

Context Analysis

of Technologies in Social Change Projects

This Context Analysis Framework aims to provide clear best practice guidance to implementers planning to use technology in social change projects. It was written particularly with international projects using 'inclusive' (accessible, low-cost) technologies in mind but could be useful anywhere, in any kind of project.

What do we mean by context analysis for inclusive technologies in social change projects?

Context analysis helps you to understand the elements of an environment and a group of potential users so that you can design a better technology project. It should involve key stakeholders, including implementing partners, donors, local and national authorities, and community members.

We suggest five key *lines of inquiry* that context analyses should consider:

People: Levels of education and literacy, information habits and needs, access to disposable income for equipment, electrical power to charge devices, and airtime and data to run them, and network access;

Community: How membership of specific groups may affect access to technology and communications habits. For example, a nomadic clan may have attributable characteristics shared by its members, and variations in levels of access and freedom within the clan differentiated by gender and age.

Market environment: An understanding of the key players, legal and regulatory issues, the mobile market, including both cost and distribution of agent networks, and the infrastructure, including commercial mobile infrastructure such as the availability of short-codes and APIs are all critical to making good design decisions.

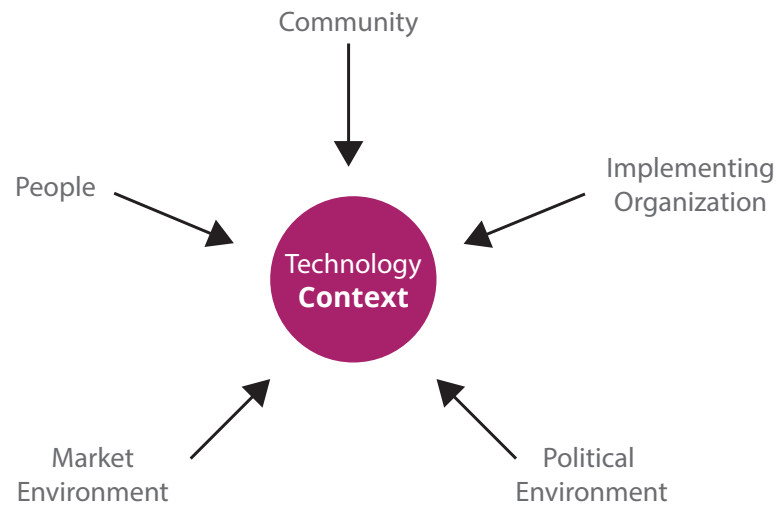
Political environment: understanding governance and control of, and access to, communications infrastructure by government and other actors

Implementing organization: Many interventions have failed because staff were not able to maintain technology, because power or access to internet were not strong enough, because staff capacity was low or went away, or because the intervention was not supported by a broader culture of innovation and adaptive learning.

Whether it's gathering information about the project context, building for sustainability based on the market or understanding the wider ecosystem, **evidence is important before and after your intervention.** The Framework for Context Analysis helps you to gather evidence to help you design a better project.



Diagram
Five key lines of inquiry that context analyses should consider >



Methodologies and tools that may be helpful in conducting context analysis in inclusive technology projects

Data collection tools

Desk based research: review secondary and primary data
Key informant interview
Survey or questionnaire
Focus group discussion
Community group discussion
Life histories
Digital Lives
Direct observation (structured and unstructured)
Facilitated workshop

Analysis approaches

Stakeholder mapping and analysis
STEEP Analysis
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis
Organizational capacity assessment
Reflections and fieldnotes
Content and thematic analysis
Data presentation

The lines of inquiry above also serve as an excellent basis for data presentation, enabling researchers to group information based on how it informs a better understanding of the local context, whether in terms of people, community, market environment, political environment or implementing organization

It's important to recognize that no community or sub-group are homogenous, and always to ask:

- Who is missing from this analysis?
- Who may be able to control our access to the community and influence our findings?
- Who is hidden from this methodology of sampling, selection, or survey?



Find more on data collection tools and sample templates at <http://www.simlab.org/resources/contextanalysis>