



FLOURISHING COMMUNITY INDEX

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GIVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES A GLOBAL VOICE

Cordaid has developed an innovative new methodology for the objective and inclusive assessment of the development priorities of local communities with a focus on fragile contexts. The Flourishing Community Index (FCI) captures the needs and aspirations of communities independently of specific projects, development actors or donors. Cordaid has piloted the FCI in two communities in Burundi. Modern technologies make it possible to collect, aggregate and share information at a large scale: local communities get a global voice. Cordaid uses the FCI for programming, lobby and advocacy, and as a tool for impact monitoring.

Features of the FCI:

Smart data collection: By using the FCI Sensemaker® app with tablets or smart phones communities articulate what matters most to them through storytelling, complemented with questions for signification. This provides a unique combination of independent and authentic qualitative and quantitative information that can be aggregated and analyzed.

Community-owned information: the primary beneficiaries of the FCI are communities themselves. Information is fed back through workshops, local radio, billboards, newspapers or SMS. Communities use this information to prioritize the development activities they need most.

Multi-use: The analyzed information can also be used by service providers, local and national governments, social enterprises and (I)NGOs.

Scalable: The simple, easily applicable and replicable methodology can be used on a large scale in local communities in different countries.

What makes the FCI unique?

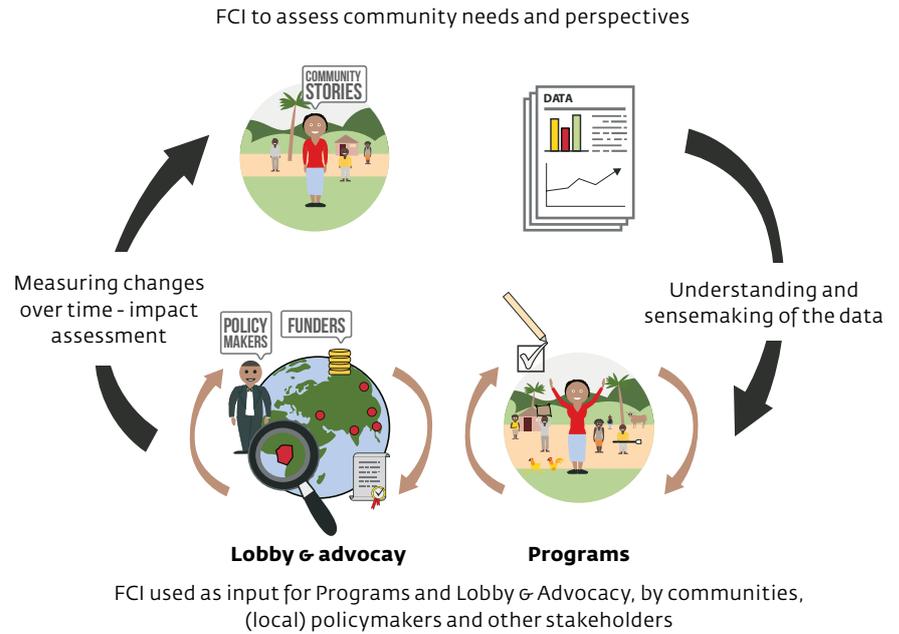
The FCI is a unique participatory tool that collects stories from communities to create a detailed portrait of life in a community. The FCI generates both qualitative and quantitative data by combining story telling with survey questions about these stories and about the people sharing the story. This mixed-methods approach offers a methodological breakthrough for **measuring 'soft' indicators** such as trust, community cohesion, and perceptions of wellbeing, to recognize patterns and trends from these indicators. This approach **enables local communities** to be part of an informed discussion about development in their own communities. Measurement over time provides information about the changes that community members perceive and about specific interventions that contributed (**impact monitoring**).

The FCI **meets the demand** from academics, development communities and donors for impact evaluation methods that are sensitive to local contexts and social difference. In light of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, the FCI offers a detailed and inclusive assessment tool to measure and monitor relevant SDG indicators, especially in fragile contexts.

This leaflet gives an impression of the qualitative and quantitative information generated with the FCI based on the pilot results in two communities in Burundi.

FCI: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Trained local people collect the data with tablets or iPads. This provides a combination of qualitative data, by collecting stories about how people perceive the situation in their community, and quantitative data, through survey questions about the community and about the person telling the story. In each community a random selection of at least 200 community members is invited to share their story and to answer the questions. This way the FCI gives independent, non-biased and representative information. After collecting the data, a session is organized with the community and/or with other stakeholders to make sense of the data and to define action plans.



THE 10 STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FCI

1. Relevant actors and organizations involved in programming and/or lobby and advocacy define the communities to be included, and support the process for collecting and feedback. The questions of the FCI are predefined, but some context specific questions can be added.
2. Storycollectors are trained (2 x half a day training) to collect data.
3. In the selected communities a representative number of community members (min. 200 per community) are interviewed.
4. Ipads or tablets are used to collect stories and quantitative data, using Sensemaker software. Data collection can be done offline.
5. Respondents start with a story of how it is to live in their community. This is followed by questions to let them signify their own stories.
6. Data are saved on an iPad/tablet, if there is internet access these can be uploaded to Sensemaker collector.
7. Stories are saved as audiofiles, and are translated/transcribed by local translators.
8. The collected stories and quantitative data are analyzed (sensemaking) together with the relevant actors and organizations. Community profiles are produced as a result of this, highlighting the insights for programming and lobby and advocacy.
9. These profiles are discussed with the community organizations for validation and to discuss possible action plans.
10. The data are published on the FCI website (to be developed) in an aggregated and anonymous way.

“With the Flourishing Community Index (FCI) we capture the voices of a representative number of people living in local communities. This provides authentic and deep insights in how people perceive living conditions and social relations. This enables bottom-up assessment of the real needs and perspectives. Moreover, changes over time can be measured.”

Rens Rutten, Cordaid FCI Coordinator

INFORMATION GENERATED WITH FCI

- Quick scan of how people perceive the situation in their community, collecting stories (positive and negative) and questions on the meaning of the story.
- Changes over time; comparison between communities, and aggregated data.
- The same indicators are used for different communities, so data can be aggregated and compared between contexts.

USERS AND USE OF THE FCI DATA

- Communities: issues and priorities for programs and advocacy.
- Policy makers and program implementers: responsiveness to needs and priorities of communities; measuring changes over time.
- Wider public: Complement national statistics and data; inform about local realities.

COSTS

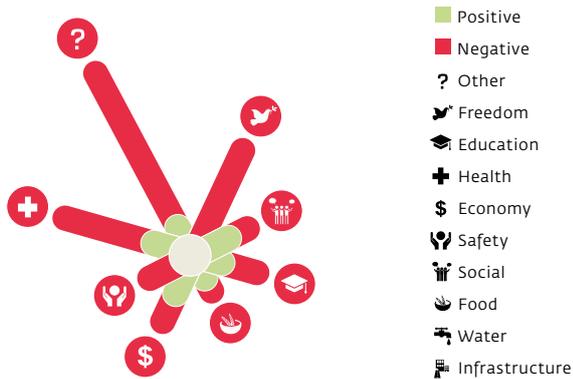
The estimated operational costs of implementing the FCI in one community (collecting 200 stories) are between € 3000 - € 5000

EXAMPLES OF FCI GENERATED DATA FROM A COMMUNITY IN BURUNDI

Below you find some examples of how FCI collected data can be presented. These data are based on stories collected from 138 respondents (65 men; 73 women) from a community in Burundi.

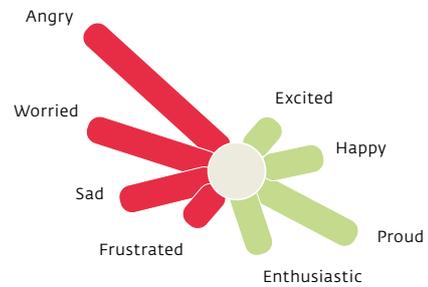
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

Stories told by the community members reflect the most important issues and themes experienced in the community (in positive and negative sense). This is based on multiple choice questions, with predetermined themes.



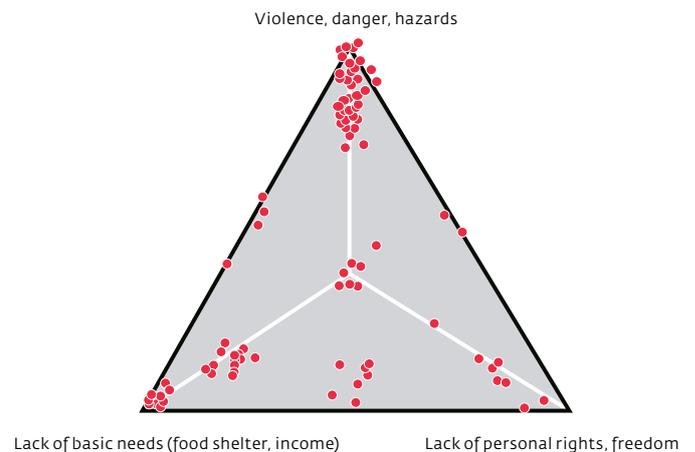
EMOTIONS RELATED TO STORIES TOLD

The story tellers are asked to indicate the emotional tone of their story. This graph reflects both positive and negative emotions.



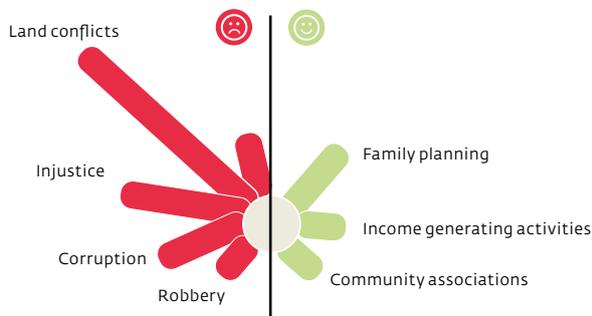
FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE ISSUE

So called 'triads' are used, whereby people position their story on a field between three possible answers. Each dot on the triad represents a story. This triad presents the answers to the question: what are the factors that affect safety in your community?



OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

People also have the option to indicate 'others' for the theme of their story, with an open field to fill in the subject of their story. This graph reflects the issues mentioned here, both for the positive and the negative stories.



LEVEL OF INFLUENCE OVER THE EVENTS OF THE STORY

The question 'What influence did you have on the events in your story', is posed to assess to which extent people see themselves as passive or active agents in these events. Measurement over time gives an indication of the agency of community members.

