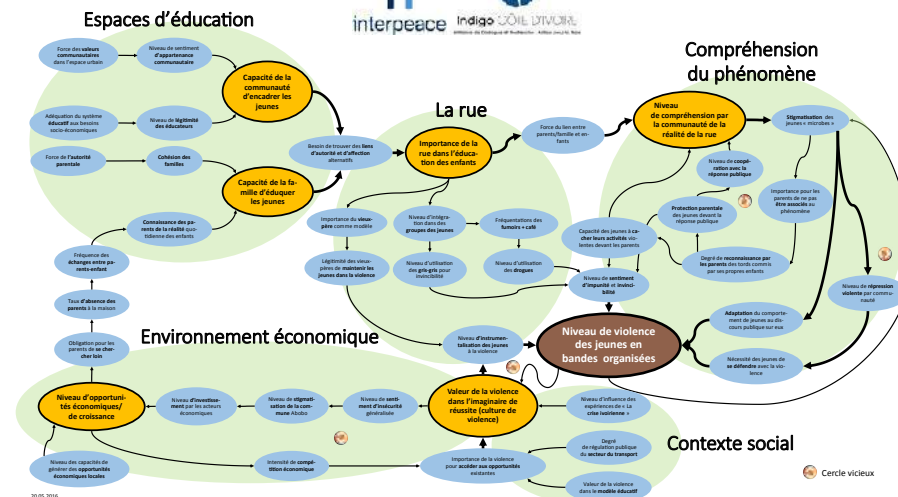
Step-by-step process of a systems analysis workshop

1. Review the detailed research notes keeping in mind the original question before the systemic analysis workshop as a way of preparing the collective process.
2. Clarify the research question or the phenomenon you aim to understand.
3. Pinpoint key explanatory factors identified by the research.
4. Distil the key elements, i.e. factors without which the phenomenon would take a completely different course.
5. Analyse the causes, effects and interconnections linked to each key factor, and on this basis develop a system map for each key factor.
6. Meld the system maps into a single synthetic map by identifying links and structural dynamics (e.g. where a vicious cycle can be turned into a positive and constructive one).
7. Phrase delving questions to guide the following research step.
8. Develop an editorial plan for the research report, if appropriate.

Lessons learned

- Recall the objectives of the project/research question/phenomenon to be understood.
- Debrief immediately following a focus group or interview, then follow this up by debriefing the programme head upon returning to the office and begin to reflect on the activity results. At this point, debrief questions should already mirror the essence of the systemic analysis.
- Be flexible and courageous because this is a fastidious exercise because it lasts more or less 4 whole days.
- Conserve your critical thinking on key factors and structural dynamics, for example by regularly exchanging with colleagues and external experts.

Exacerbation de la violence des jeunes en bandes organisées une analyse systémique



Digital cartography of a system analysis in Côte d'Ivoire



Physical cartography of a system analysis in Mali

AUDIO-VISUAL

Why?

- **Stimulate dialogue** by screening a theme-related video clip before beginning a dialogue session, showing how other research participants expressed their views.
- Create a **virtual dialogue** between actors who may never meet, either because of their horizontal distance (participants from other regions and groups) or due to vertical separation (between authorities and the population at large).
- **Authenticate** the research results.
- **Document** all levels of intervention.
- **Use video to document** all activities throughout the successive programme/process steps and results achieved, thus illustrating major advances.
- **Share the research process and dialogue results.**

How a film can make a difference

IMRAP produced a short video on reinforcing confidence between population groups and armed forces and screened it to an audience of 15 ranking police officers and department heads at the National Police Head Office in Bamako. During the screening one of the police officers noted that the prison bars did not conform to regulations. When the national Head Commissioner of Police saw the dismal state of the holding cells shown in the video, he ordered a general renovation of the cells and the police commissariat in the town.

Steps

1. Check that all equipment is operational before going into the field (batteries, tapes, HDs, memory cards, sound equipment).
2. Test equipment (sound and image) before the focus group or interview.
3. Check and clean up the background, both visual (e.g. avoid showing political party graphics) and aural (e.g. outside noise sources).
4. Explain to participants that they will be taped, obtain their consent, explain to which end the video is being shot.
5. Check the rushes between takes.
6. Create an image bank after each taping (rushes to be identified by subject, locality, date, nature of participants).
7. Edit the film together with the research team.

Building without harming

It is important that the peacebuilding process doesn't harm those who participate in it, often without the consent of their hierarchy. In Mali, after the screening one of the gendarmes received several phone calls from his superiors due to statements he made in the video. The team was obliged to re-edit this section in order to protect the individual from retaliation.

Careful not to cause any backlash, the team showed the film to the competent persons within the Ministry of Defense as well as the Army. They objected to one soldier going on record that “*even some of the foreign military behaved badly here*”. For these Ministry of Defense officials this was an inappropriate statement with the potential to compromise their work.



An audiovisual researcher during a focus group in Mali

Lessons learned

- Be aware of the added value of video documentation, understand that its power lies in the combination with other tools (e.g. dialogue, analysis, authorities' commitment).
- Screen a relevant example before dialogue sessions so that participants can understand the usefulness of their video image and will thus be more willing to consent to filming.
- Be prepared to manage participant's disappointment if they do not feature in the final cut.
- Adopt a soft approach in shifting participants during an interview or focus group if need be (for visual or sound reasons), keeping in mind that moving them may throw them off balance.
- Be as discrete as possible, do not disturb the dialogue (e.g. during focus groups).
- Integrate the audio-visual researcher into the facilitation process so that when appropriate he can react to questions and get the best possible images.
- Train all researchers/facilitators in the fundamentals of audio-visual work so that they are capable of assisting the video team in case of need.
- Get images of the environment of each activity,

allowing the audio-visual researchers sufficient time to tape illustrative material, which will be useful in editing, lest the video be reduced to people talking (dialogue scenes).

- Ask researchers to help editing the raw cut to ensure that video and research report complement each other and that you can fully benefit from their help in identifying relevant material for inclusion in the final cut.
- Ensure a balance in participants' points of view in the video while adequately presenting their diversity on any given subject, thereby reproducing a true debate. This balance also demonstrates that the film is not biased but intends to reflect the diversity of opinions expressed: for example, you may want to nuance accusations against authorities considering that their response will also be shown, maybe even following this sequence with a comment reconciling these positions.
- Take care to include diverse socio-cultural profiles, thus allowing all social groups to recognise a relatable voice in the video, i.e. ensure a balance of men and women, youths, regions, ethnic groups, political parties, religions, etc.
- Be prepared to produce several versions, weighing content according to specific target groups (e.g. a version aimed specifically at donors).

- Plan sufficient time for sub-titling.
- Regularly reinforce audio-visual researchers' technical capacities in step with technical evolution.
- Ask key contributors (interviewees) to validate videos before public screening in order to avoid compromising them. Even if an intervention must be edited out of the video, the contributor can still be quoted in the research report without revealing his/her identity.
- Tape interviews anonymously, if necessary, keeping the person's face or any identifying details out of the frame.

Filming can encourage free expression

One of the elders at the Kita dialogue session demanded his “brothers and sisters” to make relevant comments during the discussion to ensure that their town would be represented in the video, because IMRAP works all over the country and only the most relevant contributions would make it into the film. Once he had said this, people spoke freely and Kita was featured in the video for good reason.



Explaining the use of the audiovisual tool to focus group participants in Côte d'Ivoire in order to obtain their consent before taping the session

Filming in an ethical way

An ethical approach and obtaining consent are essential to all Interpeace processes. To ensure this, before launching the focus group discussion, the facilitator must explain the purpose of the research, how research results and conclusions will be used, and why videotaping is important. Participants are asked to express their consent by signing an attendance sheet. They are free to choose whether or not they wish to be filmed; optionally they can ask for their faces to be blurred. In keeping with this philosophy, participants under 18 years of age are given appropriate information and they are required to provide written authorisation to participate from their legal guardian. This consent is mandatory should they participate in interviews. Interpeace abides by the rules for ethical research involving children (ERIC). Particular attention is paid to sensitive material and images in order to ensure that the film does not have any negative consequences for any of the participants.

Wherever research is conducted, the national ethics committees are informed about the nature of the project, its implementation programme and who the participants are. Interpeace provides ethics committees with comprehensive information on all practical matters in order to ensure that all ethical considerations are taken into account.

VALIDATION SESSIONS (NATIONAL CONFERENCE, REGIONAL RESTITUTIONS, ETC.)

Why?

- Share the research results with both a representative selection of participants and key actors/stakeholders of the geographical region covered by the report (region or country): traditional leaders, administrative authorities, elected officials and representatives of technical agencies.
- Complete and improve the presentation of research results.
- Develop a common understanding of all actors around the research results, thus ensuring they will share the message.
- Allow technical and financial partners to attend discussions on primary challenges and mature solutions with national actors/stakeholders in an observer role.

Steps

1. Develop the terms of reference for the meeting.
2. Choose the dates and the venue for the meeting.
3. Establish the availability of participants and authorities to chair the event.
4. Check the suitability of accommodation of participants.
5. Finalise the report draft and the video presenting research results.
6. Develop the event's agenda.
7. Send out invitations to all participants together with the TOR and the agenda, prepare a registration system for confirmed participants.
8. Develop the speech outlines for authorities chairing the event.
9. Mobilise the media to cover the activity.
10. Prepare PPT presentations of the process, the agencies involved and the results.
11. Prepare the guidelines for working group activities and the complete facilitated-discussion methodology for the various sessions.
12. Attribute responsibilities to individual team members.
13. Welcome participants.
14. Keep team spirit high during the duration of the event.
15. Have an internal debriefing session and identify lessons learned which will improve the next restitution event.

Lessons learned

- Prioritise the identification of participants: this is an important step, because if it is not carried out conscientiously, it will be difficult to achieve our objectives. In effect this identification should begin during initial consultation in the villages. You must therefore have an efficient participant identification system, attuned to your needs, right from the beginning.
- Prepare facilitation of the discussion sessions: facilitation of a large group differs from small groups in many ways. The facilitator should prepare carefully, keeping in mind the objectives for each session.
- Ensure a common understanding of guidelines and methodology: for meetings of this nature, such as regional restitutions or the national conference, it is essential that team members have a shared understanding of guidelines and individual working group methodology.

Vote on the priorities of the obstacles to peace by participants to the National Conference in Bamako, Mali, 2015



BUILDING A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY MOBILISERS

Why?

- Facilitate **practical organisation** of programme activities through local networks.
- Facilitate grassroots **mobilisation of participants**.
- Showcase **local competence** in peace-building.
- Facilitate the **understanding of local dynamics**.
- Build a **solid network** of motivated peace actors everywhere in the country.

Steps

1. Turn to the network of team members' relations and relationships throughout the country to mobilise men and women with legitimate credentials and willing to actively engage in peacebuilding.
2. Verify the legitimacy and impartiality of potential local mobilisers.
3. Take into account the country's ethnic, religious, linguistic and sociological diversity in choosing the mobilisers.
4. Devote attention to developing a shared understanding of the programme among all community mobilisers.
5. Implement hierarchical relations between community mobilisers on the basis of experience in the interest of efficiency (ex. nominate a coordinator for each region).
6. Ascertain that mobilisers are trained in your organisation's methodology, approach, principles, etc.
7. Implement a strong communications system between the central team and local mobilisers.

Lessons learned

- Showing that you value mobilisers is very important in ensuring they do not develop become disgruntled.
- Maintain regular contact, even in the event of a financial bottle-neck at central office.

ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

MOBILE DIALOGUE UNIT (PÔLE DIALOGUE MOBILE - PDM)

At the beginning of 2015, IMRAP created a Mobile Dialogue Unit (Pôle Dialogue Mobile – PDM) in response to Malians’ request to expand and deepen the dialogue on peace in Mali. The PDM is a team of three (researcher, audio-visual researcher, driver) which moves around in a four-wheel drive vehicle. Thanks to its mobile cinema equipped with a generator, an inflatable screen and sound system, the PDM can screen videos on peace consolidation topics. Each screening is followed by a discussion session.

Reducing vertical distrust

During a field trip through the Timbuktu region in Mali, after each screening the mobile dialogue unit (PDM) met with civil administration and military officials to inquire about their view of PAR activities. Speaking to authorities in these localities not only helps overcome prejudiced ideas but also allows to convey to local authorities something of what’s not right in their precinct and provides the team with an occasion to advocate behaviour change towards population groups who are frequently stigmatised, such as nomads or formerly displaced persons (returning refugees are often wrongly accused of conniving with rebels). In this manner, the team succeeded in reducing “vertical distrust” between authorities and the population and reinforced mutual confidence in a new departure.

Why?

- **Share results** of participatory action research by screening the video documentary in the areas where researchers have worked as well as in remote areas of the country.
- **Expand research** related to specific questions.
- **Enable the continuity of dialogue** between participatory research actors beyond the official close of research discussions.
- Help participants in numerous remote villages with little communication to **get to know each other** through virtual dialogue.
- **Propose mediation** when local conflicts arise.

Screening organised by the Mobile Dialogue Unit in a Malian village



Screening organised by the Mobile Dialogue Unit in a Malian village



Steps

1. Choosing localities as a function of the objective.

Objective	Choice of localities
Dissemination	Localities having participated in consultations
Conflict resolution	Conflict localities or who have invited PDM
Expand research	Localities with relevance to research

2. Develop the strategy in relation to the objective and the dynamics of local context while paying attention to the following: identify key individuals, cause no harm to the team and the programme, reduce security risks, and maintain impartiality.
3. Prepare a specific video clip for each town/region, featuring local personalities, as a means to create confidence before the screening of the main video on research results.
4. Take to the field: engage with authorities, organise a focus group and/or additional individual interviews, promote the next video screening.

5. Screen the documentary and facilitate a discussion inspired by it.
6. Document the exchanges during and after the discussion (chronological notes, summary, data base).
7. Share PDM research results with research colleagues and share the requests of villages visited to continue the dialogue with the programme coordinator.

Defusing local tension

During a visit to Marena in the Kayes region of Mali, the mobile dialogue unit (PDM) heard that local youths were preparing violent protest against local authorities and in particular against an officer of the water and forestry administration due to his poor management of natural resources (wood and charcoal). When the PDM learned of this, the team made sure that all parties concerned would attend the screening. During the discussion following the video the aforementioned community tensions surfaced and the Deputy Prefect was able to share information which ultimately calmed the youths' anger.

Lessons learned

- Involve the authorities in a given locality before and after the screening with a view to passing on key messages, proposing the team's expertise in conflict resolution, and creating a safeguard for future team activities.
- Recognise the value of PDM data in the research process, remembering that the mobile unit has greater access to diverse populations groups, often living in remote towns and villages.
- Ensure the PDM unit's autonomy in its capacity to facilitate discussion and solve local conflicts. Rather than limiting its action to research and the spreading of information, provided its mission calendar allows it to spend at least 3 days in a given locality, an autonomous PDM can accompany local dialogue processes.
- Extend the PDM's intervention zones in order to reach the most remote areas.
- Follow through on interest shown in the mobile dialogue unit by other organisations (NGOs, ministries, etc.) and secure service contracts.

COACHING VIOLENT YOUTHS

This approach is well adapted to the project Interpeace and Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire are carrying out with violent youth gangs in Abidjan with the objective of achieving social reintegration of these youths by behaviour change and helping them to reinforce their self-confidence. Social reintegration was diagnosed as the priority action following a participatory action research process investigating the dynamics of violence in Abidjan. Coaching has proven to be the most adaptive and efficient tool in this approach.

Why?

- Observing and closely accompanying youths in their social environment is a means of better understanding their discourse and their daily behaviour while facilitating the **adaptation of project activities** to local reality, thus enhancing their efficiency.
- By spending an adequate amount of time in their company, the team can exert a **positive influence on** these youths' **attitudes and behaviours**.

Pushing back the horizon

Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire team members invited a number of violent youths to join them for a meal in a restaurant which was known to reject these youths, whose presence often inspired terror. The team also organised workshops with these youths in the business quarter of Abidjan (Plateau), a part of town known to them only by hearsay. Thus, they were introduced to new environments, opening their eyes to a broader view of society.

Steps

1. Earn the confidence of resource persons close to the target groups (violent youth gangs), thus facilitating an introduction to these social groups.
2. Identify groups and individuals to be considered for coaching, looking at their predisposition for a change of attitude and behaviour.
3. Adapt to the life of coached youths as a way of confidence-building (for example by adapting to their clothing style, attitudes, sharing food from the same plate).
4. Always be ready to join youths in their environment, respond to requests for advice on resisting the temptation of violence or simply requests for an open ear.
5. Expand youths' horizons by introducing them to other social environments, for example when coaching youths by making them meet individuals from a background with a "good reputation".
6. Build bridges by introducing youths to individuals who supposedly reject them and vice versa (e.g. take a police officer to meet them in their area and take youths for a look around a police station) and accompany them in this budding relationship.



Scene from an art-therapy session with violent youths

Always at the ready

The mother of a violent youth called a team member of Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire on Christmas day because she feared her son was becoming involved in violent activities. Several team members left their family at home and went looking for the young man to take him back to his mother. By showing this resolve, the team is able to build a confidence bond with parents and demonstrate to youths that its members are available and willing to help at all times. Nevertheless, in the interest of self-protection team members must always maintain a certain emotional remove from these youths. To this end, i.e. mitigating the emotional impact of their activity, it is important that the team members reserve time for sharing their experience and emotions.

Lessons learned

- Allow for enough time to observe youths and earn their confidence (it took one year to draw close to violent youth gangs in Abobo, Abidjan, before being able to make the move of working with them).
- Do not open yourself up to manipulation by youths you are coaching. The risk of this is real.
- Do not feed a sense of injustice: The young person you are coaching is living through a difficult situation and you can be tempted to show emotion and solidarity, but you should never support a discourse blaming others (their family, society at large). The message should be, “we realise that you are going through something very tough, but whoever you blame for that is not necessarily a bad person”.
- Congratulate the young people when they make positive steps, even small ones. You must show them that what they have achieved is a good step forward.
- Abandon prejudice and misconceptions about individuals you are coaching and accept them as they are (including where drugs and cleanliness are concerned).



ENGAGING AUTHORITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS

Why?

- Engage authorities in the process of analysis and developing solutions and strategies for the implementation of these solutions, thereby allowing them to feel involved and able to **own solutions by themselves, making it more attractive and likely to implement them.**
- The upper hierarchy of some authorities will not readily accept to participate in a focus group or individual interview, thus engaging with them directly is the **only alternative for bringing them into the process.**

The cost of impartiality

Considering the political partisanship of Malian NGO networks, IMRAP has not joined any of them. This has the effect of inducing some networks to refuse the participation of IMRAP in certain processes or events, sometimes against the explicit wishes of authorities. For example, a Ministry organized an event with one of the NGO networks and provided a letter of invitation for IMRAP. The letter was never delivered to IMRAP.

Steps

1. Identify key holders of authority, i.e. individuals who actually take decisions and those who have a formal or informal influence on decisions related to the project objective (e.g. head of staff, parliamentary commission, head of cabinet). A reliable mapping of state institutions can be of help in identifying these individuals.
2. Request an initial meeting via the official channels (e.g. a formal letter requesting a meeting) or via informal team contacts (e.g. an acquainted councillor, friends, family).
3. Highlight the added value, ways in which the work carried out by the team and the engagement of the addressee alongside the team can prove useful to him/her. Point out the reciprocity of mutual interests.
4. Build confidence and explain to authorities that they run no risk in supporting the team. Naturally they will run a background check on the team (especially if you are addressing the armed forces).
5. Invite authorities to validate the research results before official publication, either by organising official validation sessions or during bilateral meetings.
6. Maintain contact through telephone calls or by keeping the contact persons informed about your work via sms, email or courtesy visits to their office or home.
7. Create synergies, preferably with strategic impact, via common events, partnership agreements, memorandums of understanding, etc.
8. Develop a joint action plan to increase the efficiency of your work in implementing solutions.
9. Plan to monitor and evaluate activities implemented by the partnership.

Lessons learned

- Show perseverance when requesting a personal meeting. It is the team which needs the authorities' support, not the other way around, so it is the team which must make the effort. Do not become discouraged because a dozen previous requests were unsuccessful. Try again.
- Mobilise your contact network to find a way in: acquaintances of team members, relations, friends, family members, members of the pilot committee, the board of directors.
- Find and use intermediaries who have access to someone difficult to reach high up the hierarchy. These should be intermediaries who have the person's ear but who are themselves more easily accessible (e.g. head of cabinet, technical advisor to the ministry, friends, head of home village, etc.).
- You may also be able to directly contact the directors of central services (this is the case in Mali): These heads of national directorates only report to the Minister once or twice a week which is why the meetings are important and the Minister generally values their briefings. It can be very effective if such an individual is motivated to convey a message about the value of the project.
- Leave the choice of time and venue of your meeting to the authorities.
- Be alert to opportunities and react promptly, making sure to always respond to authorities' invitations.
- Be aware of attempts to manipulate the team by actors with a secret agenda.
- Protect your impartiality: proximity with certain authorities (e.g. the military) can compromise your reputation of impartiality. The team must remember that its role is not to please authorities but to work with them in lifting obstacles to peace.
- Stress the legitimacy of results by insisting upon the fact that your results and conclusions reflect the position of a great number of citizens of all origins and persuasions in order to avoid accusations of a hidden agenda (e.g. speeches, publications, use of video-taping). If opportune, show authorities the video to let them see that the process values transparency.
- Cultivate sustainable relationships, for example by identifying technical focal points within relevant Ministries. They may become regular contributors to the process (e.g. via invitations to activities/events, information sharing, organisation of joint activities, promotion/visibility at public events, validation of research results prior to official publication).
- Win over authorities who are upset by certain research results or the project proper by spending extra time with their representatives to show that you value them (regular invitations, lunch or dinner invitations, visits to their office, requests for advice, conducting an individual interview without necessarily integrating it into research results), and keep an open mind at all times should they call you.
- Identify allies who can contradict individuals who try to discredit your work.
- Manage suspicions of competition: Sometimes authorities may fear that Interpeace and its partners are going to replace them or take over their job. The team should continue to contact them and attempt to influence them via other authorities. In the long run, the quality of our work and our reputation of impartiality will bring them into contact with our programme.
- Concomitantly, engage with civil society actors, some national NGOs are influential with authorities and peace processes.



An IMRAP researcher in Mali presents a participatory action research report to a local official

Unicef, one of the project donors, presents a participatory action research report to a Minister in Côte d'Ivoire together with Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire and Interpeace representatives



PILOT COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME SUPPORT GROUP

Adapting to the context

Great Lakes region: A “working group” of technical experts is devoted to developing concrete solutions. Subsequently, a “pilot committee” of influential and respected personalities is responsible for guiding a strategy to ensure the implementation of identified solutions by local decision-makers.

Mali: several “mentors” (one or two per programme item) with credentials as researchers or topical experts accompany the team throughout the research, analysis and report editing phases. “Pilot committees” (one per programme item) monitor the development of solutions and their implementation, for example by « opening doors » to decision-makers (e.g. armed forces - FDS).

Côte d’Ivoire: a “programme support group” comprising social workers and community opinion leaders accompany violent youths and the community throughout the change process and beyond the end of the formal project phase.

Why?

- Achieve broader ownership of the **implementation** of solutions by key actors
- Access to **decision-makers** and influence on **decision-taking**.

Steps (Mali case)

1. Identify Pilot Committee (PC) members based on their profile (access, credibility, expertise, influence, etc.).
2. When composing the PC, define clear Terms of Reference, the mode of operation, financial affairs, etc.
3. Organise regular joint meetings of PC and team in order to develop the action plan and identify actors who can assist in developing and implementing operational solutions. The PC should also guide the team by indicating leads and areas for research.



Working meeting of the Mali Pilot Committee on the subject of “evolving societal values”

4. Organise meetings between PC, team and relevant actors in the solution-finding and implementation process in order to further understanding of practices, politics and potential resistance and jointly develop plans for implementation.
5. Organise meetings between PC, team and high-level decision-makers in order to convince them to actively participate and engage in the process.

Lessons learned

- When selecting PC members, include a number of individuals who offer strategic access, even if they have considerable financial demands and/or are not regularly available for PC meetings. They may open many crucial doors leading to the engagement of people useful to the programme.
- Identify individuals who are sincerely interested in engaging. One way of ascertaining this, is to gradually reduce their indemnity until only truly motivated persons are left.
- Do not create any long-term expectations. Make it clear to PC members from the start that financial and human accompaniment will end with the end of the project, especially in the case of short-term projects. This will avoid disappointment when Interpeace and its partner end providing support.
- Anticipate the end of engagement. If the PC initially includes both topical experts and influential individuals to play a role in the implementation of solutions, the former will become partially redundant once the development of solutions has ended. The challenge is to now ask the topical experts to leave



the PC. One way of preserving the individual's dignity when inviting him/her to quit the position, is to explain that the project no longer has the budget to pay his/her indemnity.

- Anticipate the ownership of solutions. If a PC comprises only topical experts for the development of solutions, it is easier to dissolve the committee once solutions have been arrived at. On the other hand, if the new PC comprises only individuals who specialise in advocacy of solution implementation, they will not have had occasion to own the solutions for themselves and may be tempted to dispute them. One way of ensuring ownership is to appoint participants from earlier programme phases to the PC.

- Protect your impartiality. There may be an advantage to direct participation of PC members in meetings between the team and authorities as their presence demonstrates that the team does not represent special interests and that its focus is society in general. Nevertheless, be aware of the risk that a PC member could be tempted to use the meeting to further his personal agenda. Alternatively, it may be possible to arrange for PC members to simply establish contact with authorities and leave the follow-up to the team.
- Develop very concrete solutions (when development of solutions is the objective) with attention to operational efficiency and compatibility with decision-makers' local realities. Put yourself in the boots of those who will have to implement solutions.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC / MEDIA

Why?

Inform citizens, media, public authorities and civil society about peace and conflict issues by communicating process results with the aim of **changing attitudes, stimulating dialogue**, and ideally, **generating political interest** in taking part in the process.

Facebook booster

On several occasions IMRAP launched 7-day Facebook-based media campaigns promoting 1-minute video clips. Results were impressive compared to previous experiences: within 3 days, 25 000 people had viewed the first video (58 000 as of now) down to the last second. The post included a link to the complete video on YouTube, which resulted in a 100% increase in views (200 views in all).

Steps

Obtain media participation in public events (e.g. launch of a report, restitution/validation sessions, etc.).

1. Target appropriate media (e.g. TV, radio, newspapers, social media) according to the target group.
2. Send out invitations to the selected media channels (together with TOR and letter of invitation)
3. Design communications materials, such as banner, leaflets, flyers, to ensure high visibility.
4. Publish a message on social media prior to the event with the purpose of providing information to subscribers without actually inviting them to the event.
5. Identify resource persons in the team, who will answer journalists' questions and be available for interviews when the time comes.
6. Mark a media section at the event to avoid confusing journalists and participants.
7. Hand out information material if appropriate (e.g. press release, copies of speeches, presentation of the event, list of participants).
8. Organise discussions, round tables or interviews to better inform the targeted audience.
9. Post key messages after the event, both on the Interpeace and national partner web sites and complement with email campaigns, Facebook page etc.
10. Document and evaluate media impact.



Studio of the « Grand Dialogue » radio show hosted by Studio Tamani and IMRAP

.Lessons learned

- Maintain excellent media relations at all times.
- Promotion (boosting) of the Facebook campaign can significantly augment the number of views and shares of your posts and will allow you to target specific geographical areas or social groups in a very cost-effective way.
- Produce very short video clips for Facebook (less than 60 seconds) to awaken curiosity and invite viewers to subsequently view the entire video, a means of generating a significant number of views.
- Validate each video with participants prior to release in order to avoid inadvertently causing any harm.
- Harmonise institutional online presence. It is important to designate who is responsible for updating and managing web site, YouTube channel and Facebook page. When well organised, it is easy to manage pass words and avoid the confusion of multiple YouTube or Facebook accounts.

Do no harm

Prior to uploading the video on violent youth gangs in Abobo online, Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire invited the youths to watch the video and validate it. A 1-minute video clip based on the film was posted on Facebook without further consulting the youths. This time the clip provoked numerous anti-youth comments posted on Facebook as well as negative comments in their community. The clip was immediately taken down and a meeting between the youths and Indigo was organised to clarify the situation and re-establish mutual confidence.



Indigo-Côte d'Ivoire web site



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