



# The Center for Sustainable Development

## Addressing Rural Development Challenges with Sustainable Solutions

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# workshop syllabus

## August 2009 Workshop

August 22, through August 29, 2009

**Workshop: Positive Outcomes:** How To Design and Conduct Impact Assessments

A hands-on, field course on discovering what works in development designed specially for headquarters' staff of donors and NGOs.

### Positive Outcomes

Donor and NGO staff are invited to participate in this workshop in Guatemala where they will combine theory with practice by working in the field designing and launching an impact assessment. You will develop a range of skills including how to facilitate participatory needs assessments, and how to plan and implement a randomized control trial. Working side-by-side with villagers in the true context of a rural development project, you will experience firsthand the varied challenges faced by NGOs in monitoring and evaluation activities, and the real-life needs of community members.

### Workshop Syllabus

#### Friday

Arrival in Guatemala City and transfer to Guatemala City hotel on hotel's airport shuttle. The hotel is 10 minutes from airport.

#### Saturday, August 22, 2009

7:00 Breakfast

8:00 Greeting and introductions

8:30 Pack, check out, and meet in front of the hotel by 9:00

9:15 Trip to field site – the farm: [Los Tarrales](#)

12:00 Arrival; freshen up

12:30 Lunch

2:00 **What we're going to do this week: An overview of this week's syllabus**

1. Overview of community-centered rural development
  2. Building trust, commitment and cooperation
  3. Key components of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments
  4. Methods used in designing an M&E system
  5. Indicators, data gathering, analysis techniques, and reporting
  6. Developing M&E questionnaires and forms that provide means of verification
  7. Designing a randomized control trial for a project based on community identified outcomes
  8. Improving project effectiveness: the use of feedback and evidence-based activities garnered from impact evaluations
  9. A review of the week's work and assessing the impact and sustainability of the project
- What we will accomplish over the next week would normally take one, two or three months. Why?

3:30 Break

4:00 **1. Overview of community centered, impact oriented rural development**

Brief, brief history of rural development

Top down or bottom up?

Gaps between the chain of actors connected to development projects

Becoming part of a strategic team: getting in alignment with what's needed

Open discussion

5:00 **Village Life**

The world in a microcosm

The village we will be working in: what should we be looking for?

What are *your* hopes, dreams, goals and expectations?

What are theirs?

6:30 Dinner

7:30 Quick synopsis of tomorrow's activities. General questions & discussion.

Please note: all workshops are in an open discussion, hands-on format

### **Sunday: Meet the villagers – our partners for the next week**

7:00 to 8:00 buffet breakfast

8:30 Trip to Vesuvio

Formalities: meeting the village leaders and village elders

Tour homes, meet families, make friends, share photos, learn about their livelihoods

#### **Conducting a situation analysis for the design of an M&E system.**

Ask questions, observe; try and see how the village functions

Who's in charge? Is the community well/fairly governed?

Where do they get their food and water?

Where do they get their incomes?

Where do their children receive their education?

What health and hygiene programs do they have?

Wear two hats and step back for a moment, don't compare the village to your home, just see it as a normal day in *their* lives

What's working? What's missing?

11:30 Back to Los Tarrales and freshen up

12:30 Lunch

2:00 What did we see? How did we feel. Why? How did they feel? Why?

2:30 **2. Building trust, commitment and cooperation**

Conducting a participatory needs assessment

Why do a participatory needs assessment?

Developing trust

Sustainability; ownership

How can we make sure that we are getting input from more than just the community leaders?

Lesson Plan for a participatory needs assessment

The ten-seed method & the tools of the trade

3:30 Break

4:00 How-to facilitate the needs assessment meeting

Letting the community lead

How to find out things that we might need to know

The vote

Discussing the results with the community

6:30 Dinner

7:30 Overview of tomorrow's activities. General questions & discussion

### **Monday: Conducting a Participatory Needs Assessment**

7:00 to 8:00 breakfast

8:30 Trip to Vesuvio

9:00 Facilitating the meeting

Assessing need

Casting the vote

Discussing the results with the community

11:30 Back to Los Tarrales and freshen up

12:30 Lunch

2:00 What did we see? How did we feel. Why? How did they feel? Why?

2:30 What are the community's short-term, medium-term and long-term needs?

How do they compare to internationally recognized needs?

Did anyone in the meeting influence the community vote in a direction that would be for personal gain?

3:30 Break

4:00 **3. Key components of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments**

What is the difference between traditional M&E and impact evaluation?

The importance of including impact evaluation plans into early stages of project planning.

M&E and reporting, where do they fit in the project cycle?

Who are your key partners in an M&E system?

Identify roles and responsibilities for M&E role players

**Practical Realities**

Snapshots: different types of monitoring and evaluation

Quantitative

Qualitative

Experimental

RCTs

Mixed methods

6:30 Dinner

7:30 **Overview of community centered, impact driven project design; a discussion.**

What sort of project & outcomes should we return to the community with?

Do the project/outcomes meet the needs that they voiced – or is it just top-down – a good idea we came up with?

Will they sustain the project's results after the project is over?

**Tuesday: Designing a community-centered, impact driven project and impact evaluation plan.**

7:00 to 8:00 breakfast

8:30 **4. Methods used in designing an M&E system.**

Log Frames

Stakeholder analysis

Problem analysis

Project activities: Plan of Action

Assumptions

Institutional arrangements

The relationship between project design and writing a grant proposal

Matching mission with donors

Logframes: Goals, Objectives, expected results, outputs

Outcomes and indicators

Activity list; Budgeting

Calendar of activities

How to deal with funding delays?

Who will be the project executer the project in the community?

9:45 Break

10:00 What are outcomes?

How can we incorporate an impact evaluation plan into the project design?

How can we use the plan for the impact evaluation to help us fine tune the description of the outcome?

How can we design the project by reverse engineering from the desired outcomes?

What is an evidence-based best practice?

Using results from RCTs of similar projects, can you identify activities which would work for us?

Can you use these building block activities to design our project?

What specific tools will we have available to work with in designing the project?

11:45 Break

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Are we ready to summarize the project would we like to present to the village?

What are our commitments going to be?

What will their commitments be?

Will the project be sustainable after we leave?

**5. Indicators, data gathering, analysis techniques, and reporting**

Carefully developing the question (outcome) that the evaluation is being designed to answer. Outcomes vs. Outputs.

Choosing clearly identifiable and measurable indicators for the expected outcomes. Means of verification

3:30 Break

4:00 **6. Developing M&E questionnaires and forms that provide means of verification**

Data collection

Using the log frame: What are our expected outcomes?

What are the outcome indicators and the means of verification?

6:30 Dinner

7:30 Open discussion while we polish our forms

**Wednesday: Designing a randomized control trial for community identified outcomes**

7:00 to 8:00 breakfast

8:30 **7. Designing a randomized control trial for community identified outcomes**

**Practical Reality**

Snapshot of incorporating an RCT into the project design.

Why RCTs?

Developing a base line

Developing a treatment and a control group

Establishing outcome indicators

Who is in charge?

Frequency of monitoring in the project cycle

Interpreting results

9:45 Break

10:00 How-to select two identical groups of community members: a treatment group and a control group.

Combining the tools that we have developed

How is the final plan looking?

12:00 Break

12:30 Lunch

2:00 How will we present our project concept and IE design to the community? Lesson plan & presentation materials

Divide responsibilities and break into groups of 4 and prepare presentations

Open discussion about our presentations

3:30 Break

4:00 Training the trainer: Country Office/Field Staff/Community relationships

The dry run: Work with field staff to present your presentations to us!

Discussion

Workshop time frames in the real world

6:30 Dinner

7:30 Evening off or fine tune presentations

**Thursday: Presenting project concept and impact evaluation plan to the community**

7:00 to 8:00 breakfast

8:00 Gather our wits!

8:30 Trip to Vesuvio

9:00 Rekindle relationships over coffee and pastries

Open the meeting

Presenting the project and IE plan so the community is comfortable joining in and offering comments

Reviewing the comments and gaining accord with participants

Selecting the treatment and control groups

Scheduling the next meeting to do the first survey

11:30 Return to Los Tarrales

12:30 Lunch

2:00 What happened this morning? How did we feel? Why? How did they feel? Why?

How can we incorporate their suggestions?

How are we going to initiate M&E execution?

2:30 Project design Phase 2:

Refining the elements of the Log Frame after the morning's meeting

Objective

Activities

Outcomes, indicators and verifiers

Refining the Questionnaire

- 3:30 Break
- 4:00 Work on questionnaires
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Evening off or fine tune questionnaires

**Friday: Conducting the first community survey of the M&E plan**

- 7:00 to 8:00 breakfast
- 8:30 Trip to Vesuvio  
Begin baseline survey
- 11:30 Return to Los Tarrales
- 12:30 Lunch
- 2:00 What happened this morning? How did we feel? Why? How did they feel? Why?
- 2:30 **8. Improving project effectiveness: the use of feedback and evidence-based activities garnered from impact evaluations**
- 3:30 Break
- 4:00 **9. What did we accomplish this week?**  
Assessing the impact and sustainability of the project and M&E plan  
Review of gap cycle; how have our perceptions changed?  
Wrap-up: What is the relevance of what you've experienced this week?
- 6:00 Freshen up
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Well-deserved evening off

**Saturday:**

- 7:00 to 8:00 breakfast
- 8:00 Pack and get bags to bus
- 9:00 Trip to Antigua
- 11:00 Tour of Antigua with Liz Bell
- 1:00 Lunch on your own; shopping/exploring
- 5:00 Trip to Guatemala City & Hotel
- 6:00 Check into hotel
- 7:30 Farewell Dinner

**Sunday:**

- Trip to airport on the hotel's airport shuttle

**Further Information**

The [course announcement](#) is here. The website for the [Center for Sustainable Development](#) is available here. For more information please contact Tim Magee at: [Tim.Magee@csd-i.org](mailto:Tim.Magee@csd-i.org) .

**These direct lines ring straight through to Guatemala:**

- 202-657-4760 Washington, DC
- 909-532-5135 Los Angeles
- 011-502-5411-4978 Guatemala
- 011-502-2366-4313 Fax

<http://www.csd-i.org/>