



# Making Data Collection Meaningful

## Module 3: Community-led data collection

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Capacity-Building  
& Knowledge Sharing  
for Small and Medium  
Organizations (SMO)



## Community-led Approach

Supports community members (including those the most vulnerable and marginalized) to articulate their goals, develop a theory of change, self-identify strategies and actions to facilitate positive change, and track progress towards results

## Participatory Approach

Engages community members in project design, collects data from the community and sometimes shares project results with community members

# Community-led Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (CoIMEL)



an investment into a community that can keep catalyzing positive behaviour of people beyond the time frame and scope of a project.

# Why integrate Community-led MEL (CoIMEL)?

CoIMEL is at the heart of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) through empowerment of the most vulnerable individuals in addressing their own challenges.

Results from CoIMEL could be possibly aggregated and used towards project indicators allowing quantitative results in settings where often only qualitative data is accessible through traditional MEL methods.

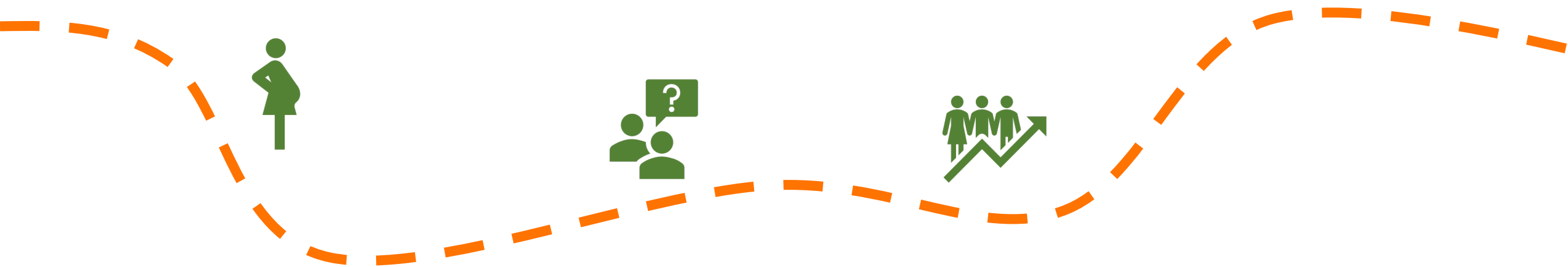


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**Community  
doesn't  
mean a  
village**

Community in the context of Community-led MEL doesn't usually mean a village.  
Rather it is an organized group of people, who self-identify within the group, based on some common identity (e.g. adolescent girls, victims of domestic violence)

# Story of Community-led MEL



Visual story-telling showing example of local communities empowered in decisions, solution design and evidence on reducing teenage pregnancies in Rwanda



Community-Led Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) **engages all community members** to design, implement, monitor progress, analyze and disseminate results, and adapt the **theory of change**.

# Story of Community-led MEL: Key Considerations

## Requires Flexibility in Design and Tools

Each community may require a different approach, methods and tools.

## Requires Flexibility in Funding

Community identifies its own priorities, which may lay outside the planned project focus but still contribute to project outcomes.

## Requires Flexibility in Time

Community-led programming needs at least 6-8 months of initial assessment, community mobilization and capacity building period.

## Requires In-depth Initial Assessment

Gender, governance, human rights, environment and other aspects need to be thoroughly assessed by the project team at the community level.

## Risk of leaving someone behind

Community-led programming can fully engage those most marginalized; but only if it is designed right, using the appropriate focus and tools.

## Risk of Unpredictable Data Quality

Community drives their own sampling, data collection tools and process, which may lead to variable quality for higher aggregation.

## Requires Significant Resources for the Initial Project Period

The initial period is critical for conducting a thorough assessment, mobilization and capacity building. This requires staff and funds available.

## Not the Right Approach for All Contexts

This approach may not be the right fit for all communities, organizations or projects.



Do you **think** that  
Community-led  
Monitoring,  
Evaluation and  
Learning could  
enhance your  
project(s)?

## REFLECTION



Do your project  
“beneficiaries”  
identify their own  
“theory of change”  
(e.g. do they define  
some of the project  
outcomes, outputs or  
indicators)

## REFLECTION



Do you **engage** people from targeted communities in the monitoring and evaluation of your project(s)? (e.g. selection of indicators, data collection, analysis of results)

## REFLECTION



# Exercise: Brainstorm your next data collection exercise



Alone or with your team:

- How will you integrate gender-sensitive, feminist, and/or community-led approaches into your next data collection exercise?
- Use Worksheet 4 (Brainstorming toward your next data collection exercise) as a guide for your reflection.
- Refer to handouts 2 (Community-led MEL), 3 (Data Collection Approaches and Methods).