

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES GRID

The engagement grid below outlines a variety of approaches to conducting learning activities to help answer learning questions. Often, we rely on approaches that we have used in the past without pausing to reflect on whether those approaches are the best fit given our learning questions.

This grid is intended for use by USAID and implementing partner staff when developing or reviewing learning activities during monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) planning processes (i.e., USAID Performance Monitoring Plan and Project MEL plan development or implementing partner Activity MEL plan development). You can use this grid as a reference for the variety of learning activities that could be appropriate depending on your specific learning questions, context, and constraints.

Before selecting learning activities, ask yourself:

- Will selected learning activities adequately answer your learning questions? *Perhaps one learning activity isn't sufficient and needs to be paired with others to adequately answer your learning questions. Consider timing here as well – will the learning activities be completed within a timeframe that enables decision-making?*
- Will selected learning activities be considered valid by my target audience? *Consider what types of evidence your target audience finds most compelling – it may be that they are most likely to incorporate learning if it comes from trusted sources or if a certain methodology is used (impact evaluation, ethnographic research, etc.).*
- Do you have the resources to carry out the selected learning activities to an adequate standards? *Consider budget constraints and whether staff have the capacity to carry out the learning activities.*

There is not just one right learning activity; the purpose of this is to demonstrate the variety of learning activities that exist that could be part of your approach.

For more on learning activities and MEL, see also the USAID Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting toolkit cluster on [Learning Agendas](#) and [M&E for Learning](#), the USAID [Monitoring toolkit](#) and the USAID [Evaluation toolkit](#).



	HIGH TECH	LOW TECH
MANY PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart phone / Tablet surveys</li> <li>• SMS/feature phone surveys</li> <li>• Social Network Analysis</li> <li>• Social networking feedback loops</li> <li>• Formal feedback platform on social networks</li> <li>• Online <u>communities of practice</u>/Learning Network (Lean Research)</li> <li>• Data management systems</li> <li>• <u>Theory of Change</u> development platform</li> <li>• Media/social media content analysis – keyword, location</li> <li>• <u>Rapid, decentralized</u>, mobile surveys</li> <li>• <u>Qualitative Data Analysis</u></li> <li>• GIS analysis or <u>Story Mapping</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline, midline, and endline surveys/assessments</li> <li>• Community/Field/Site visits</li> <li>• Sector assessments</li> <li>• <u>A/B testing</u></li> <li>• <u>Word/phrase analysis</u></li> <li>• Ethnographic study</li> <li>• <u>Net Mapping</u></li> <li>• <u>Household Survey</u></li> <li>• <u>Participatory Rapid Appraisal</u></li> <li>• Action/Community-engaged Research</li> <li>• <u>Seven Factors Modeling</u></li> <li>• Participatory community mapping (socially significant mapping)</li> </ul>
KEY PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulations</li> <li>• Web based surveys</li> <li>• VOIP (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts) key informant interviews</li> <li>• Literature reviews</li> <li>• Influencers media/social media content analysis</li> <li>• <u>Trend analysis/Forecasting</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> <li>• <u>Success case method</u></li> <li>• Scenario planning</li> <li>• Participatory story development</li> <li>• <u>Most Significant Change</u></li> <li>• <u>Outcome/Impact mapping</u>/Participatory Theory of Change development</li> <li>• Positive Deviance Inquiry</li> <li>• Before Action/After Action Review</li> <li>• Reflection Sessions (fail fairs, <u>share fairs</u>, experience summits)</li> <li>• Peer review/<u>peer assist</u></li> <li>• Peer-to-peer monitoring</li> <li>• Interactive Evaluation Methods such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choosing Corners</li> <li>- Cooperative Interviews</li> <li>- Data Dialogues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Many of the approaches in this handout were crowdsourced with contributions from the team at Institute for Development Impact (i4di.org), Tech Change (techchange.org), Counterpart International (counterpart.org) as well as Teresa Crawford (@capdividend), Monalisa Salib (@munmunword), and Vanessa Corlazzolli (@vcorlazzoli).