

Section 4: Note to Users

The tools in this section invite managers and other users to reflect critically on their agency's approach to engaging with communities and to consider a more community-led approach.

It also recognizes that many managers will have a host of practical questions about things such as qualities to look for in facilitators, the phases of engaging with communities, and the kinds of benchmarks one can use to tell whether one is on a productive track, among others.

Recognizing that there are no “final” or universal answers to these questions, the tools in this section seek to give illustrative examples that stir the imagination and invite one to think how it might go in a particular context.

Managers also may find it useful to have a more in-depth look at an example of community-led work, together with tools that were used to support it. For this reason, this section includes a case study from Sierra Leone and some of the tools used as part of the community-led work.

It is important to recognize, though, that there is no one-size-fits-all in regard to community-led approaches. The Sierra Leone example and tools are best seen as illustrations and should not be seen as prescriptions for how to do community-led work.

MGM 5. Qualities of Facilitators of a Community-led Approach

Qualities	Description
Humility	Does not put themselves “above” or judge other people; recognizes the many things that local people know about the situation, their children, their values and practices, etc. that they do not know. Does not position themselves as an “expert.”
Empathy	Uses elicitive questions and reflective listening to understand the other person’s perspective; seeks to “walk a mile in the other person’s shoes.”
Trust and respect	Treats all people with dignity and builds positive, appreciative relationships. Recognizes the unique situation of each individual. Sensitive to issues of power, equity, gender, class, and power.
Inclusive/participatory	Seeks to engage with everyone and to invite their voice and agency in the planning discussions and decisions. Invites the participation of girls and boys of different ages, without upsetting local norms.
Accompaniment	Is patient with the community as it moves in “community time.” Neither guides the community toward a pre-defined end nor forces it to meet outsider deadlines.
Adaptability	Able to deviate from a plan, changing approach and timing as new opportunities or obstacles arise; good problem solver.
Versatility	Develops rapport and relationship with different people using different approaches and interpersonal skills as appropriate to the particular individual or subgroup.
Ethical	Acts in accord with accepted ethical principles; reflects regularly on ethical dilemmas that arise, seeking others’ advice as needed; protects the best interests and well-being of children.