

After completing the gathering in Mangochi, Adriaan and Adam reflected on the discussion and shared their thoughts on various aspects of the meeting. Here's a summary of their reflections, highlighting key takeaways for further reflection:

Summary of Reflections:

1. Language and Interpretation:

- The meeting in Mangochi was unique because it required the use of a translator, which added complexity to the discussions. The translation process affected the flow of conversation, making it difficult to connect with participants and read their body language. However, the presence of a translator also allowed for greater inclusivity, enabling participants who might not be comfortable with English to engage more fully.
- The use of a local language (Chichewa) facilitated deeper engagement during group work, as participants could express themselves more freely. This highlighted the importance of contextualising discussions to fit the local context and language.

2. Timing and Structure:

- Unlike previous meetings, the Mangochi session started closer to the scheduled time and managed to conclude within the same day. This was attributed to the effective facilitation and the participants' understanding of the discussion process.
- There was a recognition that starting on time and maintaining a structured schedule contributed to the success of the meeting. However, if similar sessions require translation in the future, it might be necessary to extend the sessions to one and a half days to accommodate the additional time needed for translation.

3. Participant Engagement:

- The facilitators noted that participants were more engaged during the group work sessions, where they could discuss in their local language. This allowed for more active participation and richer discussions.
- Despite the positive engagement, there was some frustration with participants occasionally stepping out of the meeting, which was understood as a reflection of the participants' need to balance their attendance with other personal and financial responsibilities.

4. Methodological Insights:

- The reflections highlighted the need to remain open and adaptable to the local context, even if it means altering the planned structure of the sessions. The use of a translator, while challenging, was seen as essential for capturing a wide range of voices and perspectives.
- There was also a discussion on the potential benefits of modelling certain activities, such as storytelling or crisis analysis, to help participants engage more effectively. The facilitators considered ways to structure future sessions to allow for better interaction and comprehension among participants.



5. Takeaways for Future Sessions:

- The facilitators discussed the importance of setting clear expectations for participant engagement at the beginning of the session. This could include brief introductions to help participants feel recognised and valued.
- The use of sticky notes for participants to write down their questions and share them in a more visible and organised manner was suggested as a way to improve the final reflection session. This method could help in identifying common themes and questions among participants.
- The facilitators also reflected on the balance between guiding the discussions and allowing participants to co-create the narrative. They recognised the tension between using their preferred framing and terminology and allowing participants to lead the discussion in a way that resonates with their experiences.

Key Takeaways for Further Reflection:

- **Inclusivity Through Language:** Ensuring that discussions are conducted in a language that participants are comfortable with can significantly enhance engagement and the quality of the discussions.
- **Adaptability:** The need to remain flexible and adapt the structure of the sessions based on the local context, participant needs, and logistical challenges is crucial for successful facilitation.
- **Participant Recognition:** Acknowledging and involving participants more actively from the start can help build a stronger connection and encourage deeper engagement throughout the session.
- **Balancing Guidance and Co-Creation:** Striking the right balance between guiding the discussion and allowing participants to take the lead is essential for truly collaborative and meaningful conversations.

These reflections offer valuable insights for future sessions and highlight the importance of adapting to the unique needs and contexts of each gathering.

