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MEL Practioner Guide:

Engagement and Inclusion in Theory of Change Design

Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Introduction

This guide provides practical guidance for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants are engaged and included in theories of change (TOC) for democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The guide focuses on Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, as people from these groups are often affected directly or indirectly by USAID's programs in LAC. However, the guidance could be adapted to apply for other marginalized ethic or racial communities. The guide regularly returns to a fictitious TOC that aims to address high youth crime rates in Ecuador through alternative rehabilitation centers (ARCs), in order to illustrate techniques for engagement and inclusion; details about development challenges related to youth in Ecuador are not based on real figures. This example, adapted from training materials provided by USAID's LAC Bureau, is purely illustrative and not intended to be used for a real activity. However, the broad contextual elements of Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in Ecuador are real.

Using this Guide

This guide presumes the user has general knowledge of TOC development. Although some of the guidance may be useful for standalone activities that center on Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, this guide will be most useful for activities that involve or impact these communities but do not center on them, as these are the activities where the communities' needs and experiences are most at risk of exclusion. While this guide focuses on USAID personnel, implementing partners (IP) may also use it at the direction of USAID Missions and Operating Units (OU).

Figure 1 presents the structure of the guide. While Mission/OU staff are encouraged to reference this guide as early as possible in the activity design process, it is set up for easy use at any stage of TOC development, with hyperlinks and standalone guidance throughout. Guidance is intended to be illustrative instead of prescriptive and can be adapted to fit the user's needs, time and budget constraints, and current stage of activity design.

FIGURE 1: NAVIGATION STRUCTURE

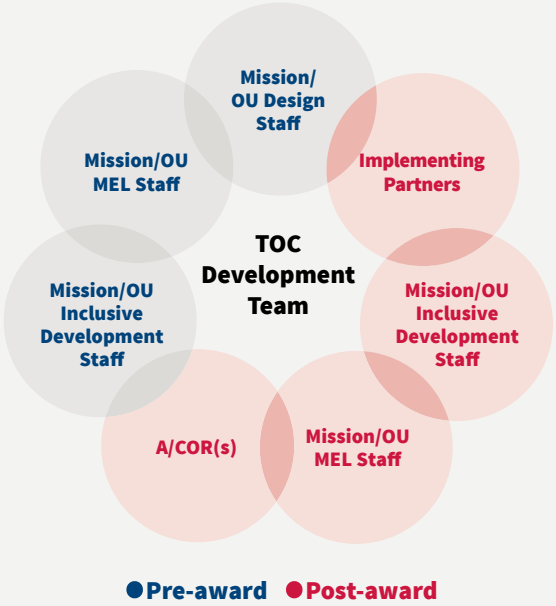
What are USAID's policies, strategies, and plans for engagement and inclusion?

USAID policies and objectives have embraced inclusive development since as early as 2014 with the publication of "Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development" and further emphasized by the 2018 "Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle in Mission Operations" resource, the 2020 Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (PRO-IP), the renewed push for localization starting in 2021, and the 2022 Equity Action Plan. Particularly relevant principles from the Local Systems Framework include "Recognize there is always a system," "Engage local systems everywhere," "Tap into local knowledge," and "Design holistically." PRO-IP operating principles that seek to provide decision-making power and influence over development to Indigenous Peoples include "Engage Indigenous Peoples" and "Establish Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples." Within Latin America, USAID/Guatemala has been particularly active in identifying strategies for working with and for indigenous communities, as evidenced by the 2022 Indigenous Peoples' Engagement Strategy.

Planning for Engagement

It is good practice for engagement with Indigenous Peoples[1] and Afro-descendants in TOC design to begin during the contextual analysis phase of activity design and extend throughout TOC and indicator construction. Engagement in TOC design – as well as all in other stages of activity MEL plan development, which this guide does not cover – requires direct communication with these communities to elicit input and feedback and support joint decision-making. Before engaging with these communities, this guide suggests carefully planning how to engage. At the pre-award stage, the TOC development team may consist of Mission/OU design staff, who may later serve as A/CORs for the ensuing activity(s), as well as MEL staff and any staff focusing on inclusive development at the Mission/OU; a team post-award might consist of A/COR(s), inclusive development and MEL staff from the Mission/OU, and relevant staff from implementing partners (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2: TOC DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

PRO-IP notes that although national governments are generally responsible – sometimes even legally – for obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples to implement a project that could affect them, USAID should consider adopting it as a best practice "where significant impacts are likely to occur as a result of a development activity." If the USAID Operating Unit identifies that a DRG activity could have significant "adverse impacts on the rights, livelihoods, culture, lands and territories, natural resources, or sacred sites of Indigenous People," PRO-IP suggests ensuring that formal FPIC takes place.

There are several domains that this guide recommends covering when planning for engagement with Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples in any stage of activity design and implementation, including how to engage, whom to engage, and issues of accessibility and safety. **Table 1** on the following page presents broad considerations for approaching engagement with Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants throughout design and of DRG activities; although not covered in this guide, the considerations may be useful for activity implementation as well.

[1] Note that in some countries, the term "Indigenous Peoples" is not considered an appropriate reference term. For example, "ethnic communities" is more commonly used in Colombia. Other countries, such as Bolivia and Peru, may use the term, "native peoples."

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TABLE 1: QUESTIONS FOR APPROACHING ENGAGEMENT

How to Engage

Are Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants open to engaging with USAID? On this topic?

- Could engaging with Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants cause tension with the national or subnational governments? How can the team mitigate this?

How do Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants want to engage?

- What are these communities' traditional decision-making processes? What cultural considerations about timing and decision-making might the team incorporate?
- Would a third-party facilitator be helpful to guide conversation and mitigate power imbalances between the team and Indigenous and Afro-descendant participants?

Whom to Engage

What are the traditional authority structures/representative institutions in these communities?

- Do these structures work in conjunction or in parallel with national structures? Does the government (national or local) recognize these structures?
- What subgroups/identities are not represented by these structures (e.g., gender, age, and ability)? How can the team engage with them while respecting traditional structures?
- Would discussions benefit from engaging with Indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders/authorities simultaneously, or is it better to engage these groups separately?

Accessibility

What are the pros and cons of virtual engagement sessions?

- Are there electricity or internet issues for some groups?
- Do participants have access to computers, or mobile phones? What functions/programs might not translate to phones (jam boards, screen sharing)?

What are the pros and cons of in-person sessions?

- Are there geographically remote groups that would not be able to travel for in-person sessions? Could the team travel to meet with them?
- Would it be helpful and feasible for the team consider providing accommodations, childcare coverage, transportation fees, and meals?

Is translation or interpretation needed?

- When discussing the theory of change, how could the team use plain language instead of technical terms to make the conversation more accessible?
- Does the team expect written or spoken inputs from participants, and what are the tradeoffs?

How is the team recruiting participants? Through what forums/outlets/contacts? What subgroups might be excluded from those methods?

Would it be appropriate and possible for participants to be compensated to offset opportunity costs and ensure equity?

Safety

How can the team ensure safe participation for Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups broadly, and more specifically for further marginalized intersectional identities?

- Does engaging separately with different subgroups better ensure the safety and participation of more marginalized identities (e.g., separating by gender or age group)?
- Does the team need to take steps to encourage anonymity, such as not recording sessions or full names? Do in-person spaces allow for sufficient privacy?

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THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Our TOC development team is designing an activity in Ecuador that will cover the broad population, but understands the importance of including and engaging with Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples. Asking the questions in **Table 1** prior to planning engagement activities with these communities could yield the insights in **Table 2**, which provides a sample of some of the answers to the questions in **Table 1:**

TABLE 2: THEORETICAL APPLICATION OF PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRO-DESCENDANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN ECUADOR

How to Engage	• Because decisions among Indigenous Ecuadorian communities are collective and flow from bottom to top (see "Whom to Engage" below), agreeing upon interventions at the regional or national level takes time. For our youth crime activity, we would need to consider the scale of interventions and engage with Indigenous authorities at the appropriate level. • For Afro-Ecuadorian communities, the structures with which we engage may depend on the geographic scope of our youth crime activity (see "Whom to Engage").
Whom to Engage	• Indigenous Ecuadorian communities have a robust, pyramidal authority structure where decisions flow from bottom to top. Councils (cabildos) lead at the community level, and there are representative bodies at the regional (CONAICE, ECUARUNARI, CONFENIAE) and national (CONAIE) levels. • Afro-Ecuadorian communities do not have the same pyramidal structure; regions with large concentrations of these communities are represented by federations (CANE, FECONIC, FOAES), while CONAMUNE works on a broader, national level. Depending on the geographic scope of our youth crime activity, we would need to engage with Afro-Ecuadorian communities through these structures. • Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian organizational bodies have thematic subdivisions. Some bodies may have youth-committees or groups, which we would want to engage with for this activity. • There is one geographic area (Imbabura and Carchi) where Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous communities border each other; if we worked in this region, we could consider forming a larger working group with representation from all communities. Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous authorities have worked together before in Ecuador, so this is certainly possible. • Both Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous authority structures interact and work with the national or territorial government; these existing connections could be avenues for the activity to engage with authorities.
Accessibility	• Afro-Ecuadorians do not speak another language apart from Spanish. Among Indigenous Ecuadorian communities, however, there are around 14 separate languages. The 2008 Constitution recognizes Kichwa and Shuar as official languages in addition to Spanish. While Indigenous youth are more likely to speak Spanish, this may vary by region, and older members of youths' families may not speak Spanish.

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After determining how to approach engagement, the appropriate next step is to select methods or mechanisms of engagement. These could include typical data collection methods, like focus group discussions and interviews. More comprehensive and structured mechanisms for engagement include:

- **Consultations:** Consultations facilitate sharing information about potential programs and elicit perspectives on them. They generally center on a well-defined topic of consultation. Consultations can inform activity design if conducted early enough, but also can support inclusion and engagement later in the program cycle.
- **Listening Tours:** Open-ended listening sessions in local communities around a specific theme or question can generate input early on in activity design and generally facilitate participant viewpoints more intentionally than consultations. These are preferable for soliciting input on challenges and possible solutions, including potentially unexpected responses.
- **Whole System in the Room (WSR):** WSR workshops are particularly useful for discussing and defining the boundaries and root causes of a development challenge.
- **Co-creation:** Inclusive co-creation of activities that apply broadly to a country's population necessitates engaging Afro-descendant and Indigenous groups in the design process alongside other stakeholders, either pre-award or post-award.

Locally Led Development

"Locally led development is the process in which local actors—encompassing individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments—set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring the capacity, leadership, and resources to make those solutions a reality." While locally led development is not a method of engagement, TOC development teams may want to consider where their engagement and design with local partners—Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other—falls on the Locally Led Development Spectrum by consulting the Locally Led Development Checklist. In a similar vein, Oxfam America, Save the Children, and the Overseas Development Institute's Local Engagement Assessment Framework includes a workbook to help practitioners think about what level of local engagement a project will have from start to finish, with levels of engagement similar to the Locally Led Development Spectrum.

In addition to drawing on the methods listed above as forums to gather information on questions related to the development challenge, this guide recommends planning to engage with these communities while defining the elements of the TOC itself, including desired outcomes, possible interventions, indicators, and assumptions.[2] These conversations could take place during initial engagement or iteratively. The PRO-IP recommends creating an engagement plan to structure collaboration for activity design and implementation, while USAID's Participatory Evaluation Guidance Note suggests that a "local stakeholder Advisory Council"—in this case, made up of Indigenous and Afro-descendant representatives—could provide input and feedback throughout design and implementation. The team could also consider designing the activity with a collective action approach inclusive of these communities. It is important to note that each engagement or data collection method has potential limitations (methodological, financial, etc.) and potential for harm that TOC teams should consider prior to selection and endeavor to mitigate, including with regards to data security.

[2] When planning whom to engage with or when to engage them, USAID's Optional Social Impact Assessment Framework suggests that the TOC development team should be conscious of procurement sensitivities. Per the Framework, the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) "has determined that it is not only permissible, but encouraged to consult with Indigenous Peoples in the design of scopes of work (SOW) or project descriptions (PDs) for activities that are likely to impact them – as long as there is no likelihood that the Indigenous Peoples consulted would also be potential applicants for a later procurement."

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Development Challenge Identification

While this guide does not delve into the identification of a development challenge – and in fact, development challenges that USAID endeavors to address are dependent in large part on directives and funding – it is important to note that development challenges identified for a broader population may not have the same level of self-identified priority or urgency for Indigenous or Afro-descendant communities. The challenge may manifest differently or simply not occur within Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the same country. However, where there is room for flexibility, many of the methods for engagement referenced in this guide could be used to discuss and identify development challenges with Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, as opposed to discussing aspects of a development challenge that USAID has already selected to address. Doing so would likely result in more meaningful engagement and inclusion of these communities. Although the guide focuses on activity TOCs for the broader population (inclusive of all races and ethnic groups), engagement with Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples as early as the development challenge identification stage is particularly important for standalone activities aimed at addressing challenges specific to these communities.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

In our example, let us say that we enter into conversations with representatives from Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities in Ecuador with the notion that high youth crime is the development challenge we intend to address. In discussing this development challenge, we are fortunate that communities share the team's understanding that youth crime is a priority development challenge in their communities. However, let us imagine an alternative scenario: during our engagement with these communities – including representatives from youth committees – they express that youth crime is not actually as much of a challenge as compared with the general population, and it is not among their priority development goals. Instead, representatives explain that a high rate of youth unemployment is a priority concern; young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 have low employment rates, especially in comparison with the non-Indigenous and non-Afro-descendant youth. In this scenario, these conversations might lead our team to decide that in addition to an activity addressing high rates of youth crime in Ecuador, we will also design a TOC for a standalone activity to address youth unemployment in Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities; interventions could include skills training and job placement services for youth, as well as recruitment and hiring support for businesses. However, our team would still ensure that the general population youth crime activity is inclusive of Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities and engages them throughout TOC design.

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Contextual Analysis

Contextual analysis is a crucial step in TOC development that "examines root causes or drivers underlying the problem, as well as circumstances or conditions in the environment that affect the situation, particularly those that are likely to change over the course of implementation and will need to be monitored."[3]

When conducting contextual analysis of a development challenge that applies to the broader population, it is good practice to include inquiries specifically related to Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples. This guide recommends that TOC development teams use the guiding questions in **Table 3** on the following page to ensure that contextual analysis of the development challenge is responsive to the experiences, needs, and views of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants; this information would supplement the more general contextual analysis that the team produces. These questions fall under distinct categories: defining the challenge, root causes of the challenge, actors, and resources.

[3] USAID. (2017, September 1). How-to note: Developing a project logic model (and its associated theory of change). How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model (and its Associated Theory of Change) | USAID Learning Lab. Retrieved November 28, 2022, from https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/how-note-developing-project-logic-model-and-its-associated-theory-change

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TABLE 3: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS GUIDING QUESTIONS

Defining the Challenge

How do Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities view the development challenge in its current state? Is this different from how the general population, the government, or USAID views it?

- Do these communities define "development" differently? Does the approach of the activity align with their self-determined development priorities?
- Are there traditional or customary authorities in Indigenous and/or Afro-descendant communities that view or would address the development challenge differently from USAID or the government?
  - Are these groups excluded from formal conversations surrounding the development challenge?

How does this development challenge manifest for Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities?

- Is the impact on these communities different than for non-marginalized populations? How/why? What are the gaps?

Do Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities face exclusion or discrimination with regards to the development challenge?

- What intersectional identities face more exclusion with respect to the development challenge? For example, do Indigenous women face unique marginalization?

Root Causes

Are the root causes of the challenge different for these communities in comparison with other populations?

- Are the norms that affect this challenge different for Indigenous or Afro-descendant communities in comparison with other populations?
- Are laws that affect this development challenge enforced differently for Indigenous Peoples or Afro-descendants?
- How does the historical context of colonization and marginalization of these groups, the United States Government's (USG) legacy of involvement in the area, and conflict or violence affect how the challenge manifests in these communities?

Actors

What actors within Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are interested in addressing this development challenge? Are there traditional or customary authorities? Community groups, NGOs, or activists? What are they currently doing to address the challenge?

- Are their priorities, interest, and incentives different than those of other actors?
- How do they interact with other actors addressing this challenge? What is the history of their interactions with the USG? Are there power differentials between actors? Between ethnic communities, including other intersectional identities (gender, age, ability, etc.)?
- What champions and opponents for addressing the challenge exist within Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities?

Resources

What resources are available in Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to address this challenge? What resources are lacking?

- Do these communities have differential access to or control over required resources to address the challenge in comparison with the general population? Are there differences in access to resources within these communities?

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Contextual analysis draws heavily on a review of existing assessments, evaluations, and studies, as well as monitoring and other data (**Figure 3**). However, a review of existing sources is unlikely to answer all the team's initial questions, and in fact may surface additional areas of inquiry. To fill in these information gaps, the TOC development team could collect additional data through site visits, focus group discussions, or interviews with key stakeholders and potential beneficiaries. If a country-level Inclusive Development Analysis (IDA)[4], needs assessment related to the development challenge, and/or stakeholder analysis or mapping have not taken place with a particular eye to Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples, the team could conduct these to further strengthen its analysis.

FIGURE 3: RESOURCES FOR CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- Social Impact Assessments or Inclusive Development Analyses conducted at the CDCS level
- Policies or research resulting from an Inclusive Development Mission Order
- Learning agendas or questions
- Gender Analysis Reports
- Project Appraisal Documents
- Implementing partner studies or datasets particular to these communities in the development context

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Let us say that in the development challenge identification stage, our team decided to design a TOC for an activity to address high youth crime rates in Ecuador. We also identified alternative rehabilitation centers (ARCs) as a possible intervention to address the challenge. While this development challenge is not specific to Indigenous or Afro-descendant youth, it is important to consider these groups when conducting the contextual analysis. To properly include these communities in the contextual analysis, we will plan to both conduct desk research and engage directly with them on this topic. **Table 4** notes questions to consider for the contextual analysis of this challenge in the Afro-descendant and Indigenous context in Ecuador.

[4] USAID's PRO-IP recommends that USAID conduct an IDA and Social Impact Assessment during the activity design stage if they do not already exist. If the timeline does not allow for a full IDA, the guiding questions in this section include several questions that have been adapted from the Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations.

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TABLE 4: THEORETICAL APPLICATION OF CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS GUIDING QUESTIONS

Defining the Challenge

Are youth crime rates different among Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian youth in comparison with the general population?

- What contributes to any noted differences? Do these populations face discrimination or profiling by police?

Are Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian youth arrested for certain types of crimes at higher rates than the general population? What crimes?

- Do Indigenous and/or Afro-Ecuadorian youth typically face harsher sentences in the national justice system?
- How does racism play a role in the general population's perception of crime among Indigenous and Afro-descendant youth? Does public perception of crime rates for these youth communities match reality?

Root Causes

What contributes to high crime rates among Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian youth? Are these root causes different than for other youth?

Are there norms or power relationships within Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities that might act as barriers to success for certain types of interventions to address this challenge?

Actors

How are traditional authorities in Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities currently working to address high youth crime rates? Is this different from how other communities or the government is working to address them?

- Are traditional authorities potential champions or opponents for addressing this challenge? Are there entry points or champions apart from these authorities?

Are there Indigenous and/or Afro-Ecuadorian traditional or customary justice systems that operate in Ecuador?

- Are they recognized by the national government?
- How do these systems work together or contradict each other?
- Are there different ways in which these systems currently address this development issue?
- How do traditional justice systems interact with ARCs?

Resources

What resources are available in Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities to address this challenge? What resources are lacking?

- Do these communities have differential access to or control over required resources to address the challenge in comparison with the general population?
- Do these communities have differential access to ARCs?

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The answers to the questions in **Table 4** could be critical in improving the inclusion and engagement of these communities in the developing activity TOC. Following desk research and direct engagement, let us say that our team learned of the illustrative information in **Table 5**[5] below, which the team may not be aware of without asking the questions in **Table 4**:

TABLE 5: THEORETICAL APPLICATION OF CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Defining the Challenge	**Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorians face general ethnicity- or race-based discrimination. However, Afro-Ecuadorians experience targeted racism with regards to crime; due to racial biases, Afro-Ecuadorians are more likely to be viewed as violent or criminal.**
Actors	**The 1998 Ecuadorian Constitution guarantees the collective rights for both Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities, including the right to maintain and develop traditional forms of life, social organization, and authority. This includes the right to administer justice in their own territories for minor crimes and offenses.** **While Indigenous communities in Ecuador have traditional justice systems and procedures for administering penalties or sanctions, Afro-Ecuadorian communities have a customary system but no consistent procedure for administering justice. Afro-Ecuadorian communities utilize the national justice system.** **Jurisdiction issues between the national justice system and Indigenous justice systems arise, as many Indigenous communities feel they should have jurisdiction over all types of crimes.**

[5] Table 5 is not intended to comprehensively answer the questions in Table 4, but rather provide an example of some of the information that may arise as a result of asking these questions as part of the contextual analysis.

Introduction

Building Out the TOC

This section provides general guidance for inclusion and engagement of Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples in each element of the TOC: outcomes, outputs and interventions, and assumptions. It is suggested to start from outcomes and work towards inputs because this will help TOC development teams think about what changes are necessary to lead to the desired end outcome and what inputs might lead to those intermediate outcomes in turn. This section first introduces the TOC and base logic model of the illustrative example, which will be refined throughout this section. The example does not go into detail regarding the TOC narrative; it is good practice to provide more detailed descriptions of the causal pathways, including theoretical backing and illustrative interventions, in the TOC narrative.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

After conducting contextual analysis, our team has created a TOC whose approach to addressing our development challenge (high juvenile crime rate) is improving the quality and use of ARCs. The initial narrative TOC[6] is, "**IF** grants and technical assistance are provided to ARCs, *and* judges are trained on alternatives to detention; **THEN** ARCs will provide quality alternatives to detention services *and* judges will increase the percent of juveniles assigned to ARCs; juvenile offenders will respond positively to and practice rehabilitative services and have sustained wellbeing; and recidivism and the youth crime rate will reduce." The logic model in **Figure 4** on the next page provides granular detail on the causal chain from the interventions through outputs and outcomes to reach the end outcomes.

However, our team realizes that as it currently stands, the TOC does not adequately include Indigenous Ecuadorians and Afro-Ecuadorians. Through engaging with Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous Ecuadorian representatives, our team will determine how to adapt or update the TOC to be explicitly inclusive of these communities. In the following examples, we will focus on sub-sections of this logic model and make changes (**highlighted in yellow**) to better include these communities.

[6] The narrative TOC is slightly abbreviated for the purposes of this guide to more succinctly cover the output and various intermediate outcome stages. A more detailed narrative of the TOC would describe all causal chains, providing evidence or rationales for each pathway.

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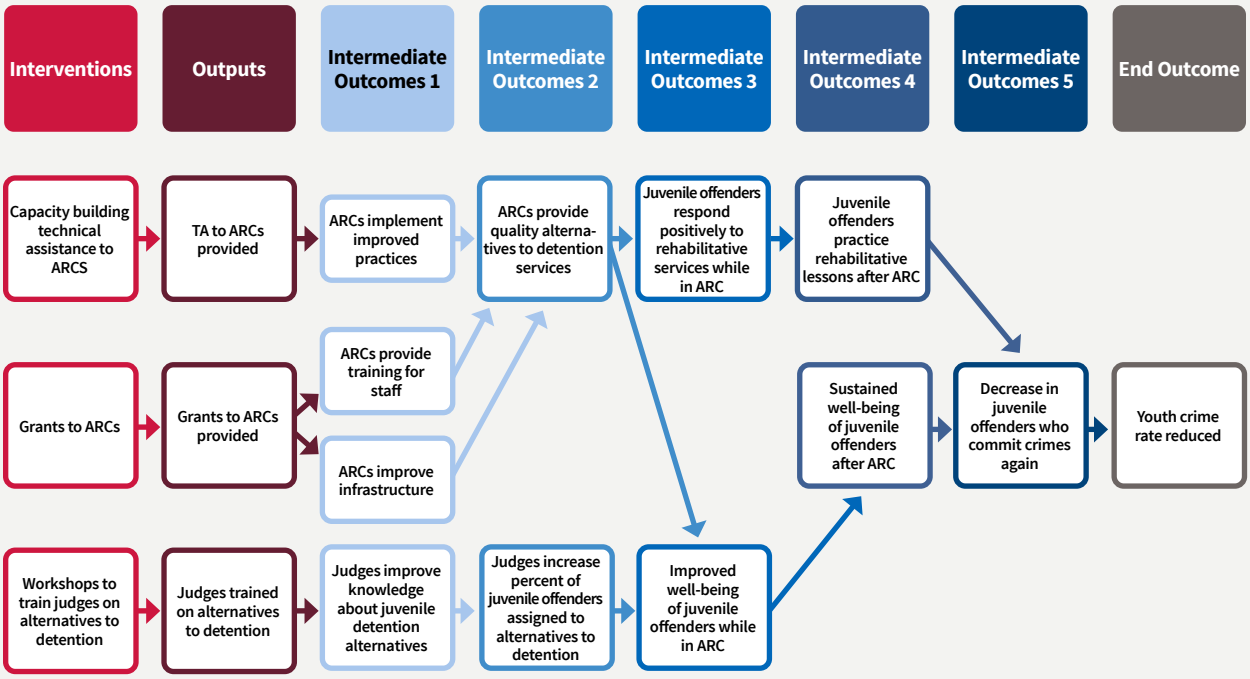
FIGURE 4: THEORETICAL BASE LOGIC MODEL



Outcomes

To ensure Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants are included in a re-constructed TOC, this guide suggests that TOC development teams work backward from the existing end outcome (impact, long-term outcome) along the causal chain of intermediate steps and identify which logical pathways for the general population may not hold for these communities. The team could include the following considerations in this exercise:

- Does the team expect the same outcome for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants as for the general population? How might the outcome differ for Indigenous Peoples vs. Afro-descendants?
- Is a separate outcome necessary to account for inclusion, or is an indicator disaggregated[7] by population group sufficient?
- Would intermediate outcomes proposed for the general population lead to the same next-level outcome for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants? Or are there missing intermediate outcomes in the chain that the team could add for these communities?

[7] Note that disaggregation by race and ethnicity can prove difficult. This requires previous thought by the USAID Mission/OU on how Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants self-identify (see the PRO-IP). It is good practice to not combine other areas of marginalization with these self-identified groups.

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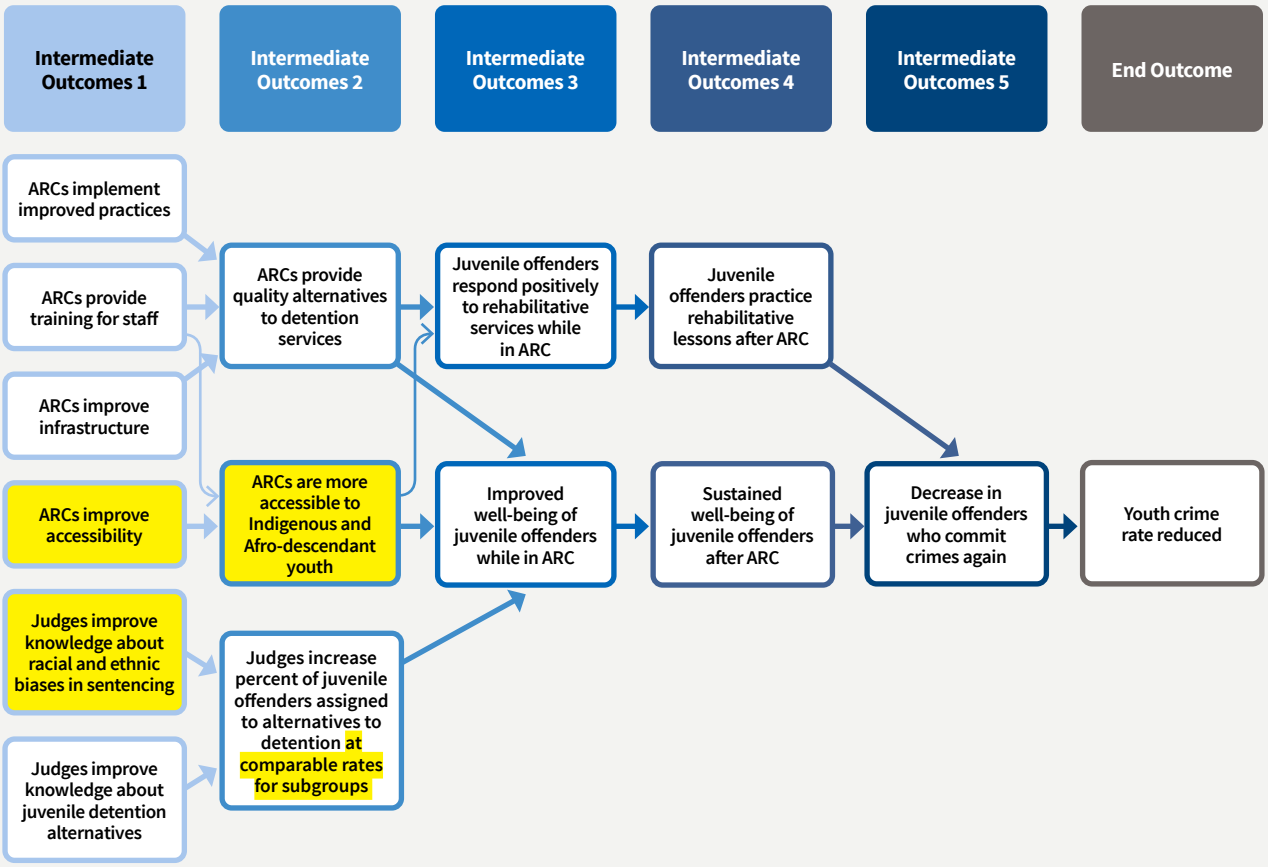
THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Given that our activity is intended for the general population, it is reasonable for the end outcome, "Youth crime rate reduced," and high-level intermediate outcomes to remain broad.

Let us say that our contextual analysis and ongoing engagement with Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian groups has raised concerns about accessibility for these youth—for example, ARCs are rarely located near these communities, Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous youth face discrimination and cultural ignorance by ARC staff, and youth feel isolated at ARCs without community ties. This would suggest that we need another intermediate outcome at Level 2 to reach the Level 3 intermediate outcomes ("Juvenile offenders respond positively to rehabilitative services while in ARC" and "Improved well-being of juvenile offenders while in ARC"). We could call this outcome, "**ARCs are more accessible to Indigenous and Afro-descendant youth**," as seen in **Figure 5**.[8]

FIGURE 5: THEORETICAL LOGIC MODEL WITH UPDATED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES



[8] All arrows represent causality; differences in width are for readability.

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Recall that during our contextual analysis, we learned that Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous youth face harsher sentences than other youth. Therefore, we decide to specifically include and track in our TOC the rates at which judges assign juveniles of different racial and ethnic identities to ARCs; this is represented in **Figure 5** by a slight change in wording to an existing Level 2 intermediate outcome, "Judges increase percent of juvenile offenders assigned to alternatives to detention **at comparable rates for subgroups**."

Moving further backwards along the causal chain, **Figure 5** adds a new Level 1 outcome, "**ARCs improve accessibility**," to build towards our new Level 2 outcome. We also add a new Level 1 outcome, "**Judges improve knowledge about racial and ethnic biases in sentencing**," with the logic that if this outcome occurs, judges will sentence these youth to alternatives to detention at comparable rates to non-Indigenous and non-Afro-descendant youth.

With these changes, our narrative TOC now reads as, "**IF** grants and technical assistance are provided to ARCs, *and* judges are trained on alternatives to detention; **THEN** ARCs will provide quality alternatives to detentions services, **ARCs will be more accessible to Indigenous and Afro-descendant youth**, *and* judges will increase the percent of juveniles assigned to ARCs **at comparable rates for subgroups**; juvenile offenders will respond positively to and practice rehabilitative services and have sustained wellbeing; and recidivism and the youth crime rate will reduce."

Outputs and Interventions

Once the team has adjusted the intermediate outcomes, it is important to determine what new or updated interventions and outputs are needed to attain those outcomes. Considerations for these aspects of the TOC include:

- What aspects of the planned outputs might need to change specifically for Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to lead to the revised or existing intermediate outcomes?
- Are there potential partnerships or entry points for implementing this intervention within Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities?
- Are proposed interventions inclusive of Afro-descendants and Indigenous communities? Are there linguistic, geographic, security, economic, time use, cultural, or other systemic barriers to participation?
    - Can current interventions be altered to be inclusive, or would it be best for the team to design interventions specifically for these communities to achieve desired outcomes?
- How might proposed interventions differentially impact these populations? Are there potential negative or unintended impacts on these communities?

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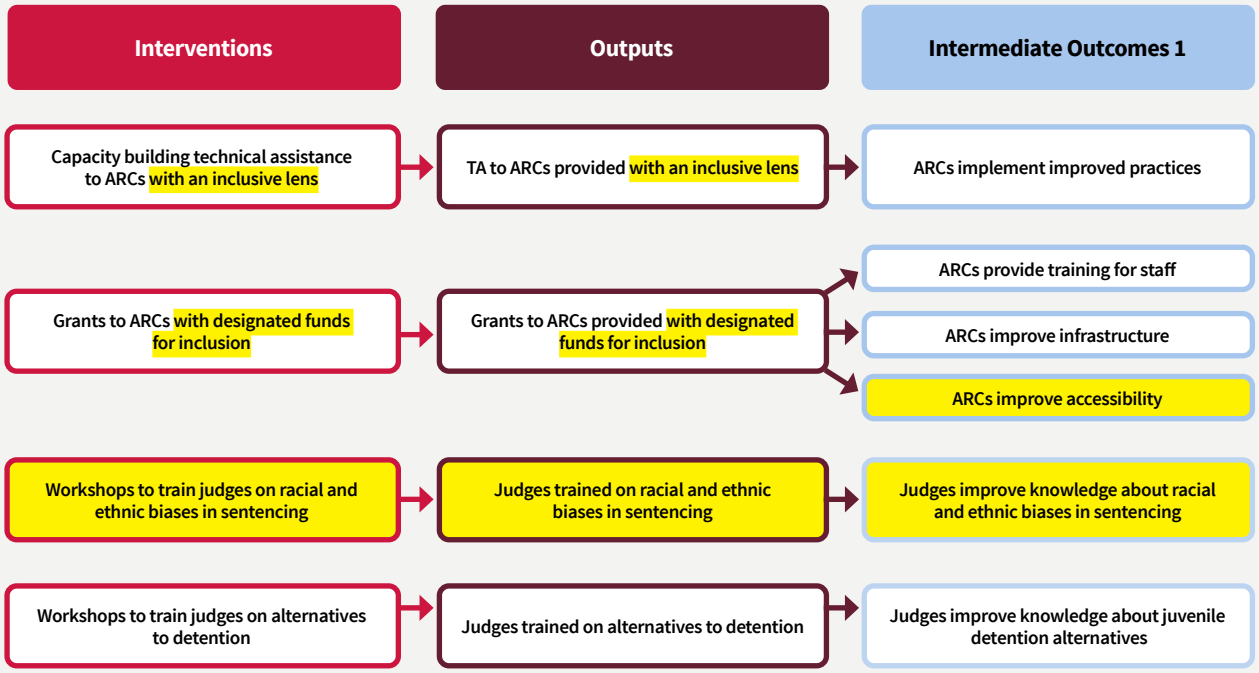
THEORETICAL APPLICATION

To make our case study interventions more inclusive, **Figure 6** shows we can specify that capacity building technical assistance to ARCs should apply an **inclusive lens** (i.e., assessing areas of improvement and providing recommendations for ARCs to provide better services and improve practices for Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian youth in their programs). Similarly, our TOC could specify that grants provided to ARCs include **designated funds for inclusion**, to be used for infrastructure and accessibility, such as cultural competency and anti-bias training for staff, covering travel costs for youth in more remote communities, investing in peer buddy systems to help Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian youth adjust to ARCs, hiring translators or staff who speak Indigenous languages to keep families informed, etc. Given our understanding of inequitable juvenile sentencing, we would also add a new intervention, "**Workshops to train judges on racial and ethnic biases in sentencing**." **Figure 6** also presents the corresponding outputs for these new and updated interventions.

Now, we update the narrative TOC to: "**IF** grants and technical assistance are provided to ARCs **with an inclusive lens and designated inclusion funds**, *and* judges are trained on alternatives to detention **and racial and ethnic biases in sentencing**; **THEN** ARCs will provide quality alternatives to detentions services, **ARCs will be more accessible to Indigenous and Afro-descendant youth**, *and* judges will increase the percent of juveniles assigned to ARCs **at comparable rates for subgroups**; juvenile offenders will respond positively to and practice rehabilitative services and have sustained wellbeing; and recidivism and the youth crime rate will reduce."

FIGURE 6: THEORETICAL LOGIC MODEL WITH UPDATED INTERVENTIONS AND OUTPUTS



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Assumptions

In addition to outlining general contextual assumptions, the TOC development team should identify assumptions specific to Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities on which their TOC relies. The team should assess assumptions at each level of the causal chain. Considerations include:

- What assumptions does the TOC make about similar or differential outcomes for Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations in comparison with the general population each other?
- What assumptions does the TOC make about how traditional/customary institutions (governance structures, justice systems) interact with the national system?

The team could consider drafting a risk management plan with an inclusive lens using the Transforming Agency, Access, and Power (TAAP) Toolkit and Guide for Inclusive Development for guidance.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Assumptions underlying our TOC include:

- Jurisdictional boundaries between national justice systems and Indigenous Ecuadorian justice systems are clear and reliably implemented.
- Youth can successfully practice rehabilitative lessons taught at ARCs in all ethnic communities.

While these elements are not currently within the scope of our activity, we may consider incorporating complexity-aware elements into our monitoring system to track crucial contextual assumptions and support adaptive management. For example, a potential risk mitigation strategy for lack of coordination and cooperation between justice systems might be periodically inviting representatives from all systems to learning events to encourage information sharing.

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Indicators

When designing indicators that are inclusive of Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples, this guide recommends that the TOC development team consider the following:

- Is disaggregation of an indicator sufficient to measure a result for these communities? How can the team ensure that general data collection methods reach beneficiaries in these communities? In what contexts are more targeted indicators necessary or superior?
- Is this indicator meaningful for the communities of focus? What would these communities consider a meaningful measure of this result?
- Are the data sources needed to measure this indicator easily accessible and available in a timely manner?
  - What are the time and cost tradeoffs of collecting data for this indicator?
  - Does collecting this indicator or any of its disaggregates potentially cause harm to Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants? Can the team develop protocols to ensure safety and anonymity, or is the indicator (or disaggregates) too sensitive to measure?
- If the indicator requires collecting data directly from Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples, does the team need to work through representative organizations to collect it? If so, how? If not, are respondents able to accurately characterize the experience of these communities?
- How can beneficiary feedback from Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants regarding their perspectives about the activity complement traditional monitoring data (see "Next Steps" section)?

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

For outcomes that are new or adjusted to include Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous youth, it is necessary to develop separate indicators to track results. However, at higher levels of outcomes, we have elected to specify that existing indicators be disaggregated by race and ethnicity to best include these youth. **Figure 7** shows a sample of new indicators at the output level, while **Figure 8** presents new and disaggregated indicators at lower levels of intermediate outcomes. Note that **Figure 7** and **Figure 8** are snapshots of the TOC; they do not include all results at the indicated levels, nor do they comprehensively cover possible indicators.

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FIGURE 7: THEORETICAL LOGIC MODEL WITH NEW OUTPUT INDICATORS

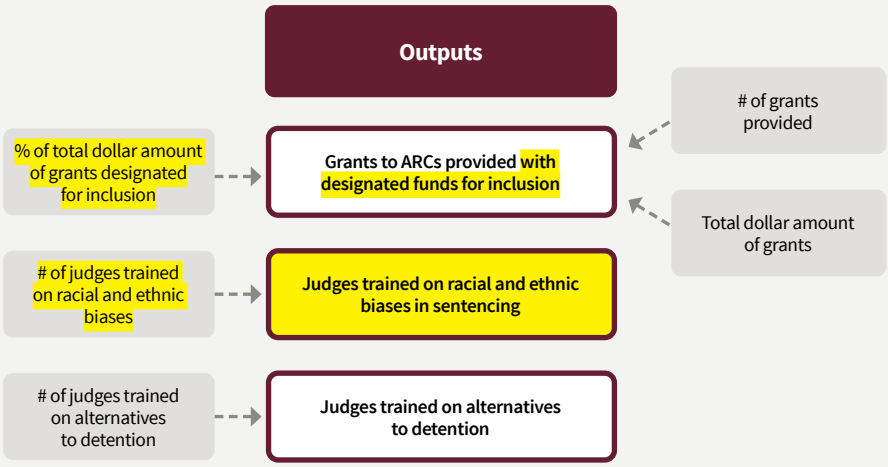
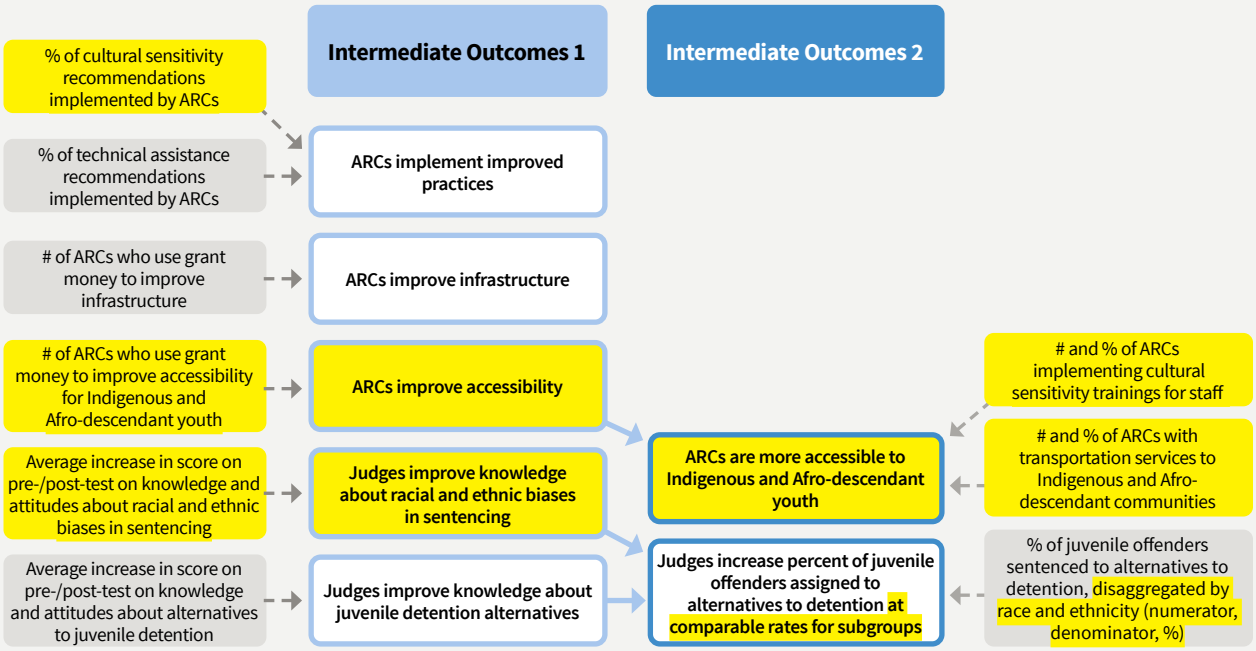


FIGURE 8: THEORETICAL LOGIC MODEL WITH NEW AND ADJUSTED INDICATORS FOR LOWER-LEVEL INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES



An informative monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system requires much more than useful and actionable indicators. This guide is not meant to be a resource for building a robust MEL system, but the following section provides some suggested domains to consider as the team moves from inclusive TOC construction to inclusive activity implementation.

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Next Steps

The steps outlined above will ensure better inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants in TOCs. It is good practice for inclusion and engagement to be an ongoing commitment throughout activity design and implementation. Below are several considerations for inclusion and engagement of Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples in other MEL or MEL-adjacent aspects of activity implementation:

Monitoring

- When determining data sources for indicators, consider how available data is from Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities and what areas of accessibility (cultural, linguistic, world-views, etc.) are critical to select and design data collection methods and instruments in these communities.
- Ensure that feedback loops adequately include Afro-descendant and Indigenous activity participants.
- Protect data gathered from these communities, with an understanding that racial or ethnic identity information may be particularly sensitive in certain contexts or countries.

Evaluation

- Consider using a participatory evaluation approach with participation from a broad range of activity participants, including Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants. Participation could include activity participants designing evaluation questions, selecting evaluation methods and approaches, collecting data, interpreting findings, etc.
- Consider drawing from Indigenous-led evaluation guidance in other regions.

Beneficiary Feedback

- Ensure that beneficiary feedback regarding perceptions of the intervention(s) as they are implemented includes perspectives and opinions from Afro-descendants and Indigenous People, as well as historically marginalized identities within those communities, through data collection processes that are not extractive or overly burdensome.
- Endeavor to collect and analyze multiple types of beneficiary feedback from these communities, including feedback falling under the categories defined by USAID's Draft Guide to Collecting Beneficiary Feedback (relevance and acceptability, quality, satisfaction, access, unintended negative consequences, outcomes, recommendations, and requests for information).

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Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting

- The team could develop learning questions that examine inclusion and engagement in the life of the activity or that investigate elements of the TOC specific to inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups.
- In addition to regular learning activities, the team could endeavor to bring a learning lens to some regular engagement sessions with Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities throughout implementation.
- The team could engage with Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in using M&E data and lessons learned in activity adaptations and documentation of these changes.

Theory of Change Reviews

- The team should consider conducting TOC reviews to track causal links, effectiveness of interventions, and assumptions and make corresponding updates to the TOC; reviews could occur at regular intervals, after evaluations, and/or in response to certain triggers, thresholds, or milestones that the team identifies beforehand. It is good practice to engage external stakeholders, including Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, in these reviews and identification of any triggers/thresholds/milestones.

Resourcing and Staffing

- When considering staffing for MEL, the team should consider accounting for the time of any staff resulting from an Inclusive Development Mission Order if one has occurred.
- USAID Missions/OUs and implementing partners should consider additional staffing and costs necessary to implement any new interventions designed to include Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples and related monitoring activities (trainings on culturally appropriate practices, hiring translators, etc.).
- USAID Missions/OUs could consider budgeting for reimbursing or off-setting costs for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants to participate in engagement activities, while complying with all Agency financial regulations.

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Additional Resources

Below are additional resources for several topics discussed throughout the guide:

Theory of Change Construction

Resources include USAID's How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model (and its Associated Theory of Change), Theory of Change Workbook, and "What is this thing called 'Theory of Change'?" blog post.

Engagement Considerations/Questions

Some of the engagement questions in this guide were adapted from or inspired by considerations in USAID's Consultation Handbook (Annex to the Optional Social Impact Assessment Framework), USAID's PRO-IP, and the Forest Peoples Programme's "Key Elements to the Initiation, Performance and Maintenance of Good Faith Consultations and Negotiations with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and Communities," USAID's Co-Creation Toolkit Interactive Guide, USAID's "Effective Engagement with Indigenous Peoples: USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Sector Guide Document," Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations, Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?, and Afro-descendants in Latin America: Toward a Framework of Inclusion.

Consultations

Resources on conducting consultations include USAID's Consultation Handbook (Annex to the Optional Social Impact Assessment Framework), USAID's PRO-IP, and the Forest Peoples Programme's "Key Elements to the Initiation, Performance and Maintenance of Good Faith Consultations and Negotiations with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and Communities."

Listening Tours

LINC's Guide to Listening for Program Design outlines tools, methods, and a framework for engaging local communities in early design stages.

Whole System in the Room

Documents on Whole System in the Room include the Whole System in the Room Strategizing Tools and Myanmar Case Study.

Co-creation

Resources on co-creation include USAID's Discussion Note, Interactive Guide, and two-pager for partners; as well as soon-to-be published Learning Document on Co-Creation with Indigenous Groups.

Contextual Analysis Questions

Some of the contextual analysis questions in this guide are adapted from or inspired by questions and considerations in the following sources, which may prove useful in other contexts: Theory of Change Workbook, Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations (Annex IV: Inclusive Development Analysis Matrix; Annex V: Samples Questions for the Six Domains of Analysis), and Effective Engagement with Indigenous Peoples: USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Sector Guidance Document.

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Stakeholder Analysis/Mapping

Stakeholder analysis resources include the Landcare Research Stakeholder Analysis Guide, and mapping tools include USAID Stakeholder Mapping Blog and Collaboration Mapping Guide.

Complexity-aware Monitoring and Evaluation

Complexity-aware monitoring, evaluation, and learning resources include the Complexity-Aware Monitoring Discussion Note, Six Simple Questions Worksheet, and Causal Link Monitoring Brief.

Monitoring & Evaluation

USAID's Monitoring Toolkit and Evaluation Toolkit provide a wealth of resources on these topics.

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting

USAID's CLA Toolkit provides guidance and resources for collaborating, learning, and adapting.

Resourcing and Staffing

General guidance on resourcing and staffing for MEL include USAID's note on MEL Roles and Responsibilities

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