REPORT ON TRAINING ON

REPORTING SKILLS AND PROJECT PROPOSAL WRITING

FOR UNFPA

SIERRA LEONE

6 - 10 June 2011

ELD Training
www.eldtraining.com

INTRODUCTION

This report documents the process and evaluates the outcomes of a five-day training conducted for UNFPA, Sierra Leone, from 6 - 10 June 2011.

The training was developed and conducted at the request of UNFPA with the broad objectives of enhancing participants' ability to “write project proposals for resource mobilization” and "write quality professional reports ensuring accountability and learning".

Although to cover these topics in depth usually requires more days than the five allotted, ELD designed a programme that was condensed and flexible enough to keep both objectives prioritised. It also later emerged that, from UNFPA's perspective, this training was considered a Training of Trainers, and participants would be expected to pass on the learning to their colleagues. This was something we tried to take account of in the process of delivery.

Fifteen participants joined (see Annex 2: List of Participants), representing both programme and operations staff. The training was designed and led by ELD Director Mr Neil Kendrick, who travelled to Sierra Leone from Turkey to run the course.

This report begins with an evaluation based on daily feedback, end-of-course survey and trainer's observations, and is followed with a day-by-day narrative of what was covered. Participants' feedback can be found at the end of each day. Work produced by participants - draft reports and proposals - are annexed.

TRAINING EVALUATION

Trainer's Observations

From our perspective things went very well in almost all respects. Participants were extremely enthusiastic throughout, and that enthusiasm grew day by day. While there were some complaints about ending late on the first day, by the fourth day participants had to be forced to stop for lunch and refreshment breaks as they immersed themselves in practical work.

The course aimed to balance a lot of inputs (due to having two major objectives) by providing the minimum of theory and maximum application of tools. (For example, 80 slides on Logical Framework Approach were trimmed down to just ten.) Group discussions, exercises, tasks and extended hands-on practical work kept the participants' interest and ensured participation was high.

To ensure the best use of time, the timing of some sessions was odd, but we felt it better to launch a topic and continue the next day than to stretch sessions out to 'fill the time'. As a result, a lot of ground was covered.

In practical work, participants clearly demonstrated they had not only acquired the knowledge of Professional Writing and writing reports and proposals, but were able to successfully apply the process and approaches learned. Participants' draft outputs can be found in Annex 3. Please note these are drafts only with just minimal editing.

The training was evaluated daily through end-of-day feedback collected on cards where participants noted what they were happy about from the day's events, as well as any questions and concerns. (These can be found in the Daily Narrative section of this report at the end of the description of each day's learning.) Each day a review team was also appointed to summarise the previous day's learning. Each evening the trainer met with the UNFPA management team to discuss progress, upcoming sessions and modifications to the course to ensure maximum satisfaction of participants and achievement of objectives.

Evaluation

On the final day, participants were surveyed on various criteria related to the course, and their responses are compiled in the table below.

The survey shows a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the training. Almost all responses fell in the happy (60-80) or very happy (80-100) ranges. The only minor concerns were mainly related to logistics. While from UNFPA side logistics were excellently managed, occasional power outages and poor Internet connectivity was a cause of concern for some.

Criteria	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100
Objectives met?				6	**8**
Your skills improved?				5	**9**
Confidence gained?				**8**	6
Content appropriate?			1	6	**7**
Useful materials?				6	**8**
Methodology appropriate?				4	**10**
Trainer's knowledge & skill				6	**8**
Logistics			2	**7**	5
Worth coming?				5	**9**

Participants' Comments

Narrative comments from the participants (collected during the survey) on the last day included:

- *The training could be even longer*
- *The facilitator has a good knowledge on development*
- *Training style was good*
- *Very participatory*
- *UNFPA should organise this training for country partners, too*
- *I learned how to enjoy writing*
- *I learned a process I can apply to all my writing*
- *Mind Manager is a great tool I will use in all my work*
- *I am looking forward to applying the skills next week*

DAILY NARRATIVE

DAY ONE

The first day set the objectives for the course and outlined how we would achieve these. Participants also learned some valuable theory about what Professional Writing is and what makes writing effective. A major learning of Day One was on how to improve clarity in writing.

Course Introduction

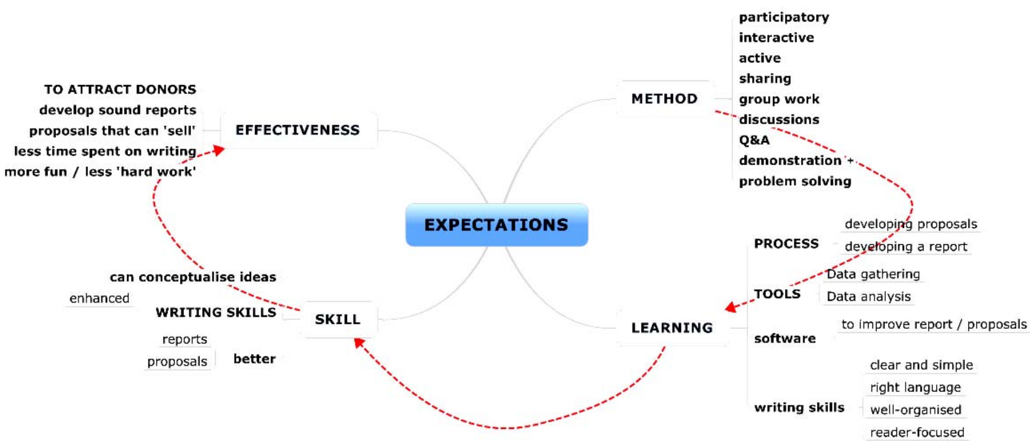
The day began with a welcome to all participants from Ms Mariama Diarra, Assistant Representative, UNFPA, after which the trainer introduced himself and briefly described his experience in delivering similar training to international organisations. Participants then introduced themselves in the plenary.

Next, the trainer elaborated on the purpose for the training - why it was requested, and the broad objectives of enhancing participants' ability to "write project proposals for resource mobilization" and "write quality professional reports ensuring accountability and learning". It was also noted that, usually, up to eight days would be necessary to cover both objectives fully, but ELD would be as flexible and efficient as it could in meeting them.

Participants were then asked to note down, and discuss in groups, their expectations from the training. Expectations were invited for all levels -

- Method / preferred learning style
- Content / knowledge / learning
- Desired change in skill
- Effectiveness - how the improved skills would have a later impact for UNFPA

These were then gathered into a Mind Map (below) and discussed.



We then went on to look at the initial schedule (later modified, see Annex 1: Final Training Schedule) to see how it reflected the participants' expectations. The course was further illustrated as a process, as follows:

The first session wrapped up with agreement on logistics and norm setting to ensure efficient use of the time available and a successful training.

What is Professional Writing?

The first major input of the course was on the principles of Professional Writing.

First, participants brainstormed their ideas around the focus question 'What is Professional Writing?' Ideas were diverse, and tended to describe what is good writing rather than define the concept itself. The trainer then volunteered a definition that 'Professional Writing is about creating action / change'.

Next, we examined the features of effective writing, which were presented as follows:

This was further illustrated through a reading task where participants read and evaluated two pieces of writing. While neither was 'perfect', participants were able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each, further developing their understanding of what makes writing effective. An interesting learning was also that they realised it is actually the writer's responsibility to be understood. Participants had previously considered themselves to blame when having difficulty understanding a text.

Next, we considered the responsibilities of the Reporter and Proposal Writer.

Responsibilities of the Reporter were clarified as being to:

- Investigate
- Analyse
- Understand
- Describe
- Explain
- Draw conclusions
- Recommend
- Help your reader decide on action

Responsibilities of the Proposal Writer were to:

- Investigate the Situation – using a range of tools and points of view
- Analyse – understand the causes of the problem to be addressed
- Describe & Explain – help your donor to see the situation the way you see it
- Develop a Plan of Action – set objectives, devise a strategy, schedule activities, developing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and management plan …
- Persuade your Reader that –
    - The problem is worth solving
    - It can be solved
    - You can do it

Common problems with Proposal and Report Writing were also noted as:

- Lack of Clear Objectives
- Poorly-Organised and Difficult to Follow
- Not Concise or Clear
- Poor Use of Language
- Poor Style
- Poor Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

The session continued by exploring that 'writing sends a message', and discussed how readers will always make judgements about us / our organisations based on how we write. Hence, poorly organised writing suggests disorganised people; while writers wasteful with words may be seen as being extravagant in other ways.

The final topic covered in the morning session looked at the Writing Process. Participants were introduced to the four-step Writing Process of:

- Thinking / Analysis
- Planning
- Drafting
- Editing

The trainer clarified how we often confuse these steps, especially Drafting and Editing, leading to problems in writing.

Writing Clearly

The afternoon session began with examining how to improve clarity in writing. Participants were given worksheets electronically to allow for easier editing during the exercises.

Participants were introduced to a tool called the Fog Index. By analysing the Average Sentence Length (ASL) and percentage of complex words (words of three or more syllables), the Index gives us a score equivalent to 'the number of years education a reader needs to easily understand a text the first time'.

Next, a short text (from the UNFPA web site) was taken for evaluation. In many ways, it was a good piece of writing, but also it forced readers to slow down and re-read. In other places the meaning came through only after some considerable strain on the part of readers. We realised that this was due to poor clarity, mainly caused by long sentences and too many complex (polysyllabic) words.

On analysing the text using the Fog Index, we saw that its index was extremely high.

The afternoon continued with an exploration of how to improve readability by reducing the Fog Index. First, we brainstormed reasons why it's a good idea to use short sentences and came up with:

- Easier and faster to write
- More accurate
- Easier and faster to read
- Make your message more obvious
- Get your reader’s attention
- Easier to remember

We then presented, gave examples of and practiced through exercises various ways to reduce the ASL and increase readability:

- Breaking up log paragraphs
- Breaking up long sentences
- Prefering to use short words
- Reducing unnecessary words
- Getting rid of meaningless phrases
- Cutting out emphasising language
- Reducing nominalisations

Participants then worked in groups to increase the readability of a two paragraphs of UNFPA text. From this exercise we recognised that it does not need much in terms of editing to take a difficult text and make it simple enough for readers to easily grasp.

Day-end Feedback[1]

Happy About ...	Questions & Concerns ...
Good day All the sessions were useful Interactive / Participatory (2) Fog Index is useful (11) Tools for writing clearly / keeping sentences short (3) Definition of Professional Writing Useful exercises Good presentation methods Have learned how to measure the readability of my proposals Nice learning environment Good pace / timing Interesting concept of language / meaning being different brain functions Use of Mind Manager as a brainstorming tool	Need to better understand the use of the Fog Index to simplify our writing Need more time for some tasks Should finish at 5PM prompt (2) Slow Internet

[1] Where more than one participant made the same comment, this is indicated by a number in parentheses.

DAY TWO

The main focus of Day Two was on setting writing objectives and data analysis. Participants also learned more about data gathering methods and were introduced to Mind Mapping software.

Setting Objectives

After a review from the day's Review Team, discussion of the first day's feedback and an energizer from the trainer, we moved onto the first major point of the day, Setting Objectives. While specifically focused on Reporting, many of the issues were also related to the Proposal Writing context wherever possible.

We looked firstly at the overall purpose of reporting. After brainstorming together, we came up with the following list of reasons for reporting:

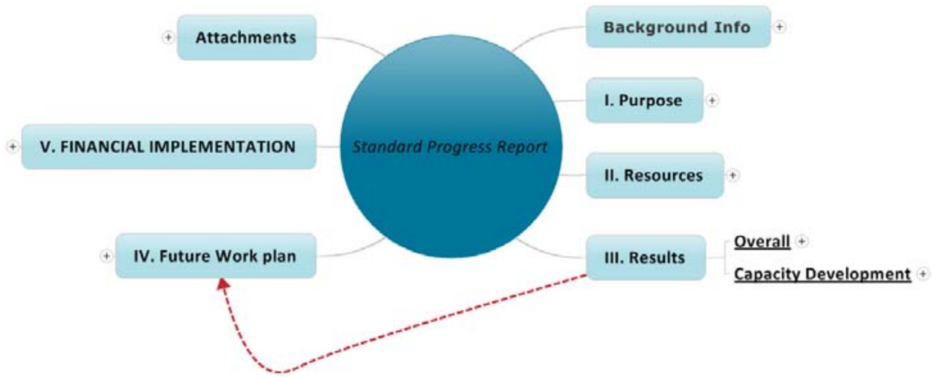
- To facilitate smooth implementation of programs
- Accountability and transparency
- To provide a record of progress / success
- To investigate concerns from management or end users
- Monitoring activities, use of resources
- Gain support for our work and advocate change
- Assist management thinking

We then moved on to look at setting specific report objectives, using key questions such as:

- What is the history?
- What are the current issues to be explored?
- How will the results of the investigation be used?
- Are you looking at strengths and weaknesses?
- Are you looking at process, performance or outcomes?

The session continued by examining the four levels of evaluation, noting how, at different stages of implementation, we can expect to gather information on different levels. We also saw how these four levels correspond to the intervention logic of the Logical Framework.

The session continued looking at various types of report - evaluation formats, such as the EU format, monitoring reports and progress reports.



However, the most important point that emerged from the study of different formats was that any report format, or even a specific TOR, is never a box-filling exercise. To fully understand the format and develop a plan for data gathering, analysis and presentation, an essential starting point is to map the structure / format in order to (i) identify the questions the report should answer and (ii) identify where the information needed will be found.

Data Gathering Methods

The session continued by looking at getting answers to the questions. We saw that there were six main ways of gathering data:

- Survey – questionnaires, checklists
- Interview – structured or unstructured, getting first-hand responses from end users
- Desk Study – reviewing existing documentation: reports, publications, web sites
- Observation – visiting the project site and personally observing what is happening
- Focus Group Discussion – facilitated meetings with groups of end users around a particular issue
- Case Study – an in-depth investigation over time into one particular end user's experience and outcomes of the programme

In teams, participants discussed and presented back on one method each, outlining its overall purpose, advantages and limitations / risks. We saw that each method presents both opportunities as well as having drawbacks; and that some methods can get us more quantitative data, while others are more qualitative. It was agreed that, to get the required information in a low-cost, reliable way and to get both breadth and depth of information, a combination of methods should be used.

Data Analysis

The rest of the day was spent on Data Analysis. To start the session, we began with analysing quantitative data. Participants were given a set of graphs representing responses from a survey of the citizens of Nepal on a range of issues conducted at the height of that country's civil war.

Participants discussed and compared their interpretations, and it became clear that even quantitative data is seldom neutral, and that everything can be interpreted in more than one way. Therefore, as reporters, we have a responsibility to speak on behalf of 'the facts' rather than letting 'the facts speak for themselves'.

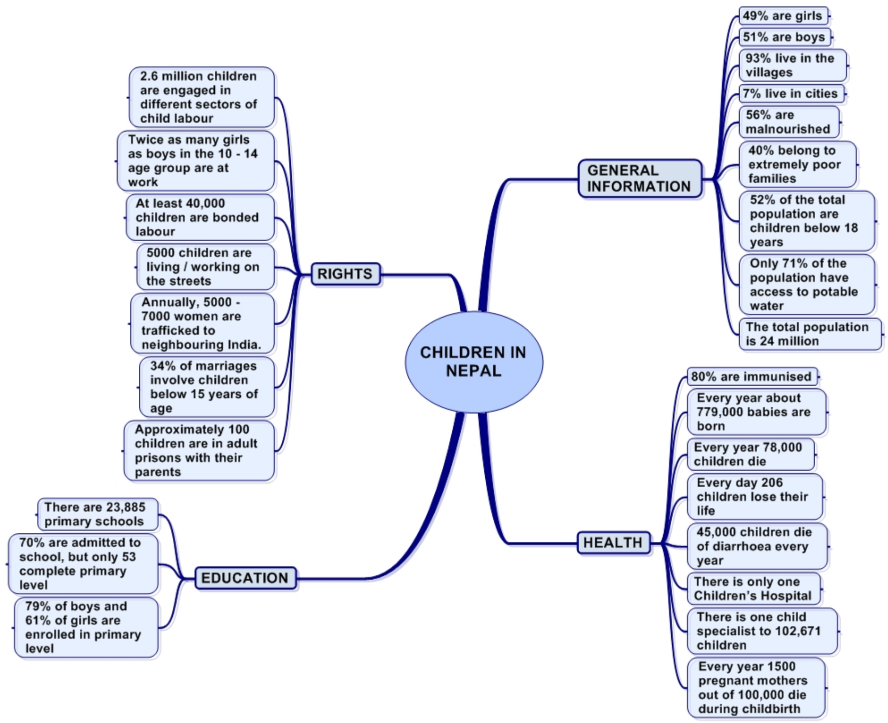
The Three Steps of Data Analysis

We then moved onto the three steps of data analysis:

- Read everything
- Cluster / organise the information
- Identify patterns, associations and relationships

Participants were given a fact sheet which was to form the basis of extended practical work throughout the rest of the week. This fact sheet contained around 30 pieces of 'information' related to the status of children in Nepal. In the first step of analysis, participants, in groups, read through and discussed each piece of data, noting their reactions and thoughts. Through the exercise, some questions were raised - after all, secondary data is static and often incomplete or does not fully answer our questions - and participants naturally tried to connect some of the ideas. It was recognised that this step, though quite limiting, was necessary as a familiarisation stage and that some conclusions, even though incomplete, were already starting to emerge.

Next, we moved to the second step. The same information was issued to participants, this time cut up onto separate pieces of card. Participants then clustered these to find some structure for the information. This was very much a trial-and-error process and, like step one, also had its limitations. While some pieces of information definitely belonged in a particular category, others seemed to belong in more than one 'box' while others were 'orphans', seemingly unrelated to the rest. In the end, a basic structure for the data was agreed as seen below.



This basic clustering of data was then broken down even further within each section to give us a basic structure for the data. While this level of analysis would be sufficient to give a descriptive report, we had seen on Day One that the reporter's responsibility includes that of explaining the data. For this, it was necessary to synthesise the information.

The final step of data analysis was identifying patterns, associations and relationships. For this, it was necessary to use the Mind Mapping tool. After a brief introduction to the principles and a few examples, participants were equipped with Mind Manager software in order to develop Mind Maps of the data. By the end of the day, participants had mapped the data, although the final analysis was left over for the next morning.

Day-end Feedback

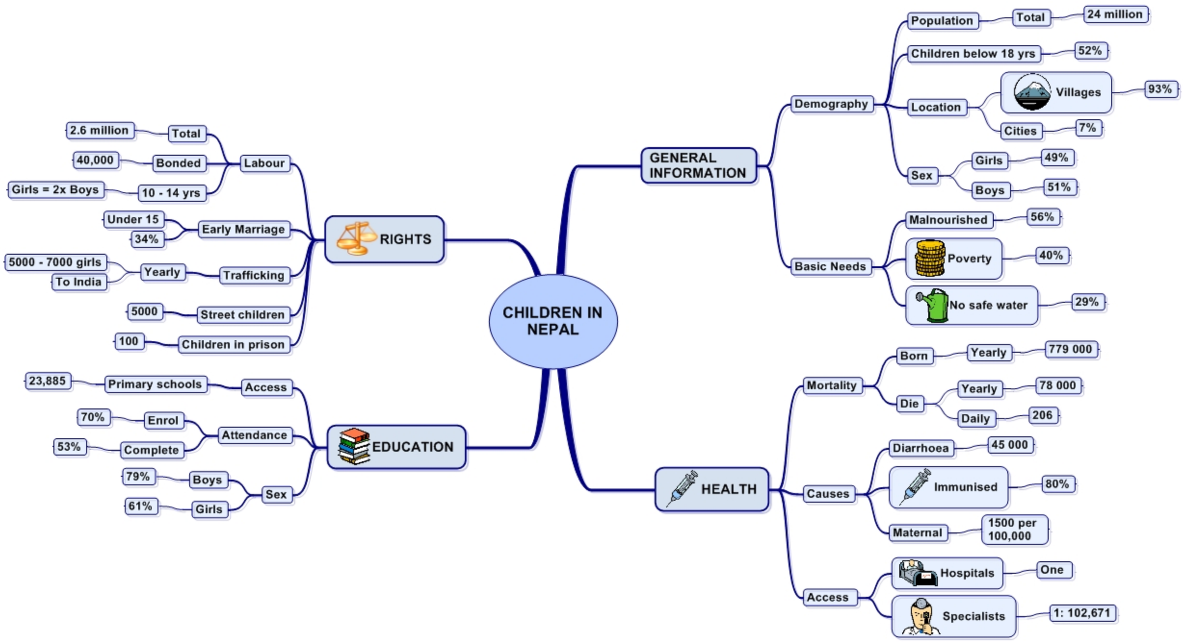
Happy About ...	**Questions & Concerns ...**
Data Gathering Methods Data Analysis process / tools (5) Exercise on clustering and sub-clustering ideas Mind Manager software / Mind Mapping (12) Learned more about Reporting Skills and Professional Writing Interesting sessions (2) Useful sessions (2) Practical day / Interactive / Participatory (3) Excellent day - progressing well	Want to learn more about Mind Manager (2) Can we use Mind Manager when drafting the proposal? More time needed for mapping

DAY THREE

Day Three took the data analysis further as participants learned how to use Mind Mapping to synthesise data. After learning about how to organise ideas in writing, they then applied all the tools so far into developing a report based on the data they had analysed.

Data Analysis (Cont.)

The first session began with a review from the day's Review Team and a discussion of Day Two's feedback and questions. Resuming from the previous day, participants had collected everything in one framework, as seen below.



Next, participants moved to turning the quantitative data to qualitative. For each piece of data or idea in their Maps, they were asked to 'describe' the data (using the Mind Manager 'Call Out' function). This exercise had two benefits. First, it allowed participants to 'step back' from the data and start to draw conclusions; and, secondly, it meant that during drafting participants were unlikely to be 'lost for words', as all their ideas would be easily accessible.

Next, we moved onto identifying some of the underlying issues that were not easily identified from steps one and two. We would return to these Maps later in the day during Drafting exercises applying the tools of Organising Ideas.

Organising Ideas

In the afternoon the focus turned to organising ideas in writing. We saw that there were two main ways of organising our ideas - the Inductive and Deductive approaches. While the Inductive approach is logical, it often fails to be persuasive. We suggested that participants prefer to use the Deductive approach as it:

It helps the reader to decide on action

- It's more persuasive
- The reader might not read everything
- It gets the reader's attention
- It helps the reader to follow the argument
- It shows respect

The session continued by looking at the various ways to organise the main points of any document:

- Chronology / Sequence
- Location
- Order of Importance
- General to Specific
- Specific to General

However, whichever way of organising ideas is used, it is always essential to give the main point as soon as possible to help the reader to follow the rest.

The session on what makes a paragraph effective further reinforced this. One key feature of a good paragraph is the presence of a Topic Sentence, usually the first sentence of the paragraph. The Topic Sentence can give the structure of the argument, but, more usually, is interpretive, offering a summary, conclusion or reaction to the evidence the paragraph presents.

The rest of the session was based around practical exercises where participants tried to identify the Topic Sentences for a range of paragraphs. Interestingly, as well as being hard work (something we should not force on our readers!) participants came up with many various (and often contradictory) Topic Sentences for the same data. This further illustrated the importance of Topic Sentences in persuading the reader to see things the way we see them.

The session concluded by examining how, if we are consistent in using Topic Sentences, we can both aid readers in speed reading and also summarise our documents easily by using the Topic Sentences as the basis for a document overview.

Drafting Practical: Introduction & Findings

The final session of the day took participants through a more extended exercise where the Mind Map analysis was used as a vehicle for Drafting.

Using the Map, the facilitator outlined how to develop the analysis into a report structure and how to draft the report Introduction. Participants worked in teams and then, in plenary, we drafted the report's context section.

Participants then worked in teams to draft the various sections of the report, to be compiled the next morning.

Day-end Feedback

Happy About ...	**Questions & Concerns ...**
All sessions were good / Great day (2) Well-structured day / presentations Mind Manager was fantastic / practical session was great (2) My programme knowledge has moved to a new level Big improvement in how we approach our reports and proposals Interesting tasks and exercises Appreciate all aspects of today's training Exporting from Mind Manager to Word / Learning more functions of Mind Manager (5) Linking cross-cutting ideas together in Mind Mapping Hands-on work was invaluable (3) Enjoying the process Enjoyed drafting using the Mind Map Learning new skills / becoming more confident / Gaining more knowledge (3)	Still not 100% comfortable with developing Mind Maps Would like some more clarification on Deductive / Inductive approaches / Organising Ideas (2) Want to learn more about how to use Mind Manager's 'Topic Notes' feature

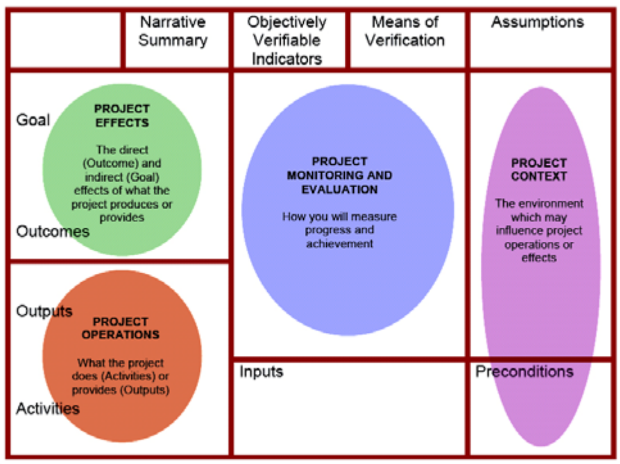
DAY FOUR

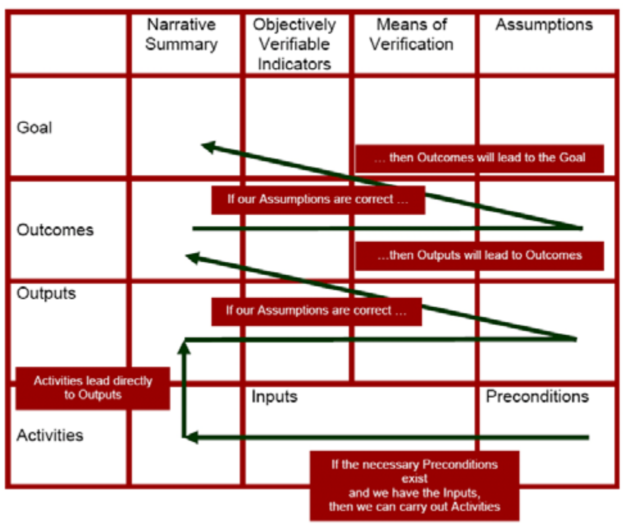
After wrapping up the previous day's extended practical, Day Four reviewed the Logical Framework Approach, after which groups started to work on planning their extended assignments.

Drafting Practical: Conclusions & Recommendations

After the review of the previous day's sessions and feedback, we gathered participants' drafts and incorporated them into the Mind Map. Participants then brainstormed conclusions and these were also added. Next, the trainer illustrated how to ensure all conclusions were balanced with Recommendations, and the final report draft was exported to Word. The end result (see Annex 3: Outputs from Group Work) was a clear report with good flow and structure, with conclusions based on firm evidence and logical recommendations.

The Logical Framework Approach





As we had made such rapid progress so far, it was decided that we would further strengthen the Proposal Writing objective by having a Logical Framework Approach 'walkthrough'. Although usually a two-day component of any training, slides were reduced to the minimum, exercises and discussions dropped and the whole stage was covered in just 60 minutes. Interestingly, non-programme staff who had claimed not to know anything about the Logical Framework actually managed to connect their own experience of dealing with programme staff's workplans and recognise how the LFA is actually a part of their work.

After some brief theory and history of the LFA, we got straight to the Logical Framework itself - the columns, the rows, the different sections and the diagonal logic.

Along with the conceptual illustrations, a complete case study / example was regularly referred to, illustrating the ideas presented.

After the theory, we looked at each of the steps - Problem Analysis, Stakeholder Analysis, Setting Objectives and Defining a Strategy. Next, we saw how these ideas were integrated into the Logical Framework, and how the rest of the data (Preconditions, Assumptions, Inputs, OVI and MOV) were incorporated.

Finally, we looked at how the analysis and Logical Framework data were transformed through Mind Mapping into a plan for Drafting the Proposal.

Extended Group Work: Planning Practical

Since the end of the previous day, groups had been forming, and we had established four thematic groups for the extended writing assignments. The thematic groups were:

- Gender
- Management
- Population and Development
- Reproductive Health

Throughout the day, teams worked together smoothly, applying the tools learned so far. They developed comprehensive Mind Maps, and by the end of the day all groups had started drafting.

Day-end Feedback

Happy About ...	Questions & Concerns ...
Logical Framework Approach (2) Practical sessions on Mind Mapping and Drafting (5) Even just 10 LFA slides were enough to make it clear Practical day / Hands on (6) Reinforced my knowledge of Day Three's work Great job! Happy about everything Fantastic day Excellent coaching and mentorship Light at the end of the tunnel! Mind Mapping has made Reporting and Proposal Writing a pleasure! (2) One of the best training workshops ever organised!	None

DAY FIVE

On the final day, participants completed their extended assignments. After some peer editing, these were shared and discussed in the plenary and the course was evaluated.

Extended Group Work: Drafting Practical

Without losing time for review, participants got straight down on the final day to developing their drafts further. Those groups who finished earlier / were more complete exported their Maps to Word and started to look through their drafts to see where improvements could be made in terms of Objectives, Organisation of Ideas and Clarity. At the end of the first session, all groups copied their Maps and Drafts to a pen drive for the peer editing session.

Editing Skills

Participants' printed drafts were shared with other teams, and, after a few minutes time to appraise the drafts, new teams were formed so they could give suggestions to each other. Teams were asked to focus on the key areas of: Clear Objectives, Organisation of Ideas and Clarity / Conciseness. After this, the original teams reformed and went through their texts for a further 20 minutes, making any necessary refinements.

Presentation of Group Work

The day continued with a plenary review of team outputs. We went through each one, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of each, and offering ideas for improvement. Some changes were made to each document, although the annexed versions (see Annex 3: Outputs of Group Work) should still be considered drafts and not examples of the best work participants could produce under more natural circumstances and with less time constraint.

Review and Close

In the closing session, we reviewed the key points covered briefly, looking at the process we had used during the course. From each step of the process we highlighted the major lessons.

Next, we reviewed the original objectives of the training as well as participants' own expectations from Day One. It was noted that many major achievements may not even have appeared in the expectations, as often at the start of a workshop we don't actually 'know what we want' or may not be able to anticipate what may come. (Many key areas of ELD courses, such as the Fog Index, Mind Mapping, etc., fall in the zone of things people 'don't know they need' until afterwards.)

Participants then had a chance to evaluate the course using a checklist ranking various course criteria, as well as adding their own free narrative comments. (See the Evaluation section for details.)

The trainer then directed participants to the large amount of digital resource materials provided by ELD for follow-up self-study.

We then opened the floor for questions, reactions and comments to give all participants a chance to express their reactions and raise any remaining concerns.

As the previous evening all 'speeches' and thanks had been made, the workshop closed without much undue formality with the distribution of certificates.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Final Training Schedule

Day One

- Course Introduction
- Introduction to Professional Writing and The Writing process
- Writing Clearly

Day Two

- Setting Objectives
- Data Gathering Methods
- Data Analysis

Day Three

- Data Analysis / Planning
- Organising Ideas in Writing
- Extended Practical 1 (Children in Nepal Report)

Day Four

- The Logical Framework Approach
- Extended Practical 2 - Planning (Group-defined tasks)

Day Five

- Extended Practical 2 (Cont.) - Drafting
- Peer Editing
- Final Presentation
- Review, Evaluation & Closing

Annex 2: List of Participants

NAME	DESIGNATION

Annex 3: Outputs from Group Work

1: Mid-point Group Exercise: Draft Report based on Data Set (Children in Nepal)

DESPERATE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN NEPAL
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to highlight the desperate situation of children in Nepal. Nepal has a young, rural population with roughly the same number of boys as girls. Over half of the population are below 18 - 52% of Nepalese are children. Most of them (93%) live in villages, with limited access to education, health care and other social services. Although the proportion of girls and boys is almost equal, there is gender discrimination against girls. While girls make up 49% of children, they are more likely to marry below 15, more likely to work and less likely to go to school.

Children's basic needs are not being met. There is widespread malnutrition, endemic poverty and limited access to safe drinking water. 56% of children are malnourished, which contributes to Nepal's high child mortality. 40% live in extreme poverty, which affects children's education, contributing to the high drop out rate at primary level and number of children who work. Due to limited access to water, the incidence of diarreah - the leading cause of death among children - is high.

We have gathered information for this report from ...

We have divided this report into the following three sections:

- Children's Health
- Children's Education
- Children's Rights

HEALTH

Overall, the health situation of children in Nepal is poor. Child mortality is high due to preventable causes, while access to health for children is limited. Child mortality stands at over 10%. 78,000 die each year whilst 206 children die on a daily basis.

Most child deaths are preventable. Due to poor sanitation 45,000 children die from diarrhoea each year. Although the level of immunization is encouraging at 80%, child mortality is Maternal death rate is high with 1500 per 100,000 births.
Access to health services is limited with just one children's hospital and one specialist to 102,671 children.

EDUCATION

Education in Nepal can be improved. Currently the country has a small number of primary schools making access limited. There are only 23,885 primary schools. Despite limited access, enrolment is encouraging; however, far too few children complete their primary education. Although 70% of children are enrolled only 53% complete primary education. The high drop out rate may be a result of poverty leading to school drop-outs, child labour, trafficking and early marriage.
Gender bias affect girls more (61% enrolment) than boys (79%). Girls are also sent to work instead of going to school. The number of girls sent to work between the ages of 10 - 14 is twice that of boys.

RIGHTS

The human rights situation of children in Nepal is appalling. There is an alarming level of the practice of child labour and unacceptable levels of early marriage. Child trafficking, street children and children living in prisons with their parents are also endemic social problems that affect the well-being of these children.

Due to poverty, about 2.6 million children are involved in child labour. Of these, 40,000 are in bonded labour with twice as more girls of 10-14 years affected. Some 34% are married before age 15. Between 5,000 and 7,000 are trafficked to India yearly. Also, 5,000 children are in the streets and 100 are living with their parents in prisons.

CONCLUSIONS

The situation of children in Nepal is desperate. Their basic needs are not being met.

They are dying of preventable diseases, and very few children complete primary education, especially girls. Children suffer human rights violations such as widespread child labour and early marriage. Many children live in extreme poverty, and girls are particularly discriminated against.

RECOMMENDATIONS / ACTION

The status of children in Nepal needs to be improved. The Government need to take urgent action to ensure that children's basic needs, such as access to food and safe water, are met.

Health development partners including government and NGOs need to take steps to reduce deaths from diarreah and immunizable diseases.

Government and parents ….

2. PROGRESS REPORT ON REDUCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SITUATION

This report highlights progress made in the campaign against Domestic Violence in Kono District. The campaign aimed to address the alarming situation of wife battering due to cultural and economic dependency of women.

The situation of women in Kono is desperate compared to the rest of the country. Kono accounts for over 35 percent of all reported cases in the country. With high levels of illiteracy and limited economic resources aside from small scale subsistence farming, women are highly dependent on their male counterparts. Most are married off before age 16. This emphasizes their poverty. They are faced with high levels of domestic violence especially wife beating which constitutes 60 percent of the reported domestic violence cases.

Wife battering is generally accepted as it is considered a cultural norm which has been brought about because of the high dependency syndrome. Perpetrators offend with high impunity as most of the women would not report.

Those that get reported tend to go unresolved. Of the 579 cases that were reported in Kono between 2008 and 2009 only 20 cases got charged and none were convicted. Most of these cases were settled out of court to the disadvantage of the women. In 2009 only 305 cases were charged, 134 resolved and a mere 15 cases were convicted in the entire country.

Government response to violence against women has been promising and has put in place several institutional and legal measures. The establishment of the Family support Unit is seen as a positive step towards ensuring victims report their cases. In terms of legal redress the government enacted the domestic violence act.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project aimed at improving the lives of women in Kono by reducing domestic violence. This was done through improving the knowledge of women on women's rights.

The project strategy addressed three overall areas of women's lives. These were awareness raising, training, and legal aid provision. The primary approach was to increase knowledge on women's rights amongst the women and the community at large. At the same time the project worked towards improving women's dependency status through training and livelihood skills provision whilst empowering the legal environment to be more responsive to domestic violence cases.

The main Outputs were

- Increased number of women knowledgeable in human rights issues
- Number of women self reliant
- Increased number of women that have access to justice

3. ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH IN SIERRA LEONE

SITUATION

Sierra Leone has an unacceptably high maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity which requires urgent action. Its population is mostly rural and poverty widespread. Maternal mortality is 857/100,000 and neonatal mortality rate is 36/1000.

There are more women than men with a high youth population. Illiteracy is high, especially among women. There is low use of contraception among women and a high fertility rate. HIV prevalence is high among pregnant women (3.4%) compared to the general prevalence of 1.5%. Although there are policies and strategies that address MNH such as the Agenda for Change and National Health Strategic Plan, much still needs to be done.

The high maternal death increases orphans and vulnerable children in the communities. These children are more likely to die in childhood or drop out of school. It also has an adverse effect on the country's economy.

The causes of maternal and neonatal deaths are mostly preventable. The causes can be direct such as haemorrhage, eclampsia obstructed labour, sepsis and unsafe abortion. Indirect causes include malaria, weak health systems and community factors.

There are several reasons why women fail to access maternal and neo-natal health care. Major decisions are made by men which stops women getting health care when they need it most. There are also cultural practices which prevent women from taking decisions, when necessary.

Weak health systems are mostly responsible for the poor quality of care given to women and neonates. There is a critical shortage of Human Resource for health, both in number, quality and capacity. Skilled attendance at birth is only possible in a supportive environment. This requires availability of essential drugs, equipment and consumables (such as gloves and syringes) which need proper storage and distribution facilitated by a functional Logistics Management Information System.

When complications arise, it is essential to recognise these early. After diagnosis, the right treatment must be given by a skilled birth attendant. When this cannot be done, the patient must be quickly referred to a higher level without delay.

Sierra Leone currently lacks a functional Health Management Information System. To ensure result based management and informed decision making, accurate data must be available. This is partly due to the inadequate staff to collect, collate and analyse data.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goal: The goal of this project is to contribute to the reduction of Maternal and Neonatal mortality in Sierra Leone.

Objectives:

- To improve access to quality maternal and neonatal health services
- To strengthen health systems
- To improve community participation in promoting demand and utilisation of maternal and neonatal health services

Strategy:

- Increasing access to Skilled Birth Attendants
- Increasing capacity of service delivery points
- Improving community participation towards increased access to quality maternal and neonatal health care

Rationale:

Maternal death is associated with high stillbirth indicative of poor monitoring during the prenatal, intra and post partum periods. Therefore, there is urgent need to build the capacity of health staff to provide quality health care. 32% of maternal occur at home and 49% at PHUs. Only 19% of maternal deaths occur at the CEmONC facilities. This may be due to some underlying factors in the community. Recent survey also revealed that only 24% deliveries are institutional. Urgent measures should be taken to address all the above issues.

OUTPUT 1: Capacity of Service Delivery Points improved

Activities:

1. Train 50 health service providers
2. Renovate 5 BEmONC sites
3. Renovate 1 CEmONC site per district
4. Provide Reproductive Health Commodities

OUTPUT 2: Strengthened Health systems

Activities:

1. Procure 13 ambulances
2. Train central and district Senior Management Teams
3. Support Health Management Information Systems (HMIS)
4. Support Logistics Management Information Systems (LMIS)

OUTPUT 3: Community empowered

Activities:

1. Train community members to identify danger signs in pregnancy, birth planning and preparedness.
2. Formation of community advocacy groups
3. Train Community Based Distributors to promote and distribute family planning commodities including condoms.

M&E

Monitoring and evaluation will take the following approaches:

- Field visits, supervision and monitoring.
- Mid Term Review (MTR) of the project will be done. Final evaluation will also be conducted at the end of the project.
- Routine reporting will also serve as part of monitoring.
- Monitoring will be jointly done by the executing agency and implementing partners. The executing agency will do quarterly monitoring and supervision and the IP will do monthly reporting.

Indicators defined in the log frame will be used to monitor progress of the project. Findings of monitoring and evaluation activities will be shared through conferences/seminars, reports, websites, networks and mobile health. It will also be shared with targeted audience and users including donors, IPs and beneficiaries.

MANAGEMENT

The project management will be in accordance with standard UNFPA guidelines. Project management structure and roles are defined below:

- The Project Manager will assume overall responsibility of managing and coordination of the project.
- The Project Officer will provide technical guidance and assistance to the project.
- The Implementing Partner will assume the day-to-day implementation of the project.

BUDGET

The overall budget of the project is estimated at US$ 20 Million.

- Output 1 is estimated at US$ 10 Million
- Output 2 is estimated at US$ 5 Million and
- Output 3 is estimated at US$ 5 Million

Expected funding sources: UNFPA core resources are expected to provide US$ 2 Million, European Union, US$ 12 Million and UN Joint Vision, US$ 6 Million.

4. OPERATIONS INDUCTION TOOLKIT

This induction toolkit is for newly recruited staff and also serves as refresher for old staff.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Location

The UNFPA Country Office is located at no. 7B Sharon Street, Wilberforce, Freetown. The office is housed in a three stored building on top of a hill over looking the city of Freetown.

(Add: Map / Photo)

Benefits of Living in Sierra Leone / working at UNFPA

Challenges

Utilities

The UNFPA Office faces an acute shortage of water and electricity.
There is no pipe borne water and relies on water bowzers to supply water.
Electricity form the National Power Authority (NPA) is limited with less than 12 hours per week forcing the office to rely on generator for its electricity needs. When NPA power is available, the voltage is usually not sufficient to power all the equipments in the office.

While 100% of water consumed in the office is from water tanks, 90% of electricity supply in the office comes from generator. This accounts for 20% of the administrative budget.

HR

HR is governed by polices and procedures that covers the ethics and standards of the organisation.

The HR Policy can be found in Docushare under PPM. It covers generally recruitment process, salaries & entitlements, staffing and security. At the moment the Unit has no HR person and is being supported by the Secretary.

Brief Introduction on HR Policy

The HR Policy underpins the framework of the organisation's:

- Mission, mandate and strategy
- Design including the job design and HR Planning
- Compensation, benefits and career management.
- HR policies also covers the Ethics and Standards of Conduct of the organisation

Recruitment Process

The Recruitment Process includes the following:

- Preparation of TOR/JD
- Advertisement
- Long listing/Short listing
- Interview
- Reference checks
- Submission to CRP/CAP
- Offer & Acceptance Letter
- Medical
- Issuance of contract
- Salaries & Entitlements
- Levels of salaries
- education grants
- dependency allowance
- rental subsides
- post adjustment
- assignment grants
- MIP
- Social Security
- Separation
- Safe driving bonus
- Within grade increment (WIG)
- Language Allowance
- Special Post Allowance (SPA)

OT/ CTO / Night Differentials

Overtime is applicable to general service staff irrespective of their levels and for service contract holders only applies to SB1 and SB2. SSAs are not entitled to overtime.

GS staff who have been required to work substantial or recurrent periods in excess of the ordinary working hours may take CTO in lieu of paid OT.
Night differentials may be authorized for certain categories of staff who regularly works at night.

Leave

Depending on type of contracts, staff are entitled to different types of leave namely- Annual leave, Home leave and Family Visits.

Annual leave are normally granted at a rate of 2.5 days per month for Fixed Term holders and 1.5 day for Service Contract Holders. For SSA holders, annual leave is granted at the rate of 1 day per month after the first 6 months of a continuous service of 11 months.

Home Leave and Family visits are applicable to International Staff.

The Unit is challenged with accurate recording of leave balances due to late submission of supporting documents for leave/OB taken during the month

Medicals

Staff are required to undergo Entry & Exit Medical Examination. Entry examination is a mandatory requirement for recruitment while Exit examination is a requirement for international staff upon separation.

Periodic medical examination is a requirement once every two years for staff below 40 years and once every year for those above 40 years.

There are 2 major medical insurers for staff namely GMC for Fixed Term staff and Van Breda for Service Contract and International staff. Note that SSA holders are required to have their own medical insurers.

Staffing

The workforce at UNFPA comprises of 3 types of contracts namely-FTA, SC and SSA.

There is an internal directory for the CO staff which provides information about staff name, e-mail address, extension numbers, cell phone numbers and residential address (see Annex XXX)

Staff are normally appraised using online and offline Performance Appraisal and Development (PAD) for FTA and SCs respectively.

The CO is currently imbalanced in gender with a 55% male and 45% female.

Security

Staff safety and security is a high priority to the organisation. All upcountry travel requires prior security clearances.

ICT

UNFPA Country Office operations are heavily dependant on use of ICT for communication through emails and online applications using Internet. However, connectivity is a challenge.

ICT is cutting across all departments in programmes and operations like Finance, Procurements, Assets Management and Human Resources.

ICT Policies

There is a clear ICT guidelines that is available through UNFPA Portal http://portal.myunfpa.org

The policy document advocates for use of strong passwords to access computers and all resources like emails and other applications on the portal. It also covers issues on use of licensed software, anti-virus, hardware and software standards. The current hardware standard is a laptop with docking station while on the software side, windows XP, Microsoft Office 2007 and Symantec end Point protection anti-virus are the recommended standards.

All software that is installed in a UNFPA computer must have a valid license and staff are prohibited from downloading unauthorized software.

Internet access

There is a big challenge with the current Internet connectivity in the office. The connectivity is very slow and often goes down intermittently during the day.
Internet access in the office is either through wired or wireless network. To access wireless network, you need a laptop with wireless access capability and also access KEY to grant you connection.

Emails

E-mail is the primary means of communications for UNFPA staff.
Staff are provided with individual e-mail account that is set with a limit of 500MB. When this limit is reached, no new emails will be received until old mails are either transferred off-line as archive or deleted. It is a good practice to regularly watch that this limit is not reached.

Disaster recovery plan

backups
shared drive

FINANCE

The CO financial operations are governed by the UNFPA Financial Procedures and Rules. This can be accessed from the PPM at http://myunfpa.org for details.

Financial Policy

STAFF STRENGTH

The CO Finance Unit is run by three staff who are under the supervision of the IOM. The Finance staff basically performs the following tasks: Prepare budgets, screen and process payments, monitor budgets and prepare financial reports for management information.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The CO gets its funding from both Core and Non-Core Resources. The Core resources include programme and BSB and these are allocated on yearly basis. The Non-Core Resources are resources mobilised from other sources. Non-Core resources account for 70% of the CO's budget annually.

BANKING

UNFPA has not got a bank account and it uses UNDP account in the country. This means that for all UNFPA transactions UNDP cheques are issued. The UNFPA Finance Staff process and approve the payments in ATLAS and notify UNDP to write out the cheques. This poses some challenge because priority is given to their payments and this may cause delays. The Finance Unit maintains a petty cash ceiling of USD 600 equivalent in Leones for small cash payments of up to USD 100 per payment. Considering the volume of transactions in the office, the petty cash amount is small.

PETTY CASH

PAYMENT PROCESS

All approved payment requests are submitted to the Finance Unit for processing in ATLAS. There are two ways in which payments are processed. For payments above $5k the request and supporting documents are submitted to Finance and a requisition is raised followed by a Purchase Order which is converted to payment voucher. This type of voucher is called a PO voucher. For payments below $5k a memo signed by the Budget Owner, certified by the IOM and approved by Representative is sent to Finance together with all the supporting documents. In this case a Non PO Voucher is raised.

There are three approval levels which are pre-set in ATLAS and the approval amount depends on the level of authority. Level 1 Approvers can only approve payments up to $5k, Level 2 $5k to $30k and Level 3 $30k and above.

AUDIT

There are two types of audit; Management Audit and NEX Audit. Management audit is undertaken to audit the CO Management and Programme and this normally takes place once in a programme cycle. The NEX audit is undertaken annually for UNFPA funded projects and the threshold is $100k or previous qualification or end of life of the project.

PROCUREMENT

Procurement process used is guided by the UNFPA Procurement Policy that is available on the UNFPA Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) available at the UNFPA Portal (http://portal.myunfpa.org).

The Country Office Procurement Unit covers wide range of Procurement that includes Goods and Service. The Country Office works closely with Procurement Service Branch (PSB) especially for International Procurement. Procurement Request are compiled at the start of the year for Procurement Planning. This Plan is also submitted to PSB. International Procurement accounts for 70% of the CO Procurement while 30% is for Local Procurement.

Procurement Policy

Methods

The Procurement Process makes a clear separation between the roles of the requester and the buyer. This is for internal control.

For procurement below US$5K three proforma invoices are required for analysis and may not need a Purchase Order. However for all travels and attractive items a Purchase Order should be raised irrespective of value. For procurement between US$5K and 30K three proforma invoices are mandatory. Then also Procurement ranging from US$30K to US$100k International or local bidding is needed and finalisation has to go through Contract, Asset and Procurement (CAP) Committee. For procurement over US$100K headquarters procurement is needed. Any procurement which does not conform to the above will require a waiver.

Types of procurement

Lead time

To guide requesting officers, the PSB Lead Time Calculator and is provided with estimated lead times for commonly requested items purchased by PSB. Actual lead times will vary, depending upon a variety of factors (size and complexity of the order, supplier production capacity, transportation, etc.). The times begin from when the purchase order is sent to the vendor, while the calculator includes a broader time frame. Orders cannot be placed without budget/funding in place and must be received in Atlas by UNFPA before expiration of the funding. This information should be taken into account when planning projects.

G.2. Checking Purchase Order StatusG.2. Checking Purchase Order Status

Receipts

After goods are clear from customs and before delivering them to the implementing agent (e.g. government) the field office must ensure that the correct quantity of goods has been received according to the purchase order and delivered to the implementing agent. Discrepancies between the purchase order and actual delivery should be identified before handing over the goods to the implementing agent. UNFPA is not liable for goods that are missing after the implementing agent receives the goods. If there is shortage, damage, or discrepancy, the field office must contact the buyer as soon as possible, and notify the carrier in writing regarding the damage and/or short shipment (photographs are also helpful). Delays hamper efforts to obtain rectification or compensation from the suppliers and/or insurer.

Once goods have been received by UNFPA, any attempts to return them to the supplier are likely to result in charges. Returns should be discouraged except in cases were it is really necessary to do so.

C&F

The Country Office is experience delays in Clearing of Goods Purchased internationally. These are mainly due to Duty Free Concessions documents which have to be approved by various Government Ministries. Even though Government has requested that Duty Free goods for Free Health items be treated with urgency, the Country Office is still experiencing delays in getting the approval. This therefore causes delays in the receipt of goods.

Travel

Travel process is guided by the UNFPA Policy which is available at the UNFPA PPM.

Arranging for travels is a challenge for the Country Office. Even though the UNFPA Travel Policy states that 2 weeks notice should be given to arrange for missions. Most of the travels undertaken by CO Staff are treated as emergency. This includes local and international travels.

Travellers are required to give enough notice to the travel unit for them to be able to get the required number of quotations and analyse for best route and price. All travel cost are processed through Purchase Orders which usually requires some time to do.

Most international staff and visitors of the Country office request for Gratis Visas for which request are submitted to Government for approval. Sometimes the Office is requested to process these documents within short notice.

Transport

Use of UNFPA Vehicles is guided by Principles of UNFPA Vehicle Management Policy.

Poor planning is the cause for under allocation of vehicles in the Country Office. Requests from staff are received by the travel unit almost at the time they need to use the vehicle. In some cases staff members going to the same location request for more than one vehicle.

Staff members are required to request and get approval for Personal use of UNFPA vehicles for which payment should be made.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset Management encompasses the whole life of asset from acquisition to disposal.

Assets is defined as any property or equipment purchased by programme or administrative funds or donated in kind which is under UNFPA's control and for which acquisition cost is US$1,000 or more per unit at the time of purchase and the service lifetime exceeds 3 years.

There are attractive items which are classified as attractive items. These are defined as those items irrespective of value and lifetime, considered to be easy to remove from the office and are valuable to individuals for private use or easily convertible into cash. E.g. include laptops, scanners, printers, digital cameras, external drives, flash disks, flipcam, LCDs etc...

AM Policy

The AM Policy provides guidelines on maintenance of assets through out its lifetime. This policy is available Docushare under PPM.

Asset register

This is available in Atlas and records all details related to a particular asset namely asset identification, description, serial number, location and value.

5: 2014 POPULATION & HOUSING CENSUS

SITUATION

The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, with technical support of The National Population Commission and Statistics Sierra Leone, is mandated by the census act to conduct population and housing census every ten years.
The vision is to ensure that reliable and timely data is available for development. This will lead to a better quality of life and improved welfare of the people.

CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

The next ten-yearly census for Sierra Leone is in 2014. The population growth rate in 2004 was 1.8 % which poses a challenge for policy makers and development partners. The intercensal period of ten (10) years is too long to maintain an updated data base on population.

Sierra Leone has an increasingly youthful population. The population is predominantly rural. The fertility rate is high at 5.1% and early marriage is common.

The mortality rate had fallen to 20.1% (2004) as a result of improved medical service delivery. However, there is a need to further reduce this to meet international standard.

There is high rural-urban migration at 15%. This is as a result of centralization of employment and other social amenities in urban areas. External migration is also alarming as lots of young people are leaving the country in search of better economic opportunity. There are a small percentage of immigrants in Sierra Leone, since the economy is less attractive to foreign investors and other nationals.

Current data on population issues has become obsolete and the 2014 census will serve as a useful tool. The lack of adequate and reliable data on population has led to poor forecasting and planning. The next census will be useful national, regional, sectoral, structural and local planning. The 2014 census will also be a useful tool for developing voter's list and delimitation boundaries during general elections. Furthermore, it will be useful for monitoring and evaluation and mobilizing and allocating resources.

There is a need to update the existing population data, but this has been constrained by insufficient funding.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Enumeration, publicity, GIS and training will be the process through which the census will be conducted.

The first step will be the update of the 2004 maps using the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This will be followed by the training at all levels of personnel who will be involved in the final census. Both electronic and print media publicity will be done after the training. Publicity will cut across all the stages of the census taking. All of these stages will be completed by the enumeration.