



FACILITATING PAUSE & REFLECT

Activity Options and Resources

Pausing and reflecting on a regular basis helps us to identify what’s working and what needs adapting and it allows us to consider the impact of changes in the operating environment or context. Here are some approaches for facilitating pause and reflection.

Group-Based Pause & Reflect Activities

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Activity	Description	Resources
Portfolio Review	Required: A periodic review of all aspects of a USAID Mission/Office's assistance objective, projects, and activities, often held prior to preparing the annual Joint Operational Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording: Getting Staff Buy-In for Meaningful Portfolio Reviews (Requires CLA Community of Practice membership to access).
CDCS Mid-Course Stocktaking	Required: Seeks to better align implementation of a Mission’s program with its strategy and to help ensure that contextual changes and lessons learned are better integrated throughout the Program Cycle processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProgramNet Blog: CDCS Midcourse Stocktaking – What We’ve Learned So Far
After-Action Review (AAR)	An assessment conducted after a project or major activity that allows team members and leaders to discover (learn) what happened and why, reassess direction, and review both successes and challenges. Originated in the US Military.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Lab: After Action Review Guidance
Hot Wash	A more informal equivalent of an AAR, also from the US military. A facilitated discussion held immediately following an exercise among exercise players. Designed to capture feedback about any issues, concerns, or proposed improvements players may have about the exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Tools Podcast Episode: Hot Wash February 2006

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Learning Event	<p>Panel discussion with audience participation</p> <p>Brown bag discussion</p> <p>Share Fair: facilitated sessions to learn how others have improved the effectiveness and quality of their work</p> <p>Fishbowl discussion: Certain groups relate in different ways when uninterrupted (such as people of different positions, gender, etc.) and much awareness can be raised by simply hearing what other groups have to say on particular topics. Participants from one group sit in a tight circle in the middle of the room, discussing a particular issue or question while the others observe, remaining quiet during the discussion and sharing their comments and observations afterwards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: How to Organize a Knowledge Share Fair • Facing History and Ourselves: Fishbowl
Chalk Talk	<p>Chalk Talk is a silent way to reflect, generate ideas, check on learning, develop projects, or solve problems. It can be used productively with any group—students, faculty, workshop participants, committees. Because it is done completely in silence, it gives groups a change of pace and encourages thoughtful contemplation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California State University, Stanislaus: Chalk Talk
Team Meetings	<p>Incorporate into regular team meetings a question on what was learned and how that might apply in future. Ensure that meetings are participatory. Consider including participants outside the team who may contribute to or benefit from the lessons being shared.</p>	
Liberating Structures	<p>A series of innovative approaches to facilitate groups to help them tap into their collective know-how and creativity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberating Structures
Appreciative Inquiry	<p>A change management approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. The basic tenet of AI is that an organization will grow in whichever direction that people in the organization focus their attention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champlain College: Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry • USAID Learning Lab Youtube Video: Kipp Sutton

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Communities of Practice	A group who share a common interest and interact often, face-to-face or online, to learn from each other to advance their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Learning Lab Resource: Communities of Practice Guidance • USAID Learning Lab Resource: Supporting Communities of Practice
Learning Networks	A facilitated, peer-to-peer learning approach that can be highly effective at documenting and sharing knowledge between donors and implementing partners to help strengthen a particular technical area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Learning Lab: Learning Networks Resource Center
Peer Assist	A group of peers that comes together to get feedback on a problem, project, or activity, drawing lessons from the participants' knowledge and experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Learning Lab Resource: Peer Assists Guidance
Action Learning Set	A group of 4-8 people that form a set with the objective of helping one member at a time to resolve an issue or take advantage of an opportunity. They do this by giving “air time” to the presenter and simply listening and asking the presenter questions, leading that person to decide on a set of actions to take. That person then implements the actions and comes back to the group to review progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOND: Guidance Notes No. 51 – Action Learning Sets
Big Picture Reflection	Facilitated constructive dialogue, on issues such as development hypotheses, game changer issues, and program foci, which aims to improve the quality and substance of discourse and to validate the direction of USAID development assistance, or elicit suggestions for changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on USAID Learning Lab about LEARN's Walking the Talk on Pause and Reflect
Knowledge Cafe	A means of bringing a group of people together to have an open, creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest to surface their collective knowledge, to share ideas and insights and to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and the issues involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Café: DNA Overview

Individual Pause & Reflect Activities

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Journaling	Particularly useful approach for reflecting on an ongoing experience, such as a conference, a field visit, or the life of a project. Encourage reflection by prompting the writer with a question and to steer away from simply recording information and toward documenting impressions and thoughts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits: https://www.hrbartender.com/2015/strategy-planning/work-journals-help-employees-accomplish-their-goals/ What is Process Journal? http://schurzhs.org/IB/pdf/ProcessJournal.pdf
Blogging	A web log to share your thoughts within a community or other audience online.	

Additional Resources

Reflection as it relates to learning: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/development/reflection.html>

Reflection activities: https://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/activities.html