



Lifeline: End of Season Reflection

Season:	Post-Harvest
Objective:	To identify the different challenges and achievements that group members feel they have experienced during the season.
Used to:	This exercise allows the participants to understand the practices that have been most beneficial or most difficult to adopt; how group/project participation has shaped household dynamics and participation in community spaces; and what unexpected changes the participants have experienced. It can be conducted as a group or individual exercise.
Timeframe:	1 hour and 30 minutes
Materials needed:	Flip-chart paper, markers, colored paper, or string and available materials. Use a digital camera to capture the drawings so that they can be revisited the following season.
Ideal workspace:	Enough space both for drawing on flip-chart or on the ground.

Background: The lifeline is a participatory tool that allows individuals or groups to reflect over a given period on the achievements and challenges faced. This is an open-ended exploration that helps bring out unanticipated changes and challenges that may not otherwise come up in monitoring or discussions. It allows you to explore how participants are using (new) resources to cope with challenges, and to identify areas where the project could address some of them.

Choose the timeline period you are going to focus on (one year, or the past crop season). Ask the respondents to draw a timeline of his/her/their life in that period, and mark on it the highlights and the low points or challenges—these may not necessarily be project-specific. Choose one symbol to mark the highlights and achievements, and a different symbol to mark the difficult points or challenges.

Have some open-ended questions ready to probe around their work in agriculture, involvement in Pathways, work in the house, and the relationship with their spouse or family members (if applicable). For challenges, ask about resources or skills that enabled (or would enable) the participant to cope with the issue. For successes, ask about what brought them about and how it has changed their life.

This exercise can also be conducted over a lifetime; in probing, you can use it to explore gender-specific obstacles faced by men and women of different groups.

Steps to follow for the activity:

Step 1. Preparation: Choose a timeline period for this activity (one year, or the past crop season). You will be asking the participants to draw a timeline of his/her/their life over the timeline period (i.e. 12 months or crop season), marking on it the highlights and the low points of their work in agriculture, involvement in Pathways, work in the house, and the relationship with their spouse (if applicable).



After the participants draw their timeline, you will initiate a discussion around what they have illustrated.

Step 2. Introduction to participants: Remind the participants that, “In everyone’s life, there are high points and low points, successes and disappointments. You have been part of the Pathways project for [amount of time]. In addition to your agricultural changes, you’ve probably seen some changes in your personal life, in your family life, in your work, and in your relationships with your groups.”

- Ask participants to close their eyes for a minute, and think back on some of the big changes (ups and downs) of the [time] since they’ve been part of the program.
- Ask participants to open their eyes. Tell them that what you’d like to do now is go over the history of this last year, and record those high points and low points. Tell them that you will all draw symbols of these events on a timeline.

Step 3. Draw the Lifeline: Ask the participants to draw a line representing the duration of the project last year on an individual piece of paper, or if you choose to draw one timeline for the whole group, on one sheet of paper. They should mark the start of the project/season/year at one end of the chart, and the finish at the other.

Step 4. Brainstorm Events: To help participants, you may want to first brainstorm the highlights and challenges before you plot them on the timeline. If you are creating one timeline for the whole group, discuss each issue to come to agreement on when they happened and which are the most important to plot on the timeline.

Step 5. Plot Events: The participants should then mark down the occurrence of the high points and low points on their timeline. In order to best facilitate the interpretation of the timelines, choose one symbol to mark the highlights and achievements, and a different symbol to mark the difficult points or challenges.

Start with the **most exciting/important** moments and the **most challenging/difficult** moments, and plot those on the timeline first.

Fill in the other points in order of significance. As they plot each point on the timeline, discuss the questions below.

Step 6. Probe the Lifeline:

1. To start with, tell me about some of the **happiest and proudest moments** of this year/season since you’ve been part of the program.

- Why were they important? Who did you share those moments with?
- How did you feel in these moments? Did you have any other feelings (besides happiness) at the same time? Why?
- How did other people look at you or think about you in those times?
- What led up to this moment?
- Did your life change in any way after this moment?



2. Tell me about some of the most **difficult times/challenges** in the past year since you've been part of the program.

- What were some of the biggest challenges you have faced in this past year, since you've been part of the program? Why caused these challenges? What put you in that difficult position?
- How did you cope with difficulties? Who helped you through those times? How?
- Did any Pathways program activities or partners help you cope?
- What would have made it easier to cope during these times?
- How did your life change because of these difficult moments?

Step 7. Summary and Reflection: After plotting the events, help the participants to look back at the overall timeline, and follow up with some broad reflection questions.

1. Summary:

- Looking back on the past year, what are your thoughts about this timeline?
- How would you characterize the biggest changes you experienced while you were part of this program?

Probe around:

- Skills, capacity, confidence
- Family and household relationships
- Group relationships
- Mobility, community participation
- Economic changes and improvements
- Negative changes

2. Concerns:

- Looking forward in the next year, what are you most concerned or worried about, regarding your involvement in this project and your crops?
- Why is this a concern? What is your plan to address this issue? How can the group, family, spouse, program, and community support?

3. Hopes:

- Looking forward to the next year, what is one change that you would like to see for yourself, your group, your family in the next year? Why is this important to you?
- How do you think you can make this change happen? How can the group, program, spouse, community help?

Step 8. Close: Thanks participants and close. If possible, photograph, label, and document the lifeline, but leave the original with the participant(s). Record to return to the following year.



Looking Through the Window

Objective:	To conduct a group exercise reflecting on the various perspectives we all bring to our work, in particular in monitoring and evaluation.
Used to:	The lesson of this exercise is that when we all look at the same thing (direction), we see different parts and from different perspectives. Thus, it is necessary for all of us to have a role in the M&E system and be open to sharing our perspectives about the learnings of the program and that it is important and critical to our program to take time to slow down/stop, look around, and reflect as individuals and as a group.
Timeframe:	45 minutes
Materials needed:	Each individual participant must have a pen/pencil and sheet of paper for recording notes.
Ideal workspace:	A space where all participants can stand/sit comfortably facing the same direction is the ideal workspace for this exercise. Leaving the conference room/training space is encouraged. Consider having participants face a scene such as a street scene, natural beauty, etc. Bring all participants to this space to begin the group exercise.

Background: Observation is one of our strongest individual human senses. However, when a group all look at the same scene, we all see different things. This exercise is a team-building activity which emphasizes the importance of *all* in taking part in the M&E system and be open to sharing our perspectives about the learnings of the program and that it is important and critical to our program to take time to slow down/stop, look around, and reflect as individuals and as a group.

Steps to follow for the activity:

Step 1. Explanation of the activity: Tell the group that you are about to start an exercise called “Looking Through the Window.” Ask all of the participants to face towards the [insert direction or place to face] and spend a few minutes looking around and writing down notes about what you see. Let them know that you will tell them when to stop their observations.

Step 2. Looking Through the Window: Note that groups are often silent while they look around at what they see. After a few minutes (3-4 minutes) have passed, ask all participants to return to the workshop space where you can sit in a circle and debrief.

Step 3. Debrief: When all are seated for the debrief, ask the following questions:

- Will each one of us spend a few moments sharing what you saw?
- What are the similarities and differences in what people have shared?
- Why did we do this exercise? Why is understanding and hearing from all our perspectives important?

If these items were not raised, probe or discuss the importance of the following observations:

- Some people report information in very descriptive ways (qualitative) while others report numerically (quantitative), for example, “I saw some beautifully dressed people looking like they were headed to the beach” or “There were two middle-aged adults”.



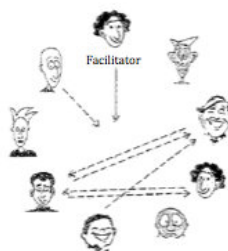
- Some people look and describe the big picture while other focus on the close-up and details (“The sun was on the horizon” or “There were flies and ants at my feet”).
- Some people describe senses beyond just ‘looking’ which was the exercise, such as smells, feelings, etc. (“I felt the breeze”).



Focus Group Topical Outline

Season:	Post-Harvest
Objective:	To understand the changes that have taken place over the course of the season/year; To understand how the project can further support positive changes and address some of the challenges.
Used to:	This exercise serves as a reflection opportunity to identify the progress that has occurred over the course of the season/year.
Timeframe:	2 hours
Materials needed:	Question guide, paper and pen for note taking, and recording device if needed.
Ideal workspace:	Enough space both for standing and sitting in groups.

Background: Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a great way to hear from program participants and their household members about their experiences and reflections with the program. The sections below provide suggested sections to address with single gender focus groups; the team may have additional sections or questions to ask. Conversation should be kept to two hours; if needed, the questions may be asked over several sessions or gatherings.



Steps to follow for the activity:

Step 1. Prepare for Discussion: Follow standard FGD tips, found in the “USAID TIPS” document¹; if needed, divide groups by age and gender to allow for more open discussion

Step 2. Discuss the questions below: Note that FGDs should be conducted with women and men groups separately. The questions below are not meant to be asked directly word-for-word. They are meant to be suggestions and a memory aid that will help the interviewer to think of important gender equality questions depending on the direction of the interview.

Date:

Facilitator:

Site:

Recorder:

1: Introduction

¹ Conducting Focus Group Discussions. (2011). *USAID Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS*: 10. United States Agency for International Development. Available from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadw110.pdf



- Sample introduction:

Good Morning/Afternoon. My name is _____ and I work for the Pathways project. We would like to have a discussion to look back on the season—what we did, what we achieved, what was challenging. We would also like to take some time to reflect on changes that we’ve seen in our households, within the groups, and in the community. We will be asking you questions about members of your household, agricultural practices, food security, and gender.

The information we collect will be used for planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. I want to make sure we get through all the questions so at times I may move us forward to a new topic. I hope to hear from everyone in the group and please know we value each of your opinions. It is okay to disagree and share thoughts and opinions that not everyone shares.

This interview will last about 1 hour. There is no other cost or risk involved in the study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and there is no penalty for not taking part. You can also stop participation at any point or refuse to answer a question. Do you have any questions? Do you all agree to participate? [Gain consent before moving forward]

2: AGRICULTURE

- What have been the most significant changes in your agriculture practices in the past 12 months/season? What makes these the most significant? What changes have you observed in yields, costs, labor time from the new practices?
- What treatments and techniques have been most beneficial to you? Why?
- What treatments and techniques have been most difficult to adopt? Why?
- In what ways has your participation in this program affected other areas of your life? Probe around:
 - procuring inputs, accessing land (at household and group level)
 - deciding what crops to grow on what land
 - growing food for nutrition
 - actively deciding what household income will be invested in
 - asking for support with household work
- In what ways has your participation in this program encouraged/required you to take on new roles or responsibilities in agriculture? What challenges are you encountering as you take on new roles?
- In this community, do you think women are respected as “farmers,” in the way that men are? Why/why not? What are the differences in treatment and opportunities? Have you noticed any changes in these attitudes?
- Currently, what do you think are the main challenges to women being able to earn income from agriculture/livestock?

3: MARKETING

- What have been the most significant changes in the way that you plan for and do your marketing of your crop? What makes this the most significant?
- What marketing information, tool, contact, or technique has been most important to you? Why?
- What tools, lessons, information have been challenging to apply? Why?
- What changes have you made to your production strategy, as a result of your market research?
- What changes have you not seen that you had hoped to see?
- In what ways has your participation in this program affected other areas of your life?



Probe around:

- negotiations within the household and with buyers
 - actively deciding what income will be invested in
 - asking for support with household work
 - post-harvest processing
 - time use, workloads, and time management
 - mobility
- In what ways has your participation in this program encouraged/required you to take on new roles or responsibilities in marketing and planning? What challenges are you encountering as you take on these roles?
 - In this community, do you think women are respected as capable of managing businesses and market transactions in the way that men are? Why/why not? What are the differences in treatment and opportunities between men and women? Have you noticed any changes in these attitudes? What further support do women need?
 - Currently, what do you think are the main challenges to women being able to maximize profits from agriculture?

4: HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIPS

- What messages have you heard in the last six months about the relations between men and women? Have you put them into practice? What about your spouse? How easy/hard was it to make these changes?
- Have you seen any change to the traditional division of labour in your household? What about your family and community? Does the community accept if you or one of your family members wants to take on a non-traditional role?
- What has been the most important change in your household relationships in the past 12 months? What accounts for this change?
- Can you tell me about a time you tried to make a change in the household in the last six months and it hasn't worked?
- In what ways have you and your spouse and family members changed the way you make decisions in the last 12 months?
- Can you think of a type of decision where men and women often disagree on the solution? What are the issues and how do you usually resolve the discussion? (Probe for an example)
 - Are there decisions that you think only spouses (husbands) should make? Why?
 - Are there decisions that women should be able to make on their own, or have more say over?

How would you describe ideal communication and decision-making between couples?

5: Gender-based violence

- Do women in this community experience any forms of violence? How does the community view violence against women? *Probe to understand the issues, forms, prevalence and impact (especially if violence is normalized?).*
- How is this violence dealt with in the community? Have you or a member of your group spoken up about violence in the past 12 months?
- Have you observed any trends or changes over the last 12 months in gender-based violence in this community? (increased, decreased, no change). What accounts for the change?



- Has your own perception of gender-based violence changed in the past 12 months? How so?

6: Group membership, leadership, & influence in a community

- What have been the most significant changes to your group in the past year/season (how you work together, group rules, cooperation, areas of interest)? How did these changes come about? Why are they important?
- What have been some of the biggest challenges you faced within your group? How have you resolved these difficulties?
- (If a mixed group) What changes, if any, are there in how men and women in this group participate? Do you feel that women participate as actively as men? Why/why not?
- Have members of your group taken action on any social or community issues in this year? Tell about it.
- Have you observed any changes in the way women are speaking out (in public or in the community) in the past year? What are the changes and what do you think has brought them about? How do people in the community respond to women who speak out?
- Has group membership changed or influenced the way others in the household or community see and respond to you? How so?

QUESTIONS FOR SPOUSES (HUSBANDS)

1: PATHWAYS PERCEPTIONS

- What has been the most significant outcome of your spouses' participation in the project in the past year? What makes this significant?
- How have you yourselves participated in Pathways activities in the past year?
- What do you think of the project?

2: DECISION-MAKING

- In your households, who has the role of “manager” and “decision maker” in your household, especially around issues that affect income and agriculture? Why this person/these persons?
- Have there been any changes to how you make decisions within the household in the last 12 months?
 - Are there decisions that you think only women should make? Why?
 - Are there decisions that only men can make? Why?
- Can you think of a type of decision where your wife and you often disagree on the solution? What are the issue and how do you usually resolve the discussion? (Probe for example)
- How would you describe ideal communication and decision-making between couples?

3: HOUSEHOLD AND GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

- What messages have you heard in the last six months about the relations between men and women? What do you think of these messages?
- Have you put them into practice? How easy/hard has it been to make these changes?
- Have you observed or made any change to the traditional division of labour in your own households or in the community?
- What challenges are men encountering as they take on new roles? How does the community respond when men want to take on a non-traditional role?
- What prompts or encourages men to take on new roles?



- What has been the biggest change in your household relationships in the past 12 months? What accounts for this change?

4: Gender-based violence

- Do you think that women in this community experience any forms of violence? How does the community generally view violence against women? When is violence justified?
- Have you or a member of your group heard about or spoken up about violence in the past 12 months?
- Have you observed any changes in the trends over the last 12 months on gender-based violence in this community? (increased, decreased, no change). What accounts for these changes?