

Complexity-Aware Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (CAMEL)

Counterpart's Journey to Applying New MEL Approaches for its Women Peace and Security / CVE Component in Niger

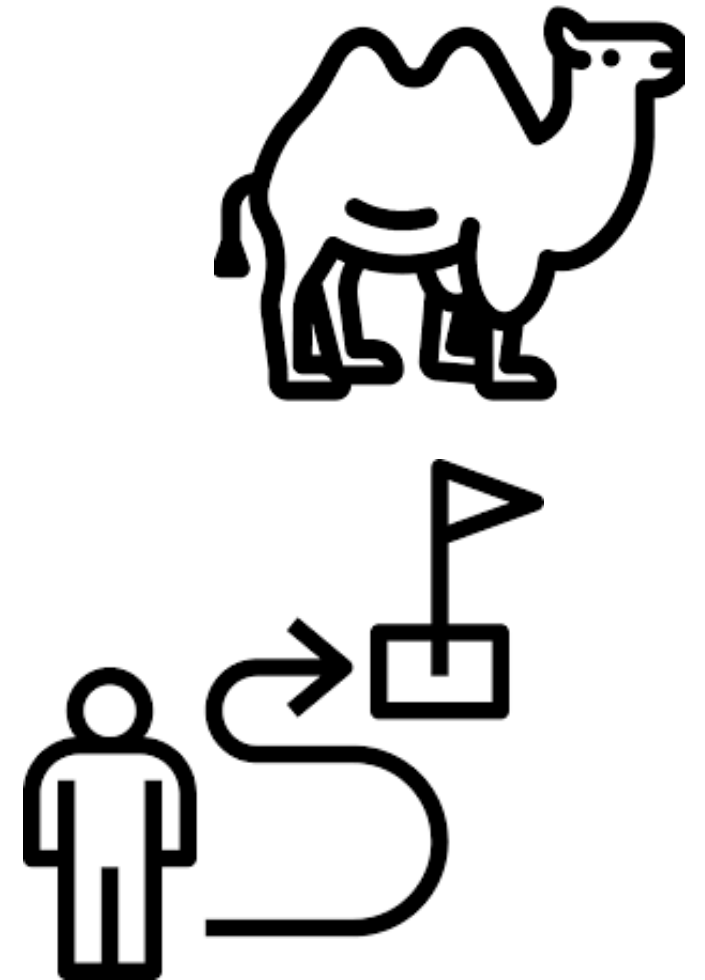
Peacebuilding M&E Solutions Forum

Alliance for Peacebuilding – M&E Solutions Forum

October 1, 2019

Presented by: Mehreen Farooq, Rebecca Askin, Nigina Valentini and
Lucie Amadou

Questions: Mfarooq@counterpart.org



Overview of Workshop

- Overview of Counterpart's work in Niger and the challenges affecting women
- Our approach, theory of change and goal
- Introduction to Complexity-Aware Monitoring & Evaluation (C-AME&E)
- Counterpart's application of C-AM&E (+L)
- Challenges & lessons learned

The Context of Niger

- Struggling economy – 189/189 on UNDP list
- Land locked with limited arable land and a desertsic climate
- Low literacy rate: men (43%) and women (15%)
- Niger has one of the youngest populations in the world, with more than 70% under the age of 30.
- Chronic poverty, food insecurity, inter-communal strife and violent extremism threaten stability.
- The presence of homegrown and foreign terrorist fighters in Niger is notably on the rise
- Porous borders, limited rule of law, and increasingly cross-border raids by violent extremist organizations like Boko Haram.



Factors of Instability which Violent Extremists seek to Manipulate for Recruitment Purposes

- Food insecurity
- Inter-ethnic conflict
- Unresolved land conflicts
- High levels of employment
- Environmental crisis
- Unequal resource distribution
- Demographic shifts
- Political tensions
- Weak rule of law
- School closures/out of school youth
- Emergence of gangs
- Drug abuse





Why are we focused on women?

- Women are often victims of conflict, or experience gender differential impact of violence and instability
- Women can be peacebuilders and first defenders
- Women are also perpetrators engaging or supporting violence
- Inclusion matters



Theory of Change for our WPS Component

ASSUMPTIONS

- Women and girls have different policy priorities & grievances than men, in part due to the gender differential impact of conflict and instability.
- Participation in local decision-making processes will lead to strategic public investment choices
- Strengthening their influence in community affairs will inspire them to take more actions to mitigate violent extremism
- Women would benefit from soft skills to have meaningful engagement in community dialogues
- Women have a unique role and influence in promoting or fighting violent extremism; and
- Women lack opportunities to support activities that increase protective factors and mitigate the risk factors that influence radicalization of both men and women
- Women do not have enough opportunities to exchange information with security force
- Enhancing women and girls' status and promoting respect for their opinions contributes to more inclusive attitudes

If women and girls better understand and participate in community and governmental decision-making processes (access to information)

If authorities and decision makers are sensitized to give women and girls a voice and place them at the heart of decision-making processes (inclusion and participation)

Then women and girls will more forcefully voice their communities' grievances while suggesting local solutions to address priority issues (active participation). In addition, they will feel more empowered to engage decision makers and lead action to prevent and mitigate violent extremism (leadership and problem solving)



OBJECTIVES

- Women are actively participating in local decision-making
- Public institutions are more responsive, transparent and accountable in the provision of gender-sensitive citizen services
- Security forces and women in particular effectively communicate and improve community security

GOAL

- Communities are more resilient to violent extremism due to increased women and girl leadership and participation in community level decision making, citizen action, and inclusive service delivery



What is Complexity?

Most development contexts are complex.

Projects and their environments are a mix of: simple, complicated, and complex.

Complex environments* have many actors and influences.

Operating effectively in complexity requires expensive technical tools or specialized knowledge.

When in complexity, focus is on contribution not attribution, and learning is retrospective.

*complex environments are not synonymous with conflict



What is Complexity?

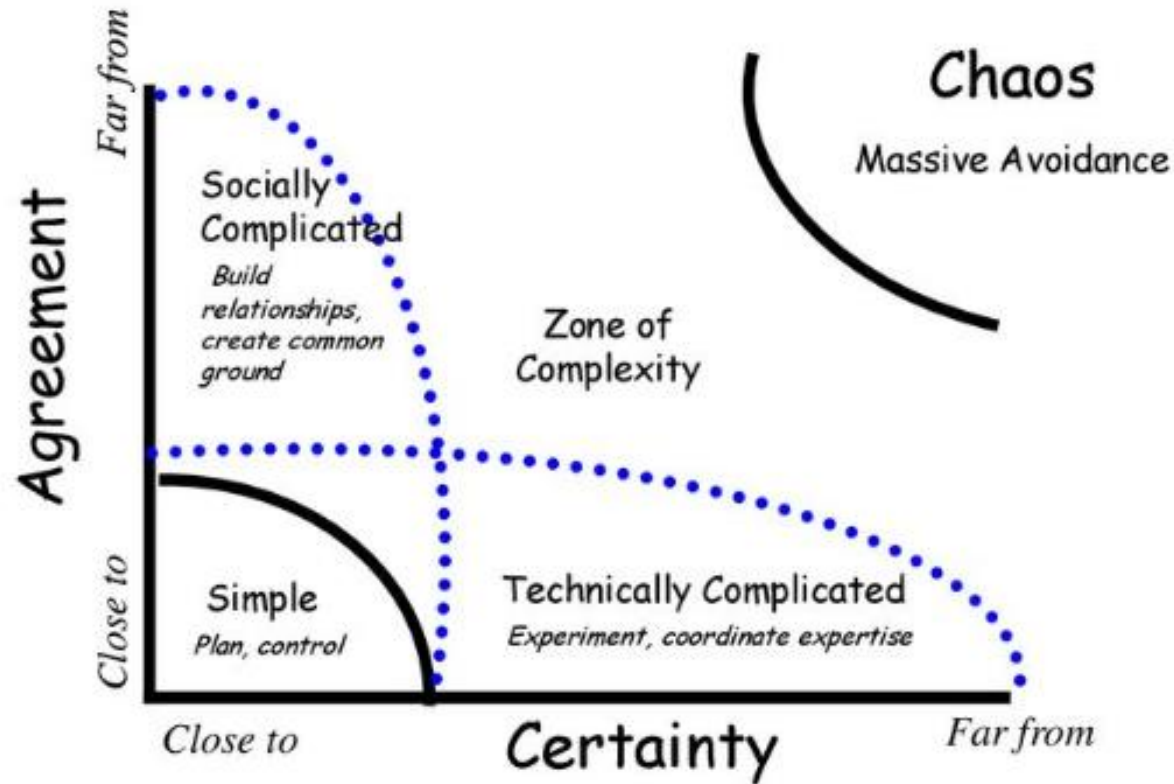


What is the degree of certainty about how to solve the problem?

What is the degree of agreement among stakeholders about how to solve the problem?



What is Complexity is Complexity?



Michael Quinn Patton
May, 2008



What is Complexity?

The Cynefin (pronounced kuh-nev-in) Framework is a tool to aid in decision making. Problems are categorized into four types: simple, complicated, complex, or chaotic.

Source: <http://www.managingforimpact.org/tool/cynefin-framework-0>

Source: Kurtz and Snowden, 2003

COMPLEX

the relationship between cause and effect can only be perceived in retrospect

probe-sense-respond

EMERGENT PRACTICE

COMPLICATED

the relationship between cause and effect requires analysis, investigation and/or expert knowledge

sense-analyze-respond

GOOD PRACTICE

CHAOTIC

no relationship between cause and effect at systems level

act-sense-respond

NOVEL PRACTICE

SIMPLE

the relationship between cause and effect is obvious to all

sense-categorize-respond

BEST PRACTICE



Performance Monitoring vs Complexity Monitoring

Performance monitoring uses indicators designed to measure results that contribute to broader country strategy results frameworks

Complexity-aware monitoring is distinct from performance monitoring as practiced in USAID and is intended to complement performance monitoring when used for complex aspects of projects and strategies.

Complexity-aware monitoring is appropriate for aspects of strategies or projects where cause and effect relationships are poorly understood.



When to use Complexity- Aware Monitoring?

Complexity-Aware Monitoring tracks the unpredictable.

Results (beyond those originally intended)

Factors & actors outside the project

Multiple pathways of change & feedback loops

Systems qualities

Triggers



Principles of Complexity-Aware Monitoring

ATTEND

Attend to performance monitoring's three blind spots.

SYNCHRONIZE

Synchronize monitoring with the pace of change.

CONSIDER

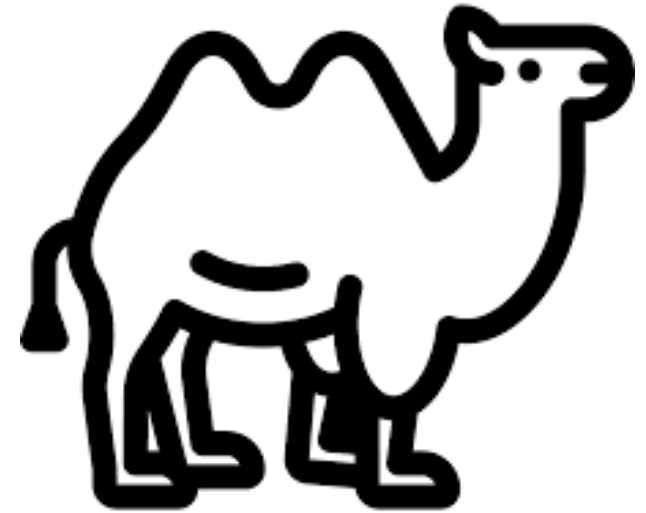
Consider relationships, perspectives, and boundaries.



Applying Complexity-Aware Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (CAMEL)

We use CAMEL when the cause and effect are not fully understood.

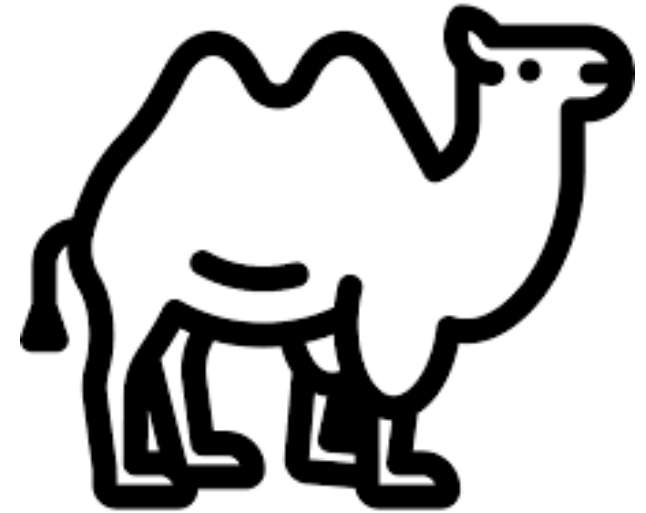
In rapidly changing environments that affect the assumptions of our theory of change, we need dynamic M&E systems to assess what is working / needs improvement in our approach, and flexible CLA mechanisms to determine how to adapt our approach accordingly.



Applying Complexity-Aware Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (CAMEL)

Counterpart's CAMEL toolkit includes two key tools:

1. A **Complexity Checklist** (*created by Michael Bamberger*) which serves as a quarterly barometer to measure program complexity. It looks at the nature of the problem, complexity of the technical approach, number of stakeholders, cohesion among stakeholders, stability of the environment, etc. As complexity of a program and its environment evolves – how do we respond by adapting our approach?
2. A **sentinel indicator tracker** (*created by Counterpart*) which measures sense of security in public places, violent incidents, social cohesion, economic conditions, presence of Violent Extremists, etc. This is adaptable to each program. Program coordinators re-assess each quarter and determine programmatic changes, as necessary.



A Closer Look at the Complexity Checklist

- Created by Michael Bamberger
- Assesses the complexity of the program through four (4) dimensions
- Rates the level of complexity from 1 (very low) complex to 5 being very high
- Scores are added at the end of each dimension and at the end to determine the final score and level of program's complexity
- Currently being tested in Niger
- Baseline assessment conducted in June 2019
- Complexity analyzed on a quarterly basis by Regional Coordinators, and MEL team on a quarterly basis to further determine scope of complexity of the program.

- *Note: understanding the domains and translating the concepts for field M&E staff is a challenge! We provide frequent re-training to staff to ensure data quality.*



Complexity Dimensions



Modeled after Michael Bamberger and Asela Kalugampitiya's
Dimensions of Complexity in Development Evaluation presentation

Sentinel Indicators

Domain	Indicator	Definition	Timing	Sources
Security (as related to women feeling safe)	Perception of sense of security in public places	Sense of public safety among women in relation to GBV	monthly, or urgently if needed. It can also be included in the weekly security report if needed	media, beneficiaries, government updates (ministry of women and child protection, chiefs of villages), sub-clusters led by UNDP
Security (overall)	Violent incidents	Number of reported violent incidents per community in a quarter (e.g. inter-ethnic, inter-religious violence, robberies, kidnappings, etc.)	monthly, or urgently if needed. It can also be included in the weekly security report if needed	media, beneficiaries, government updates
Social Vulnerability	Social Inclusion	Women participate in development decision-making processes (outside of project activities)	As activities/actions emerge	beneficiaries, media, government updates
Economic conditions	Female Labor Force Participation	Percentage of women that are either employed or unemployed	6 months or as information emerges	National Employment Agency. Ministry of Community Development. National Institute of Statistics. Communities Youth.

- Indicators initially developed for MEL Plan by HQ staff and adapted by program coordinators in the field
- Data captured by regional coordinators and shared on a quarterly basis with program managers.
- Pause and reflect sessions utilized to determine adjustments to implementation



Testing and Validating our Theory of Change



Complexity
Checklist



Sentinel
Indicators



FGDs, KIIs and
community
score cards



As a Result of Applying CAMEL, we have noted the following challenges that may affect our program implementation...

Inter-ethnic conflicts are increasing

Community leaders are being targeted by armed robbery, kidnapping and assassination

International NGO are being increasingly targeted by VE groups

Recruitment by violent extremist is ongoing



What have we found to date, and how are we adapting?

Readjust communication strategy and security measures

Car rental for field trips, avoid specifically referring to WPS as a CVE project, less visibility for our banners in high risk zones

Readjust implementation methodologies

More emphasis on our direct beneficiaries for the implementation/restitution of some WPS activities, selecting village level extension agents to reach more beneficiaries

Quickly respond to the changing situation

Make some programmatic changes in order to mitigate risks

Appropriate choice of partners

Our local partners are well known experts who have gained the trust of their communities

Mitigate threat to stakeholders

Adopting a ``no action`` approach to minimize risks for traditional leaders in our communes. For the time being, we will not openly engage with them in peace consolidation initiatives as planned.



Challenges in Implementing CAMEL

CULTURAL SHIFT

Substantial investment (time, training, and learning activities budgeted) required for transforming culture and operations from traditional M&E to CAMEL.

RESOURCES

Determining appropriate sentinel indicators is an iterative process, which requires thorough training of data enumerators, program staff, and having senior management champion the effort.

SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF DATA

Potential bias in the sources utilized for sentinel indicators, particularly for perception-based indicators.

EMERGENCE

Security situation may be evolving rapidly, requiring more rapid analysis of the emergence.



How the CAMEL system works

What we *learn* from this process (*what works and doesn't work*) informs our body of Learning.

We share learning internally in the program team and externally with stakeholders (e.g. USAID, Sahel Development Program, etc.)

Complexity Aware Monitoring



Traditional M&E Tools

(e.g. monitoring visits, AAR, FGDs, etc.)



Informs our Adaptive Management Approach



Next Steps

Continue

- Continue monitoring and adapting to the context while reinforcing the “do no harm approach”

Collect

- Collect regular feedback from beneficiaries on how our interventions are helping mitigate the risk of violent extremism if any

Keep

- Keep WPS learning questions in mind when conducting FGD , KII , surveys



Exercise

Break into groups
Select a project
Rate its complexity
Walk through the steps

