

Practice Note 2

A Compass for Navigating a Complex World:

Methodology Reflection based on the Developmental Evaluation
of the Community Memorialisation Project

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The Community Memorialisation Project, Sri Lanka

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About this note –

This practice note provides a methodology reflection of using Developmental Evaluation to monitor and evaluate the Community Memorialisation Project. In as much as the Community Memorialisation Project ventured into a previously under-explored area of using memory as a tool for reconciliation in a post conflict setting in Sri Lanka, Developmental Evaluation is also a new and innovative approach to evaluation. This methodology reflection outlines how Development Evaluation was operationalized in the project and considers the advantages and disadvantages of using this approach to evaluate innovation in a complex environment.

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1. Introduction

In the field of development, evaluation is often seen as a necessary evil. Often project staff are required by funders and other stakeholders to submit to an evaluation at the end of the project cycle, sometimes unwillingly, and receive a report that is often too late to help them address the real practical problems faced during implementation or which does not answer many of the practical questions they had. This is particularly an issue for innovative initiatives, which are often in a continuous process of development and adaptation; for them, the destination is often 'a notion rather than a crisp image, and the path forward may be unclear' (Gamble, 2008). Under such conditions, Developmental Evaluation (DE) is a game changer. It moves the focus of evaluation away from ex- post proving the impact of the project with a view to designing the next project, to directly and immediately helping ongoing projects to adapt and improve their design and implementation.

In many ways, the DE approach is a significant shift away from traditional evaluation approaches, and is particularly well suited for complex, changing and emerging contexts. Yet, there is little practical guidance on how to actually carry out a DE, and few real life examples of applying it as a methodology (Patton et al, 2016). This paper is a methodology reflection based on the experience and learning from using the DE approach to support an innovative project in a complex and changing context, namely the Community Memorialisation Project implemented by Search for Common Ground, Sri Lanka and the HerStories Initiative during the period 2016-2018.

2. The DE niche in Evaluation

Traditionally, many approaches to addressing problems in the development field are based on a linear logic model. There is a sequence of steps that moves from problem to solution, and practitioners move methodically from assessing the situation to gathering and analyzing data, formulating a solution and then implementing that solution. This linear logical approach works well when the problem is well understood, there are clear boundaries and there is a limited set of possible solutions. Traditional approaches to evaluation are generally built around supporting this kind of problem solving. Summative evaluations provide a judgement on the extent to which the problem was solved; whether measured outcomes can be attributed to the identified solution; and the conditions under which goals were attained that would affect generalizability and therefore dissemination of the identified solution. Formative evaluations aim at improving program processes and providing feedback about strengths and weaknesses of the identified solution that appear to affect goal attainment (Gamble, 2008).

The challenge for practitioners is that not all problems are well understood, have optimal solutions, or occur within stable parameters. Innovators usually find themselves in such complex situations, where it is difficult to understand the ramifications of changes. As Gamble (2008) notes:

The dynamics of a complex system have a high degree of connectivity and interdependence. There are diverse elements whose interactions create unpredictable, emergent results... A solution may initially appear ideal, but does not get at what was intended, so the problem needs to be re-examined in light of what was learned in that experience...The very techniques that enable evaluation excellence in more static situations – standardization of inputs, consistency of treatment, uniformity of outcomes and clarity of causal linkages – are unhelpful, even harmful, to situations where there is a lot of uncertainty and 'moving goalposts'.

Innovation is often about breaking boundaries and therefore, upfront and preordained specificity - which is required under traditional evaluation approaches - may not be useful under conditions of high innovation, exploration or uncertainty. For example the log frame

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Methodology Reflection based on the Developmental Evaluation

approach, which is popular among evaluators and funders alike, can force premature adoption of a rigid model not because such a model is appropriate, but because it complies with what many in the development field understand to be good evaluation (Patton et al, 2016). Developmental Evaluation emerged as a response to criticisms from ‘the field’; from practitioners wary of traditional evaluation and their expressed need for an alternative way to evaluate their work. In many ways, DE offers a real alternative to the traditional approaches of Summative and Formative Evaluation (Box 1).

Box 1: Traditional forms of evaluation vs Development Evaluation	
Traditional evaluations	Developmental evaluations
Render definitive judgments of success or failure	Provide feedback, generate learnings, support changes in direction
Measure success against predetermined goals	Develop new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge and evolve
Position the evaluator outside to assure independence and objectivity	Position evaluation as internal, team function integrated into action and ongoing interpretive processes
Design the evaluation based on linear cause-and-effect logic models	Design the evaluation to capture system dynamics, interdependencies, models and emergent interconnections
Aim to produce generalizable findings across time and space	Aim to produce context-specific understandings that inform ongoing innovation
Accountability focused on and directed to external authorities, stakeholders and funders	Accountability centred on the innovators’ deep sense of fundamental values and commitment
Accountability to control and locate responsibility	Learning to respond to lack of control and stay in touch with what’s unfolding and thereby respond strategically
Evaluator determines the design based on the evaluator’s perspective about what is important. The evaluator controls the evaluation	Evaluator collaborates with those engaged in the change effort to design an evaluation process that matches philosophically with an organization’s principles and objectives
Evaluation results in opinion of success or failure, which creates anxiety in those evaluated	Evaluation supports ongoing learning

Source: Gamble (2008)

The originator of the DE approach, Michael Quinn Patton, notes that:

‘Developmental evaluation refers to long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development. Developmental evaluation processes include asking evaluative questions and gathering information to provide feedback and support developmental decision-making and course corrections along the emergent path. The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. The evaluator’s primary function in the team is to elucidate team discussions with evaluative questions, data and logic, and to facilitate data-based assessments and decision-making in the unfolding and developmental processes of innovation.’ (Dozois et al, 2010)

In DE, the process is the outcome. In place of clarity, specificity and measurability at the outset, DE takes a more exploratory approach. In Patton's words, DE practitioners 'realize that where they end up will be different for different participants - and that participants themselves should play a major role in goal-setting' (Patton, 1994). Developmental evaluators help to identify dynamic system characteristics and make sense of emergent problems, strategies, and goals as innovations develop.



Another key difference between traditional forms of evaluation and DE is in the role played by the Evaluator. In traditional evaluations, the evaluator is positioned as an outsider and is required to be detached from the project, which is considered critical to assure independence and objectivity. In contrast in DE, the evaluator is embedded in the project, and is positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, framing issues, surfacing and testing model development.

As with traditional evaluations, in DE too the evaluators' work is also necessary to provide accountability to funders. However unlike traditional evaluations, DE does not merely report against predetermined outcomes and indicators. It provides a larger picture, helping funders and supporters of innovative initiatives to understand and refine their contributions to solutions as they

evolve. Funders of innovation need to be flexible and adaptive in alignment with the above mentioned characteristics of complex environments while seeking accountability, and DE can help in this adjustment process.

3. DE in the Community Memorialisation Project

Sri Lanka emerged from a 26-year war in 2009 with a military victory over the Tamil separatist rebels, LTTE. The Government at the time, embarked on a process of post-war economic development with very little emphasis on addressing any of the root causes of conflict that shaped the conditions for civil war since it gained independence in 1948. The struggle for political voice, the discriminatory practices that were systemic, the ethno-cultural superiority one group felt over the other and many more elements of decades of conflict remained buried beneath the surface.

Building on the experience of the HerStories project¹ and the strengths of Search for Common Ground², CMP aimed to contribute to repairing the social fabric in Sri Lanka through shared memorialisation of pain, and thus empathy for 'the other'. Project activities consisted of collecting the life histories of persons affected by violence and using these life histories to generate intra-district and inter district dialogues that cuts across ethnic, political and socio-economic divides. In addition, all of the personal stories collected were translated into all three national languages, Sinhala, Tamil, and English, and archived as a digital map. This along with a dedicated website aims to ensure that these narratives remain for posterity. All of these activities aimed to create an enabling environment for memory work and ensure that the type of violence experienced in the country will not be repeated.

1 <http://herstoryarchive.org/>

2 <https://www.sfcg.org/sri-lanka/>

The Community Memorialisation Project ventured into a previously under-explored area of using memory as a tool for reconciliation in a post conflict setting in Sri Lanka. At the time when CMP was designed, a project on historical memory was a new and innovative approach in the country, and the project hoped to build on each activity allowing for adaptation to context and new learning as the project evolved. In such a situation, the project team needed rapid feedback from the ground, both in relation to project activities and changes in the context as they emerged, as well as support to find their way through the complexities of the context, to the desired goal. Given the complexity of the post war context in Sri Lanka as well as the innovative and emergent nature of the project, the DE approach was uniquely suited to support the CMP.

4. Operationalising DE in CMP

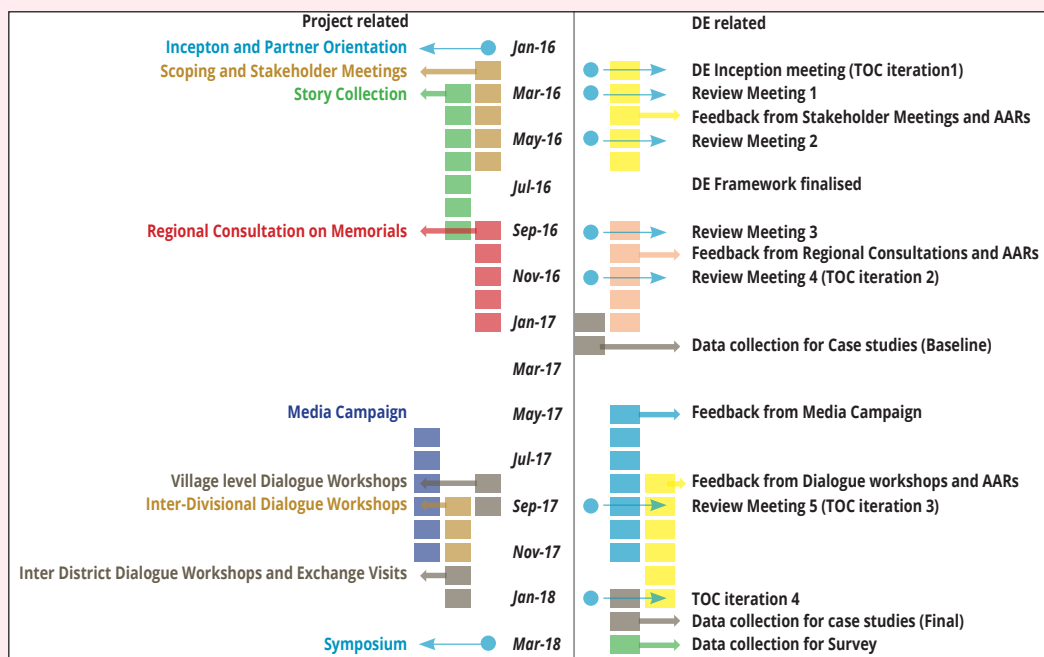
The DE in CMP was implemented as an embedded evaluation. The DE team consisted of an external consultant (part time) and a project team member (full time). Together the DE team were involved from the start of the project, participating in project planning, review and implementation. The DE team was present during planning meetings, observed field activities such as story collection and dialogue workshops, and functioned as a sounding board for the project team, both in Colombo and during field activities. While they lead the analysis of the data from case studies, key person interviews and the survey, much of the data was jointly analyzed by the DE and Project teams. The DE team provided preliminary analysis of various data as they were collected, which were discussed and further analyzed at team meetings. This close relationship helped the evaluation to better support the project and for the DE team to understand the project as well as the context better.

Because DE was a new approach - to the project team, to evaluation in Sri Lanka and to peacebuilding efforts more widely - the DE for CMP started with multiple consultations and sharing of information. These consultations began with discussions with project team members, sometimes individually and sometimes together, as well as with the partners implementing the project in the three districts of Ampara, Matara and Mannar. It was important for the project team to understand what the DE approach is and what it could do for them, as well as for the DE team to understand the project and the context. Unlike in traditional evaluations where the Evaluator provides the evaluation framework at the outset for approval by the project team, the DE framework for the CMP was collaboratively developed over several months.

The DE framework set out the objectives, tools and reporting methods for the DE, and identified two focal areas of learning. Specifically, *learning during implementation* which focused on assisting project staff and key stakeholders to identify and understand the changes happening in the context and formulate rapid responses; and *learning from the project experience* which focused on assisting project staff and other stakeholders to reflect on where they end up and make judgments about the implications of what has happened for future programming and redesigning.

Learning during implementation was structured around a continuous quality improvement process, following the steps of **plan, do, check and act** (Kartikowati, 2013). Three main activities were monitored in this way: (i) collection of stories; (ii) dialogue; and (iii) media campaign. These activities were designed, implemented as pilots, refined and then rolled out but with provision for real time feedback from respondents / participants and space for reflection within the team on a continuous basis (See Box 2).

Box 2: Timeline of Project and DE Activities



The DE approach does not advocate specific tools for data collection or analysis. Rather it leaves these choices up to the evaluation team based on the needs of the project. In the CMP, several M&E tools were used, tested and discarded in line with this approach.

The **log frame** tool, which was inherited from the original proposal to the funder, helped to ensure that standard data such as number of stories collected, number of participants at workshops and number of media events are regularly monitored against targets, which were then regularly reported in quarterly reports to funders. However, from a learning perspective as a log frame provides limited information, other tools were also introduced. For example, after each dialogue event, the participants were asked to provide **formal feedback** regarding the effectiveness of the workshop (Annex 1). This was done for initial pocket meetings which introduced the project, regional meetings and village level meetings, as well as for division and district level meetings. These feedback loops helped to refine the content and structure of the dialogue workshops. For example, based on this feedback, the project changed facilitators used for the dialogue workshops. The DE team also helped to structure a monitoring framework to **monitor the media campaign** while it was ongoing (Annex 2). Using the frame, the media team provided regular feedback, not just on outputs but on some outcome level indicators (such as public response to media articles and events). Finally after each dialogue event, the team (comprising of the project staff as well as the partner and facilitators), sat together to review the event under what worked, what didn't and what can be improved. These **After Action Reviews** (Annex 3) brought together various perspectives and provided real time feedback to the project staff to adapt and improve implementation.

Two other tools were used to promote reflection as a team as well as individually by the project team members, namely a Theory of Change (Annex 4) and a Diary Tool (Annex 5). Visualizing a **Theory of Change** (TOC), as a joint exercise for the team, helped to articulate the project theory as well as assumptions and clarify the objectives. Subsequent TOC visuals were developed at critical stages of the project, which helped to 1) communicate the project activities to the team and partners; 2) to get everyone on the same page; and 3) to develop

multiple data collection tools as the project progressed. To promote individual reflection, a **diary tool** was used. Given the innovative nature of the project and the need to maximize learning from observation and piloting of various approaches, both project staff and partner staff were encouraged to keep a diary to document their thoughts and issues. However, not everyone used the diary as requested. Nevertheless, among those who did use it, the diary tool has helped to capture, articulate and identify issues as they happen and promotes a culture of documentation, which has been useful to both the evolution of the project and the DE.

Use of multiple tools helped to give voice to multiple stakeholders, such as project participants, members of the project team, partners and other resource providers such as facilitators of the workshops. At the same time the continuous use of these tools helped to ensure that feedback and information about the context was continuously being fed back into project design, to improve ongoing activities as well as plan the next set of activities.

The second area of learning the DE focused on was learning from the project experience, or understanding the outcome, impact and lessons from the project. This was structured around two questions: what changes have occurred in terms of perceptions, attitudes, behavior, among the project participants; and what changes have occurred in the wider environment in relation to acknowledging and preserving multiple histories. For this purpose, the DE team used case studies, a survey and key person interviews.

The **case studies** aimed to understand the change, if any, the project created in terms of perceptions and behavior. In all, 6 – 8 participants were purposively selected from each district for in depth interviews, at two points in time; during the project and at the end of the project. Respondents were selected with a view to obtaining a cross cut of ethnicity, gender and age. A **survey** was also carried out to assess if there were any differences in terms of empathy and openness to reconciliation activities between those who participated in the project and those who did not. It was structured as a cluster sampling in areas / villages where project participants live with the target group purposively selected and the comparison group selected through a matched random sampling method. Learning from feedback received during workshops, the survey tool was developed with visuals and hypothetical situations, to elicit real feelings and attitudes. A small number of **key person interviews** were carried out to explore the changes in the policy and practice environment and to draw causal links to the project. These interviews were done with the implementing partners, and others connected to implementing the project at the grass root level.

While these tools are similar to what would be used in traditional evaluations, under the DE the tools themselves needed to be agile, probing the context as well as eliciting information on various indicators that had been identified as the project evolved. Many tools had open ended questions, to allow for the needs and thoughts of various stakeholders to be fed back throughout the life of the project, which helped the project team to keep in touch with what is happening as well as to respond strategically.

5. Implications of using the DE approach for CMP

Support the evolution of the Theory of Change

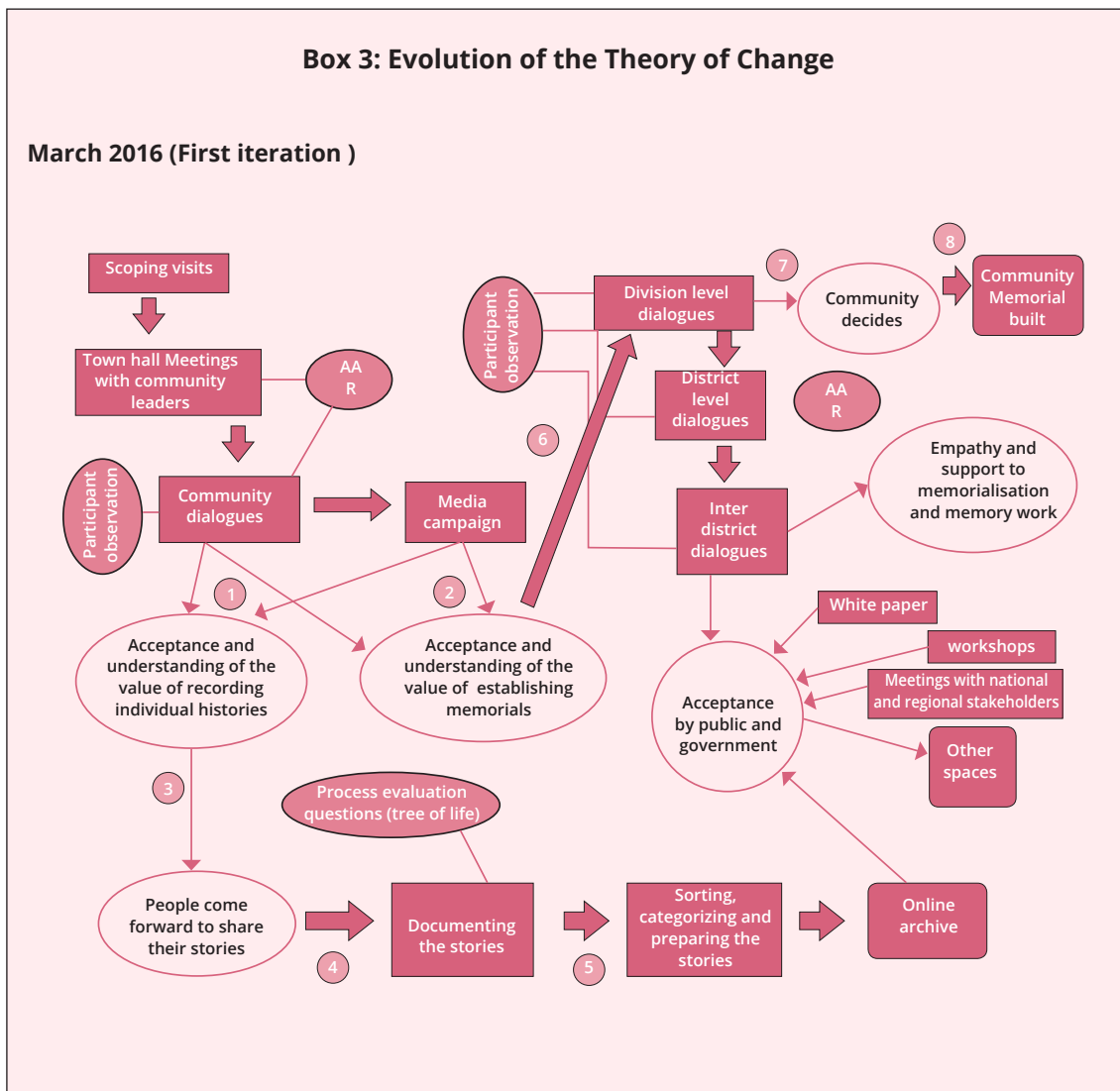
The CMP started off as an idea, to build on the experience, learning and impact of the HerStories project. The project team had extensive experience on story collection and dissemination, and well tested tools for this purpose. However, very little was articulated about what can be done with the stories once they are collected to generate a dialogue, at micro, meso or macro levels. Informal conversations with various members of the project team at the start of the DE suggested some confusion and lack of clarity about project activities and their link to project goals. Therefore, one of the main tools proposed by the DE team at the start of the project was a collectively developed Theory of Change (TOC). The first iteration of the TOC

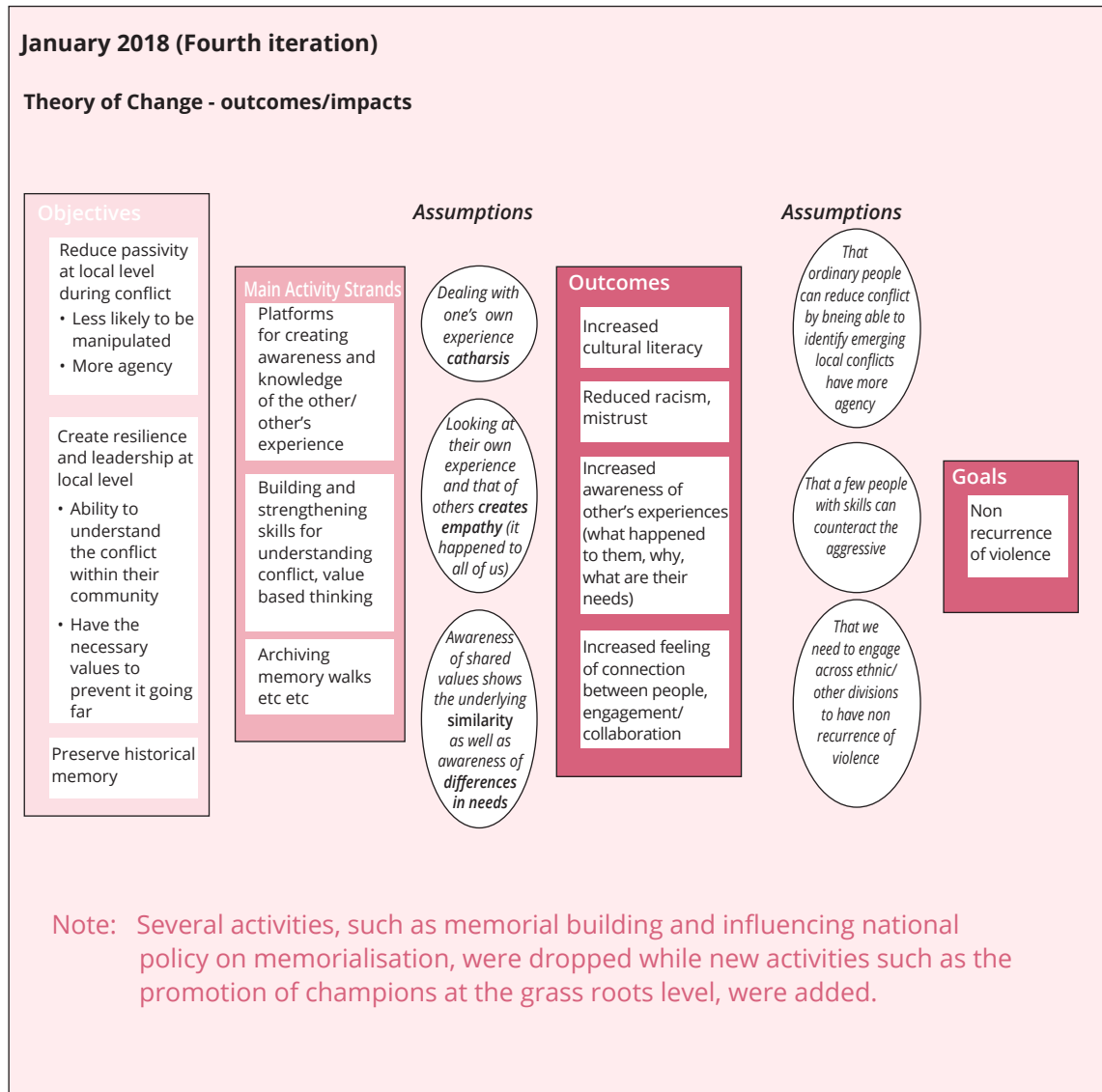
was undertaken during the DE inception meeting and helped to articulate the thinking and to get the team members to understand and buy into the project activities.

“The Theory of Change was useful for the project. Until we did the first TOC visual, much of the project was in my head. I was finding it hard to communicate it to the other team members because no one else had worked on memorialisation before, and the entire team was new to it. I was instituting something new from scratch, that’s one of the reasons why it was so difficult to get. It’s partially because it was so alien. But what the TOC did was help articulate that in a way that was familiar. As it was, even with the discussions and visuals, the rest of the team and partners took a while to understand the project, so without the TOC it would have been much more difficult.”

-Team Leader, CMP

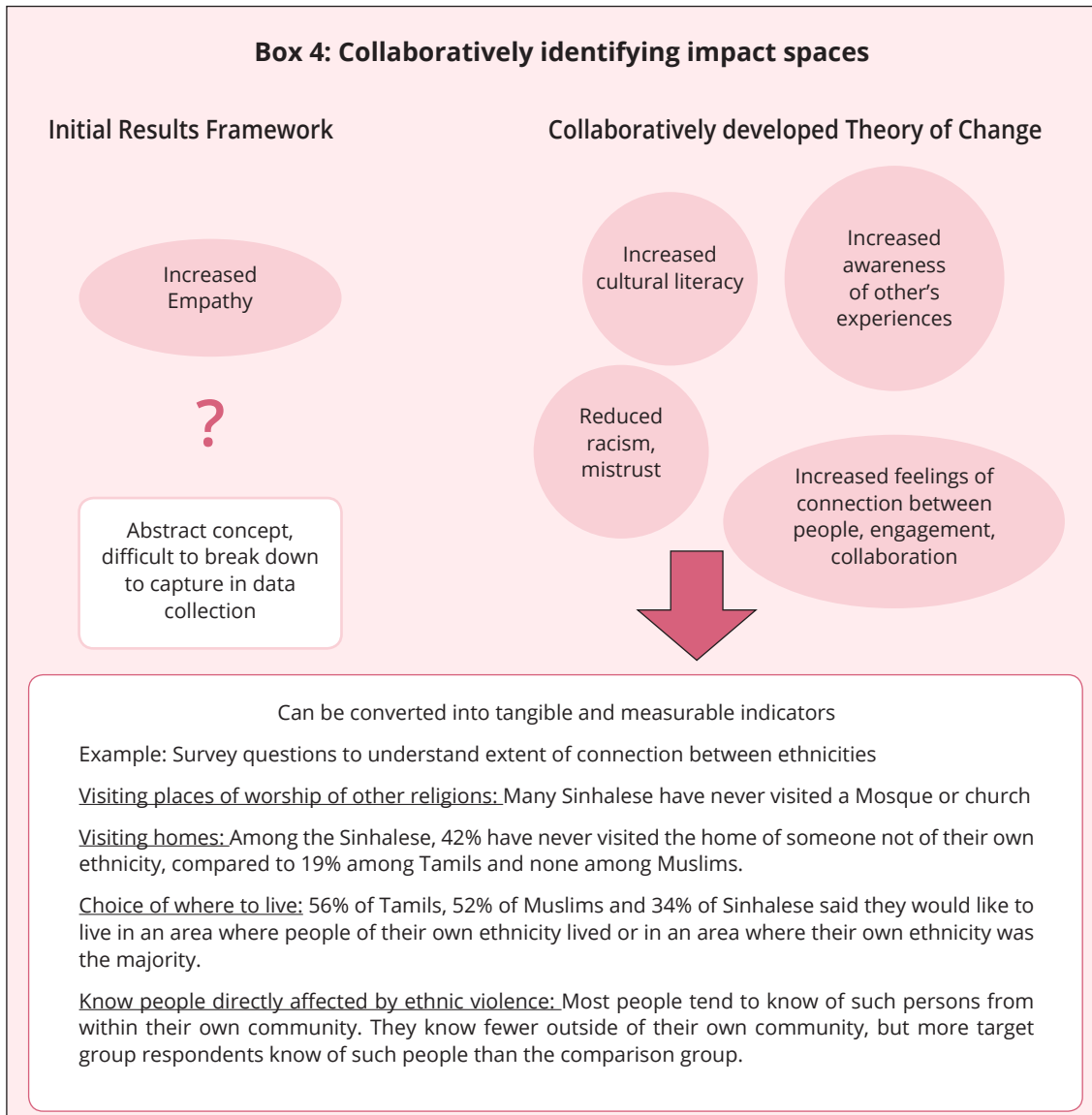
The first iteration of the TOC (Box 3) was vague on the activities to follow the story collection phase, and therefore the TOC was reiterated on three more occasions during the project implementation period and each time, helped to articulate ideas and generate a common understanding of project activities within the team. This regular iteration of the TOC was useful to keep the team focused on project goals and objectives, especially as project activities shifted and changed with changes in the context and what was being learned about the context through project activities.





For example, in the first iteration of the TOC, project goal was identified as: *creating empathy and support to memorialisation and memory work*. With the evolution of the project, it became clear that this objective was limiting of the work the project was actually doing. While this was largely the objective of the HerStories project and it made sense to use it at the start of CMP, the CMP hoped to go much further beyond this, not just to get acceptance for memory work but to *use* memory and memorialisation to promote reconciliation. Over time, the team identified the goal that was more meaningful and relevant to the project: *to prevent the reoccurrence of violence*. By creating a space, both to challenge project theory as well as to reflect on project direction, the TOC proved to be a useful tool for the CMP to evolve and adapt, while staying aligned with the direction of the project (Box 3).

In addition, the TOC tool was useful to the DE team as well, as they were able to understand the project deeply, which was invaluable in designing outcome indicators and identifying potential impact spaces. For example, initial results framework for the project identified creating empathy for the other as an important impact. Initially the DE team found it challenging to transfer the concept of empathy into identifiable and measurable indicators. However, over time, the concept was broken down into component which were easier to capture in data collection tools (Box 4). This learning is reflected in the questionnaire designs for the case studies, key person interviews and the survey.



Availability of M&E data throughout the project period

The DE is a way to ensure a strong emphasis on M&E throughout the project, not just at the start and /or end of a project. In the CMP, most activities had inbuilt feedback mechanisms, such as formalized methods for participants to provide written feedback after each dialogue event. Such data was analyzed by the DE team and provided back to the team at project meetings as analysis notes. Table 1 shows some examples of such analyses which was presented by the DE team to the project team at various points during project implementation. These formal analyses were provided in addition to the raw data, such as from the AARs which the project team were able to use directly as they came in from the field. These helped to generate discussion within the team, as well as ground the discussion on analyzed data.

In addition the DE team shared raw data and preliminary analysis with the project team during the field data collection process. For example, the information coming from individual case studies was useful and interesting for the project team, and helped them to adjust and change implementation in real time without waiting for formal analysis reports to be given to them a few months later. This informal sharing was possible because the DE team was in close interaction with the project team, as well as because of the open relationship between the DE and project teams. For the DE team too, this sharing was useful as it helped to brainstorm the data analysis with the project team, jointly discussing the meaning and

implications of preliminary findings. Overall, this continuous availability of M&E data helped to enrich the project discussions and greatly assisted the team to design and plan for the next phases of the project.

Support CMP to be flexible and adapt with context

The country context within which the CMP was implemented is fluid. Sri Lanka is less than 10 years on from the end of brutal violence associated with the civil war and there are still many unresolved issues stemming from three decades of conflict. This was very apparent when ethnicity based clashes erupted into several incidents of violence as recently as March 2018³. These incidents suggest that much still needs to be done to promote reconciliation in the country, and CMP needed to be agile to understand and adapt with the complexity of the context.

Table 1: Diverse M&E data

Project Activity	M&E tools	Analysis Method by DE team	Examples of analysis provided to project team
<u>Stakeholder meetings</u> : to introduce the project and generate an interest among potential story contributors to come forward with their life story	Feedback Form provided to all the participants	Feedback was analyzed as follows: <u>Reaction</u> : Did the participants feel that the event was worth their time? <u>Learning</u> : Did the participants learn anything new? <u>Behavior</u> : are the participants planning to put any of their learning to use? Are they able transfer their new knowledge and / or attitudes to other people? <u>Results</u> : Are participants willing to come forward to tell their stories as well as engage in dialogue with other communities on memorialisation?	Extract from Feedback Analysis by the DE team <u>Reaction</u> : All the participants who provided feedback (171 participants), without exception, expressed positive reactions to the meeting. A participant from Ampara said "I am very happy that I have the opportunity to attend this program" and this sentiment was echoed by many others. The positive reaction stems from the perceived lack of opportunities they have had in the past to express and share their stories. This was variously expressed by the participants in Matara as follows: "I feel privileged to have been a part of this program as I have never had the chance to share my story with other people and experience stories of other people".

3 <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/New-violence-against-Muslims-in-Sri-Lanka-has-old-roots-148489.html>

Project Activity	M&E tools	Analysis Method by DE team	Examples of analysis provided to project team
<p><u>Village level meetings:</u> homogenous meetings within a village to discuss their own story with war and violence, as well as the stories of others, and to consider what changes and values they need to generate to prevent recurrence of violence</p>	<p>Feedback Form provided to all the participants (see Annex 1 for format)</p>	<p>Quantitative analysis of Likert Scales to identify and qualitative analysis of the feedback</p>	<p>Extract from Feedback Analysis by the DE team</p> <p>“About a third of the respondents felt the first session (revisiting own experiences) was very useful. Sinhalese speakers, older people and males found it very useful. Those who said not very useful cited reasons such as felt sad, afraid or worried). Those who said very useful cited reasons such as learnt about the conflict, gained knowledge, gained understanding of the past of the conflict. 76% of Sinhala speakers and 51% of Tamil speakers found the second session (exposure to individual histories collected from other ethnicities and areas) very useful. They said they were able to see the hardships of others / people they did not know. They also noted the similarity of the suffering. Some Tamil speaking respondents said it was like reading about their own experience. Those who said it was not very useful said they felt sad, but also that they understood other’s experiences and that everyone is the same.</p>
<p><u>Dialogue meetings</u> at various levels</p>	<p>After Action Review with project team, partners and facilitators (see Annex 3 for format)</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of main points by district • Possible outcomes and impacts • Lessons for implementation 	<p>Selected extracts from AAR Analysis</p> <p><u>“Summary of issues by District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working will illiterate elderly people is a challenge because of the conceptual nature of the workshop. Video is more effective than the written exhibit - Video should be followed by a discussion so it is clear what the back story is (for example, some in the North and East do not know of the JVP troubles in the South) - First sessions / beginning is difficult but people calm down after having vented their feelings <p><u>Outcomes / impacts</u></p> <p><i>Empathy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Felt sympathy even with the Sinhalese – ‘they are mothers too’. It’s a pity the war started and we curse the war....” - Samanthurai AAR - “I felt the fear of death that my father must have felt during the troubles” – Matara AAR <p>Change in attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in thinking: only we suffered to yes, but others suffered too

For example, at the start of CMP the results framework was visualized as a log frame, which envisaged the construction of 3 community owned public memorials in three districts. However as the project was being implemented through various feedback mechanisms, both formal and informal, it became clear that communities were not quite ready to construct memorials. There was a variety of views expressed about whether it is necessary to remember the past or not, what aspect of the past to remember, and what implications a tangible monument could have for peace and reconciliation in future (Box 5).

Box 5: Multiple data sources about memorial building

“When we visited Aranthalwa [memorial for 28 monks slain during the civil war] I was in so much pain. We are Buddhists and to us monks are similar to deities. I was very shocked, I was sad and angry. Later when I saw the other incidents (in Hindu and Muslim areas) I felt that Aranthalawa was only one incident among many other incidents, and my anger went away. I think that a monument is valuable. The memory of those incidents should not fade away with time, they should be kept for younger generation to remember but not to instigate anger. If you first see [the Aranthalawa Memorial] with no background information you get angry. But if you know the incident you don't get angry when you see it.”

- Extract from case study, Female, Sinhalese, Age 47

“On the one hand, remembering is good in order to tell others about the experience of war, especially with the next generation. Then they too will think about the repercussions of war and will try to live peacefully with other communities. On the other hand knowing about past violence may have bad consequences in young people's minds. Erecting memorial is good for those who lost their relatives because they can remember them and honour them. The Arantalawa memorial has been built realistically but I was very worried when I saw it. It is similar to the one in Weeramunai. When Sinhalese see it they may feel angry. I think the Aranthalawa memorial is digging into the past and incites violent feeling.”

- Extract from case study, Female, Tamil, Age 62

“We can use the feedback we got today to modify the project activities in the future. For example, regarding the building of memorials, our thinking before was quite different. What we got today are a wide range of viewpoints, some people said we should do it without any religious or ethnic differentiation, some people said we don't need memorials. We have to be careful that people don't look at the memorials and get angry all over again, we don't need memorials like that. We need ones that are relatable to all (across religious and ethnic divisions)”

- Extract from an After Action Review, Regional Meeting in Kalmunai (October 2016)

The DE team assisted the team to systematically collect and analyze this information, as well as to adapt the project using the TOC and other tools, in a way that would still retain the focus on project objectives and goals. Clearly highly structured and rigid M&E, for example in the form of a log frame, would neither have identified this issue nor assisted the project team to adapt to critical learning mid-way through the project.

Promote an embedded evaluation / learning mind-set within project team

At the start of the CMP, there was very little interest or knowledge about the DE approach within the project team, who were very much focused on the design and implementation of the project. It was clear that in their minds, the project was one thing and the DE was another. While there was no difficulty for the DE team to gain access to team meetings and project documents, there was an underlying wariness of M&E among the project team. One team member noted that the DE team over emphasizing outcomes and impacts too early in the project period could undermine the achievement of such outcomes and impacts. The DE team found it a challenge to promote a results- and outcome-based thinking from the start of the project, while balancing the need to provide an innovative project the space to experiment.

However, as the project progressed and M&E data and analyses started becoming available to the project team, this wariness gradually dissolved. Particular tools introduced through the DE approach, such as the After Action Review were quickly found to be very useful for the team and were enthusiastically embraced. The DE consultant visited project areas on 10 occasions over a two year period and joined the project team during implementation, and was available to share ideas and generate discussion with the team on implementation as well as larger issues of project theory⁴. Because the DE team worked collaboratively throughout the project period, to bring an evaluative mind-set to project meetings, to design and administer M&E data collection tools, and to analyze and interpret the data, the project team became increasingly familiar with the DE approach as well as have a greater appreciation for how DE could assist their work. Over time, project team members started to proactively request for the designing of feedback mechanisms around project activities, as well as request for the analysis of such data to help plan future phases of the project.

The DE team was able to build trust with the project team by making it clear that the DE team's objective was not to produce a ground breaking evaluation report, but rather that they were interested in designing and implementing the best possible project. This helped to eradicate the audit or compliance mind-set and helped to bring out problems which could be discussed openly. This was particularly evident when project team members joined in on some of the key person interviews conducted by the DE team where project theory as well as implementation issues were discussed openly and in depth. Because M&E data was collected and analyzed jointly, there was ownership and buy-in to the M&E analysis. Improvements and adaptation could be included without undue strain, with the project team and partner showing greater willingness to make changes.

6. Methodology Reflection: The DE Experience

The Developmental Evaluation Approach has been a radical departure from the traditional methods of M&E, for both the project team as well as the M&E team. From being viewed as an external activity, done at the end of the project, and often viewed with some suspicion, the DE allowed the M&E team to be closely involved in project implementation. The DE team was able to provide inputs to help the project team learn as they go, which contributed to better design and implementation of project activities. This close collaboration also helped the DE team to understand what kind of impacts can be expected and where to look for them. This was particularly useful given the complexity of the context and innovative aspects of the project.

For the DE team, the insider look into the project came with the challenge to maintain sufficient distance. It was felt that their inputs could lose some of their value if they identified too much with the project. This is a fine line, which is hard to maintain, especially when the

⁴ The DE team consisted of 2 persons; an external consultant (who was based in Colombo and worked part time on this DE) and a project team member, who was present in the field on a full time basis through the entire project period.

DE team comprises of implementers who also carry out M&E functions, or when the DE team is called upon to perform project functions such as helping to facilitate workshops. Overall however, in the CMP the DE team's close involvement with project implementation has promoted a culture of learning, for both the DE team as well as the project team, with both parties having a strong focus on improving design and implementation. Designing and administering evaluation tools together as well as collaboratively analyzing the data have promoted an evaluation culture within the team, who have started to include these tools as well as formal spaces for reflecting and learning from project implementation, in planned activities. The DE team has a role to play in this process by providing documentation support – which is often weak at internal meetings – which helped to articulate, analyze and share institutional learning.

One challenge of using DE, from an M&E perspective, is the lack of a baseline against which the project impact can be objectively measured. In the case of CMP, the project changed substantially over the course of two years and it was not possible to establish a meaningful baseline at the start. To address this, once there was greater clarity about project activities a modified baseline was collected in January 2017, one year into project implementation, with 18 case studies of persons purposively selected as likely to become “champions” at the community level. However, at the final round of data collection, it was found that even among the respondents to the modified baseline data collection, many had dropped out while new participants had joined. The DE team overcame the lack of a baseline by adding new case studies with whom a baseline was constructed retrospectively during the interview, but this issue underlines the drawbacks of evaluating an evolving project. While DE recommends ‘developing new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge and evolve’ (Gamble, 2008), in practice this approach may pose problems for the evaluator which would require adaptation and innovation in the use of tools.

The experience of DE for the CMP has been largely positive but it is also clear that it worked due to the presence of several preconditions. The DE approach needs a substantial time commitment and openness to reflection and sharing learning from the project team. Not every project has the capacity or the ability to allow for such continuous reflection as they operate within multiple time and resource constraints. The DE is also unlikely to be a useful approach unless the project is long term, as substantial time is needed to allow the DE team to build trust with other team members and become part of the team, and make useful contribution to the project. Finally, the composition of the DE team is also important; they should have the appropriate mind-set, and be prepared to engage deeply with the project, including by spending time in the field with the project team, but at the same time be able to step back and observe project activities. Rather than the usual role of the evaluator, which is to be a judge of the project's effectiveness, the evaluator has to be a critical but supportive and trusted friend for the DE approach to work well.

Finally, in the case of the CMP the DE approach worked because of the open approach of CMP's funders. As noted at the start of this paper, DE requires a fundamental shift in the mind-set of funders and external stakeholders who support innovation. An overly rigid reporting framework and strict adherence to the original log frame would have undermined CMP's ability to incorporate innovations and adapt project activities, and would have constrained the learning that was ultimately possible through the project. As funders of innovation, CMP's funders relied less on predetermined, externally enforced accountability mechanisms and more on innovators' deep sense of fundamental values and commitment, proven throughout the life of the project. Neither the CMP nor the DE would have generated much useful learning had the space to innovate and adapt not been provided by the funder.

Box 6: Key Learning in Summary

- Designing and administering evaluation tools together, as well as collaboratively analysing the data, promoted an evaluation culture within the team
- While DE recommends 'developing new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge and evolve', practically this approach posed problems for the evaluator, requiring adaptation and innovation in the use of tools.
- The DE approach needed a substantial time commitment from the project team as well as an openness to reflection and sharing of learning
- The DE team played a role in promoting team reflection by providing documentation support
- Because the project was long term there was sufficient time to allow the DE team to build trust with other team members and become part of the team, and make useful contribution to the project
- The composition of the DE team was very important
- Neither the CMP nor the DE would have generated much useful learning had the space to innovate and adapt not been provided by the funder

7. Conclusion

DE is a welcome addition to the field of evaluation, providing a real alternative to traditional forms of evaluation. By doing away with many of the tenets of what is considered 'good evaluation' DE provides a way for evaluation to support rather than constrain innovation.

In the case of CMP, the DE has been a particularly useful approach to M&E because the CMP itself is an exploration. It started with something known – picking up from the HerStories project, collecting a new set of stories from the selected districts. Then it went on to build on this activity to promote dialogue in a manner that has not been attempted before in the Sri Lankan post war context. The project has shifted and changed with the changing context, as well as in line with what the project team was learning from implementing project activities, dropping some planned activities to adding new activities. The DE has supported this continuous evolution of the project by facilitating team brainstorming and by providing regular analysis of M&E data such as feedback from field visits, analysis of dialogue feedback and AARs. For the CMP, the DE has functioned more like a compass, which helps to show the way through complexity as it unfolds, rather than a map of how to get to a predetermined end point, within a predetermined budget and time frame. With the help of the DE, the CMP was able to change and adapt to changes in the context, in an orderly and well reflected manner.

Overall, it may be argued that the DE helped to provide a better evaluation of the CMP than a more traditional approach; it helped to generate substantially more data than an ex-post evaluation and the evaluator has a deeper, more nuanced and detailed perspective on the project, and therefore what and how to evaluate it. Had the project had only a rigid log frame approach to tracking changes or an external end line evaluation, much of the rich learning that CMP was able to generate - about memory, memorialisation and its role in non-recurrence of violence - may have been lost.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Feedback Form for Dialogue Workshops

1. What is your assessment of today's workshop sessions?

	Not useful at all ☹	←————→				Very useful ☺	Why do you think so?
Session 1: when you drew map of your experiences	1	2	3	4	5		
Session 2: when you read other's stories	1	2	3	4	5		
Session 3: when you discussed emotions and values	1	2	3	4	5		
Session 4: when you thought about what life should be like for your children	1	2	3	4	5		

2. Please write down one new thing, that you did not know before, that you learnt from today's workshop

3. Will you share what you learned today? If so, please indicate below with whom and how

Who	How

4. Many values were discussed today. Which of these values resonated most with you?

Not useful at all ☹	←————→				Very useful ☺	Why do you think so?
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5. Overall was the workshop useful for you? Do you feel you benefitted from participating?

1	2	3	4	5	
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6. Did you feel you were able to express your thoughts freely and openly?

Not useful at all ☹	←————→				Very useful ☺	Why do you think so?
1	2	3	4	5		

Please indicate the following information about you:

Gender Female Male Age DS Division

Thank you!

Practice Note 2**A Compass for Navigating a Complex World:**

Methodology Reflection based on the Developmental Evaluation

Annex 2: M&E for the Media Campaign

Article Title	Author	Theme	Language	Details (such as length, pictures etc)	Newspaper, together with approximate circulation	Availability online (yes / no)	# of comments received

Please state what was the reaction of the authors to the theme / materials. Were they particularly interested? did they want to change or add to the material? How?

Please indicate the nature of the comments received. Did any comment (positive or negative) stand out?

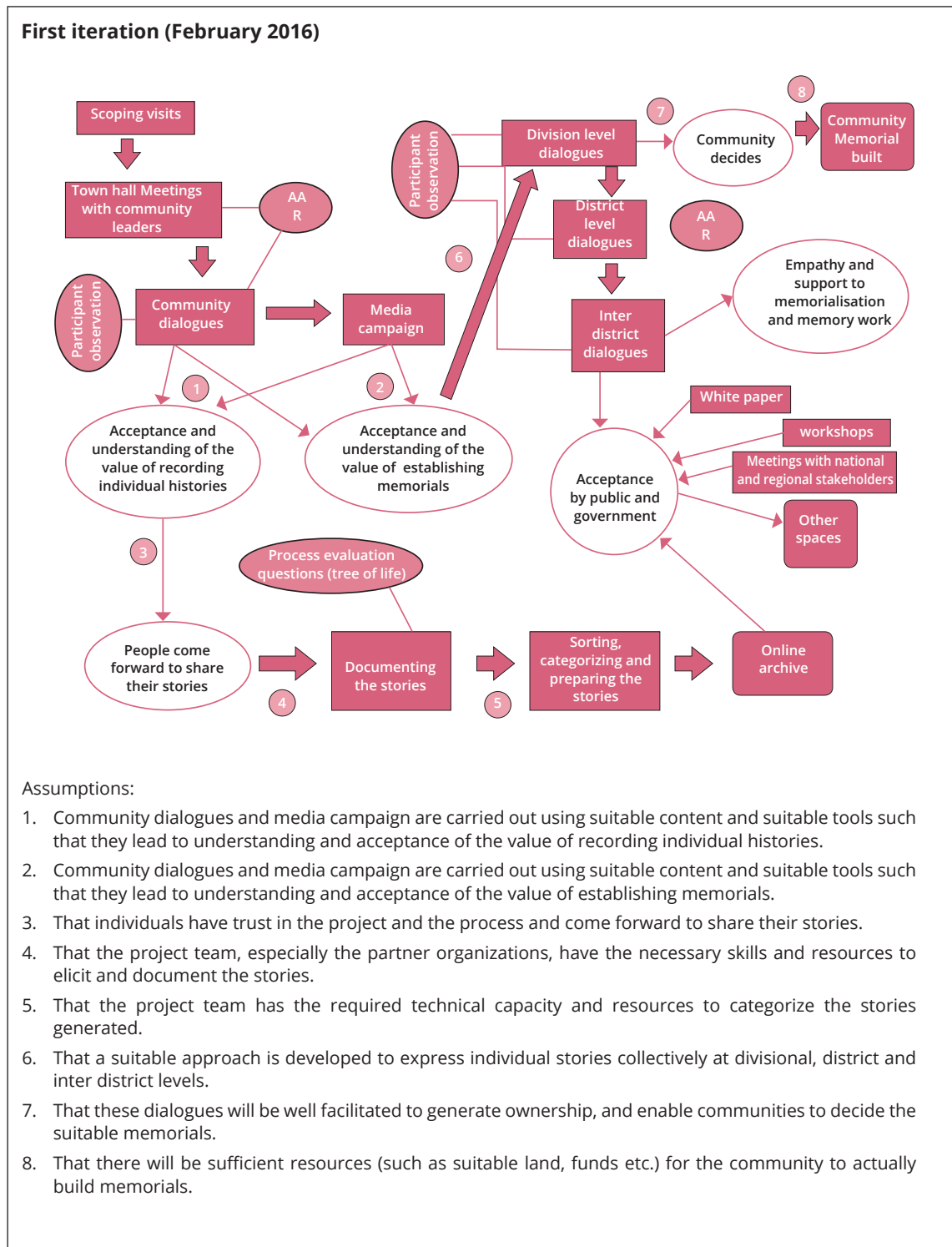
Note : Similar M&E checklists were done for TV, Radio and Social Media

Annex 3: After Action Review Format

Question	Purpose
What was supposed to happen? What actually happened? Why were there differences?	These questions establish a common understanding of the work item under review. The facilitator should encourage and promote discussion around these questions. In particular, divergences from the plan should be explored.
What worked? What didn't? Why?	These questions generate reflection about the successes and failures during the course of the project, activity, event or task. The question 'Why?' generates understanding of the root causes of these successes and failures.
What would you do differently next time?	This question is intended to help identify specific actionable recommendations. The facilitator asks the team members for crisp and clear, achievable and future-oriented recommendations.

Source: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/after_action_review

Annex 4 : Project Theory of Change (First Iteration)



Annex 5: Diary tool

What is the diary? The diary is a data collection tool used in social science. It is based on the idea of using personal documents to construct pictures of social reality from the actors' perspective. May be free text or fairly structured, and are largely used to record events as they occur ('yesterday' / retrospective diaries). Mostly used to collect time use, expenditure, transport data.

What are the advantages of using a diary tool? Self-completion diaries have a number of advantages over other data collections methods.

1. diaries can provide a reliable alternative to the traditional interview method for events that are difficult to recall accurately or that are easily forgotten.
2. like other self-completion methods, diaries can help to overcome the problems associated with collecting sensitive information by personal interview.
3. they can be used to supplement interview data to provide a rich source of information on respondents' behavior and experiences on a daily basis.

In the CM project, the diary will be used to record detailed information to provide a source of rich data which may otherwise be difficult to recall accurately.

Who will keep it? Project team and the Partners

How will the diary entries be made? The design of the diary is shown below. Entries should be made as often as possible, but at least once a week, and every day when the team is in the field.

How will the diary data be analyzed and used? The diary keeping period will be followed by an interview with the DE Consultant / meeting with the team where detailed questions are asked about the diary entries, which will also provide the basis for the regular reflection meetings with the team.

Instructions on keeping the diary:

1. The Diary may be kept in an 80 page single rule exercise book. Please put your name and volume number on the cover
2. Please paste a copy of the following instructions on how to complete the diary on the inside first page.
3. Instructions:
 - Please provide the date and time of each entry.
 - The diary is meant to record events, conversations and actions of others, as well as your perceptions. Please refer to the guiding questions below to help you to recall and record events and interactions.
 - Please make a diary entry after any community interaction such as a community meeting, scoping visit, and interactions with government or civil society officials. In addition, please try to make regular entries in the diary (every day when in the field, and once a week otherwise).
 - Use the diary to record your thoughts about how people are reacting to the idea of memory / story telling / multiple histories / memorialisation as well as to identify potential champions and spoilers. It can also be used to record your thoughts on how the project may be impacting people's attitudes and behaviors.
 - It is important to record events as soon as possible after they occur.
 - Do not let diary keeping influence / change the way you behave.
4. Suggested Questions to help the diary entry process:
 - After a community meeting:
 - o Was the meeting well attended? Do you think it was well planned? Well publicized? Did the participants or community leaders express any ideas about how the meeting was organized?
 - o Did you talk to any of the participants before the meeting individually? Did they share any initial thoughts about the importance or otherwise of memory and memorialisation, other issues affecting reconciliation, or other issues affecting their community?

Practice Note 2**A Compass for Navigating a Complex World:**

Methodology Reflection based on the Developmental Evaluation

- o Do you think the meeting was well facilitated? Did everyone get a chance to speak? Were important issues / questions covered? Did the facilitators / participants express any ideas about how the meeting was facilitated?
- o Did you talk to any of the participants after the meeting individually? For example, did anyone stay on after the formal meeting ended? Why? What did they talk about?
- o Do you have any thoughts on follow up action needed?
- After a key person interview:
 - o What was their level of interest? Did they give you time to meet right away? Where did you meet? Did you feel they spoke freely? Who else came for the meetings?
 - o Did they ask questions about the project? What kind of questions? Did they seem enthusiastic? Did they talk of possible challenges? Possible champions? Possible spoilers?
 - o Did they share any personal thoughts about memory and the importance (or otherwise) of memorialisation?
 - o Do you have any thoughts on follow up action needed?

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About the project –

The Community Memorialisation Project is a joint project of Search for Common Ground and The Herstories Project along with district partners - Viluthu Centre for Human Resource Development in Mannar, Prathiba Media Network in Matara and Women Development Foundation in Ampara.

- The project captures individual and shared community narratives in order to prioritise and strengthen community owned memorialisation. Its primary objective is to facilitate an environment that acknowledges and preserves multiple histories, while encouraging empathy through inter-generational transfer and inter-regional sharing of memory to support peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.*
- Building on individual stories the project team works with the communities to share their stories and facilitate dialogue within their communities about why memorialisation is needed, why multiple narratives should co-exist, and how we remember, at the divisional level and between the participating districts. The process will focus on empathetic listening and acknowledgement.*
- There is a need for wider public engagement. This is based on web-based and social media based platforms to add, debate and engage with the stories as well as on questions of memorialisation. With the participants' permission, the project will share these life stories through a traveling exhibition, an online archive, and a physical archive at the national level, similar to its predecessor - the Herstories Project.*
- The project will contribute to discourse and practice, through regular learning circles, sharing of practice notes, new processes of monitoring and evaluation tools devised for this project and recommendations for a memory policy, based on views and needs at a village or district level.*

While the project will have a cathartic and empathetic impact on the participants sharing their life stories at an individual level, it will also facilitate their voices and needs to be heard, through its wide dissemination. The success of the project will be in attitudinal changes – about the need to hear and acknowledge the many personal truths that exist. At a wider level, it will contribute to how Sri Lankans memorialise and historicise our past, and to making processes of justice, truth and reconciliation inclusive.

