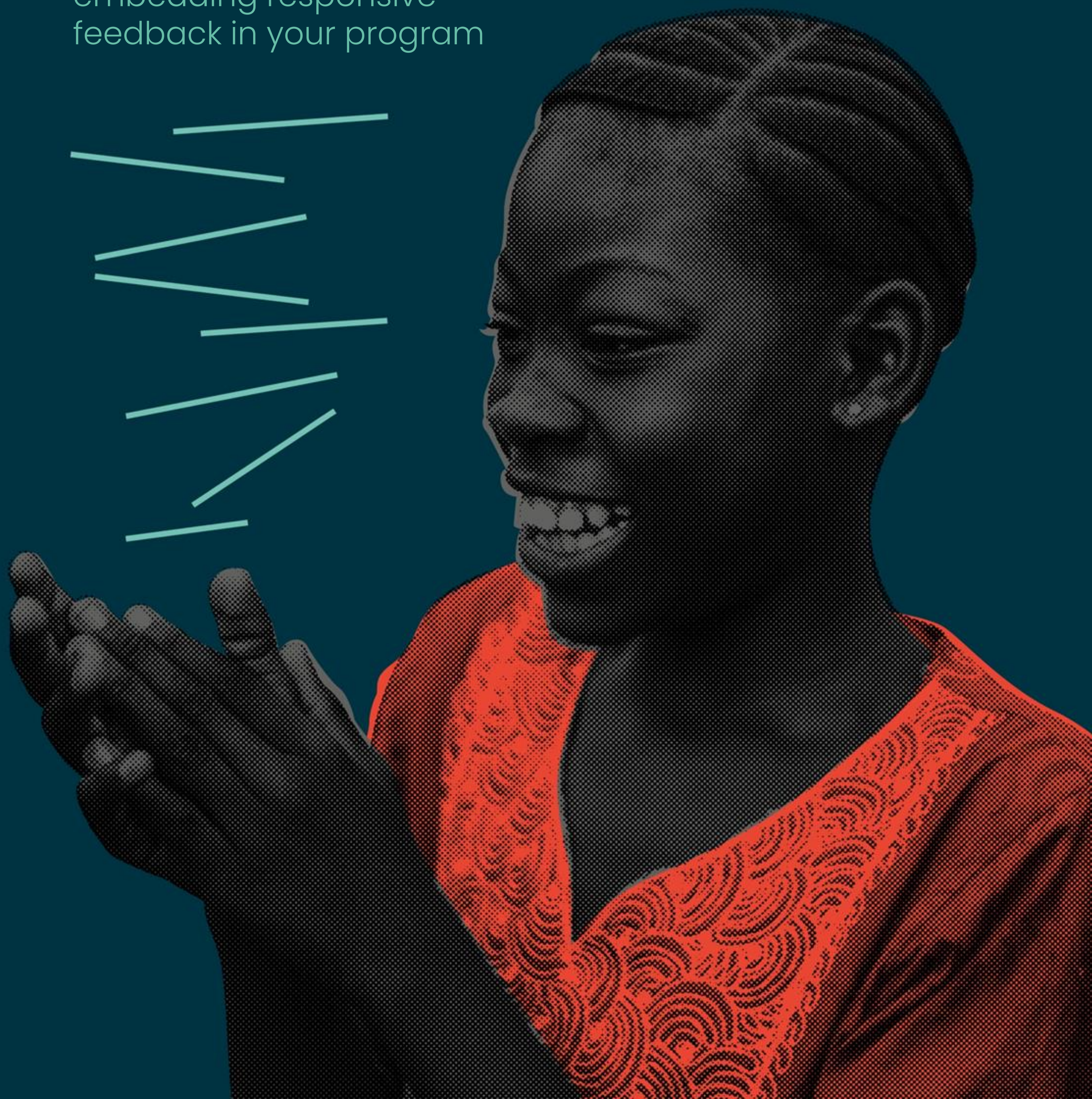
STEP BY STEP

In-depth guidance to embedding responsive feedback in your program

THE CURVE



RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK - GET BETTER FASTER

If we keep learning, we keep improving

To make our programs as effective as possible, it is important we collect and analyse regular feedback data. This will help us to learn and improve. We call this 'responsive feedback.'

Responsive feedback can help address the inherent complexity and unpredictability of implementation challenges. Ongoing feedback can help to:

- Test assumptions and explore areas of uncertainty
- Detect and address field realities, contextual factors, and implementation constraints that may be affecting success
- Diagnose problems in theory or implementation and fix those while the program is live in the field
- Continuously improve our programs by honing our understanding of how best to deliver desired outcomes

Ultimately, responsive feedback helps programs to **get better faster.**

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been written with a primary focus on Program Staff - e.g. a Program Manager - working in the global health sector. Those who are completing the eLearning course may find these documents particularly valuable as they learn how to create programs with continuous monitoring and improvement built in from the beginning. However, the advice contained within can be applied by anyone seeking to help their projects, programs or organizations learn and improve – in the international development sector and beyond.

Learning and improvement is a team sport, and throughout the guide you'll be encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders in the responsive feedback. For example, during Step 4 'Seek Evidence' it is vital to work alongside Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) teams to maximize impact.

When striving to embed responsive feedback, it is important to not let 'the perfect be the enemy of the good'. Where relevant, pragmatic 'shortcuts' are offered to simplify the process and make it more achievable for teams with lower capacity. That said, responsive feedback yields the best results when teams dedicate sufficient time and effort to the process.

RESPONSIVE FEEDBACK - GET BETTER FASTER

What can you find in this guide?

- A practical definition of ‘responsive feedback’
- A step-by-step guide on the process to establish responsive feedback in your program. The guide also contains hints about obstacles and challenges you may face, along with suggestions on how to overcome them.
- A ‘Learning Agenda’ to be completed throughout the guide, which will form the basis of your responsive feedback plan.
- Advocacy arguments to promote responsive feedback in your organization/program

What is Responsive Feedback?

Responsive Feedback is an integrated framework that incorporates elements of feedback, continuous learning and engagement.

It has five key elements:

1. Requires diverse stakeholders to work together
2. Interrogates a program's Theory of Change and makes assumptions explicit
3. Prioritizes areas where a program would benefit from learning
4. Seeks evidence to answer learning questions
5. Advocates Pause & Reflect sessions to evolve a program based on evidence

What are the benefits of Responsive Feedback?

Responsive Feedback can help programs to:

- Hone understanding of a program's theory of change
- Make explicit assumptions within a program's design
- Get more value from data
- Better understand on-the-ground realities
- Stop problems before they start
- Test, learn and iterate to find a better way
- Make decisions with greater confidence

To see practical examples and case studies of how programs have used responsive feedback to get better faster, visit www.the-curve.org

A note on terminology

The responsive feedback (RF) approach is part of a family of intervention designs that aim to collect timely data to serve as feedback to planners and implementers. Responsive feedback aims to help them make appropriate changes to the interventions to enhance their success while the intervention is still in progress.

There are other approaches, such as adaptive management, feedback loops/mechanisms, and rapid cycle innovations which have been developed out of dissatisfaction with traditional intervention designs.

The RF approach builds on these approaches to offer an integrated, systematic, and systemic method to improve outcomes.

INTRODUCING THE CURVE PROCESS

This document contains a five-step process that will help us use responsive feedback to learn and improve. We call this the CURVE process.

An overview of the process is set out in the diagram below. As we progress, we will produce and then start using a 'Learning Agenda'. This is a simple table sits alongside your measurement framework or plan, and will help you design and organize your learning activities.

The five steps you will follow

A. Map stakeholders B. Build support for using feedback C. Create a plan for working together	A. Start creating a Learning Agenda B. B. Identify your key program activities and map your assumptions	A. Develop learning questions B. Prioritize learning questions	A. Identify methods needed to answer learning questions B. Design individual methods C. Execute	A. Pause and reflect B. Make decisions

Activity	Assumptions	Learning Questions	Prioritizing Learning Questions	Methods

The activities you will do under each step

The Learning Agenda we will build along the way

‘WOMEN UPLIFTED’ – THE EXAMPLE FOR THIS GUIDE

To make things easier, we will illustrate each step in the CURVE process using a program example.

‘Women Uplifted’ is a new training program in West Africa designed to help improve socioeconomic outcomes for low-income women and their families. The program invites women to training where they learn financial literacy, business management skills, and other tools to support them in supporting their families.

Note: Women Uplifted is a hypothetical example based on real programs in West Africa and elsewhere.

CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS

CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS

What is this step about?

Ongoing learning and adaptation is a team sport. Varied stakeholders need to cooperate to make learning happen. If you take time to build consensus:

- Approvals and decision-making can happen more smoothly
- Time and resources are more likely to be committed to learning
- Feedback is more likely to be gathered and used
- Findings are more likely to be accepted
- Program iteration is more likely to happen

In this step we will identify program stakeholders, try and unite them in their support for learning, and create a plan for working together.

Activities in this step

A. Identify stakeholders

B. Build support for using feedback

C. Create plan for working together

CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS

A. Identify stakeholders

Identify key stakeholders and the roles they need to play. It is useful to distinguish between primary and secondary stakeholders.

Primary stakeholders are those that will need to approve, design and implement learning activities. These are likely to include the program's funder and/or steering committee, and internal program staff. It is good idea to bring primary stakeholders together in a workshop-type format.

Secondary stakeholders do not approve, design or implement learning activities but rather they are either beneficiaries of the program or enable it to happen. These might include for example, government officials and community leaders or groups. These stakeholders have viewpoints and an understanding of the community, so can be a valuable resource and partner as you develop and refine your program. Therefore, it may be beneficial to seek their input and feedback both at the project's beginning and throughout the monitoring of program success.

Women Uplifted example

Stakeholders	Roles in responsive feedback
Primary Stakeholders – approvers, designers, implementers of a learning approach	
Program funder	• Sanction use of resources for learning • Sanction program changes based on learning
Program Director	• Sanction use of resources for learning • Sanction program changes based on learning
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) manager	• Lead development of Learning Agenda • Coordinate and participate in implementation of learning activities
Program implementation staff	• Participate in development of Learning Agenda • Participate in implementation of learning activities • Help implement changes that derive from learning activities
Secondary Stakeholders – need to be informed of a learning approach	
Local Government	• Need to be aware that our approach to promoting livelihoods for women may change over time
Community leaders	• Need to be aware that our approach to promoting livelihoods

B. Build support for using feedback

The next challenge is to build the support of your stakeholders for taking a learning approach. Most will agree that 'learning' is a good thing in principle. The challenge here is to help stakeholders understand and support the possible implications of a learning approach. Namely, that program resources need to be allocated to learning activities, and that the program may need to change during course of implementation.

We recommend an honest conversation with stakeholders about these implications and that you try to address any concerns they have. Some common questions and answers set out below:

Funding learning means less resource for implementation, right?

True but a small investment in learning should make implementation more impactful

Okay but what if learning shows that activities have failed?

That's possible – but better to know to know early so problems can be addressed

How can we change course when we committed to deliver certain results?

Commit to ultimate objectives but keep the means by which they are achieved flexible

C. Create a plan for working together

With the support of your key stakeholders, create a plan for working together. Keep this simple, limited to the key activities you plan to undertake. Activities you might wish to include are described in this guide and there is an example plan from the Women Uplifted program on the next page.

Your plan can take any form but one option is to use the ‘RACI' method to assign roles and responsibilities.

- Responsible – The person(s) responsible for doing the actual work.
- Accountable – A single person who is accountable for the success of the task and is the decision-maker.
- Consulted – The person(s) whose opinions / input is needed to complete the work.
- Informed – The person(s) to be kept informed of major updates (but not actively involved).

1

CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS

Example: Women Uplifted

Activity	Funder	Program Director	MEL Manager	Implementation staff
Develop Learning Agenda	I	A	R	C
Design individual learning activity	I	A	R	C
Implement individual learning activities	I	A	R	R
Schedule Pause & Reflect sessions	C	A	R	C
Chair Pause & Reflect sessions	-	R	-	-
Present learning and implications in Pause & Reflect sessions	-	-	R	R
Agree implications for the program	R	R	C	R
Ensure changes to program are actioned	I	A	C	R

R= Responsible, A=Accountable, C=Consulted, I=Informed

UNCOVER ASSUMPTIONS

2

UNCOVER ASSUMPTIONS

What is this step about?

Having a clear understanding of just how you are expecting your activities to lead to program success can provide a clear line of sight for integrating responsive feedback into your program.

Activities in this step

A. Start creating your Learning Agenda

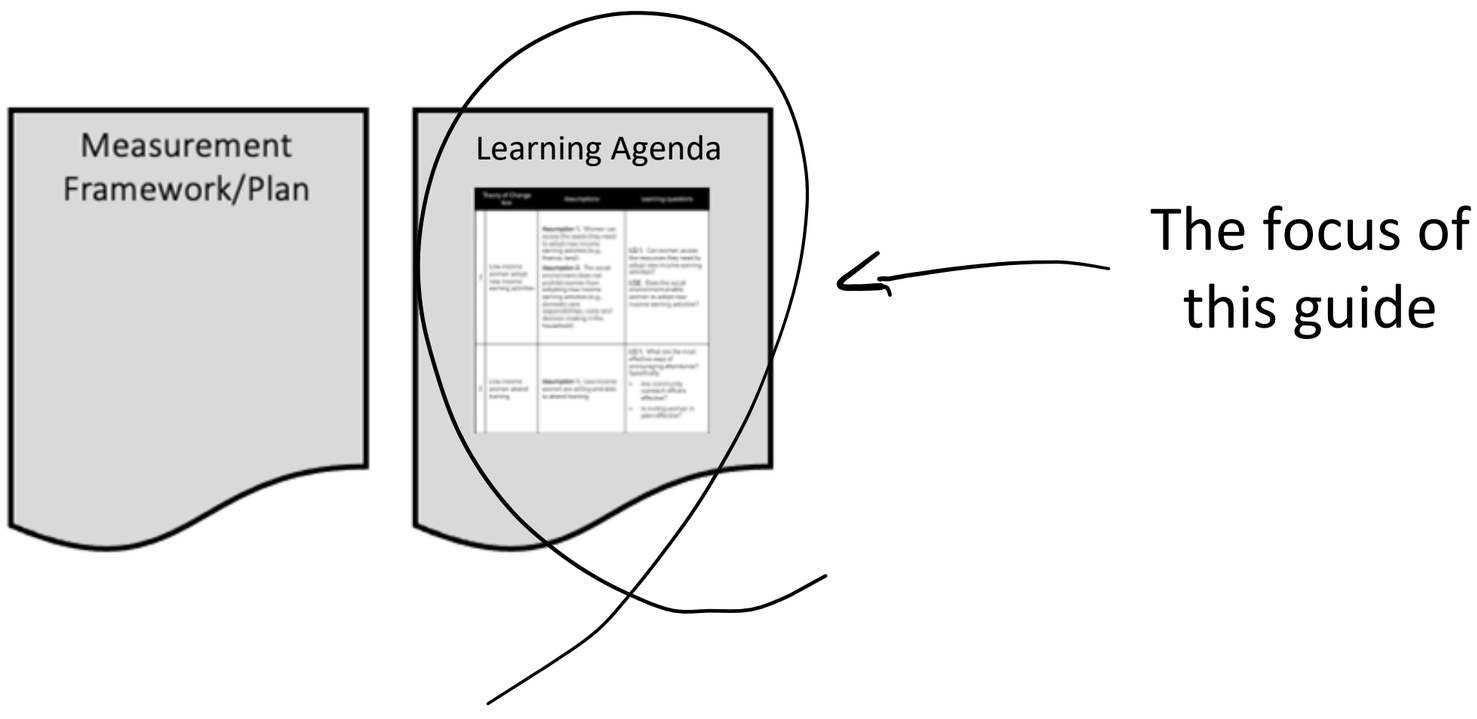
B. Identify your activities and map your assumptions

A quick aside: Measurement Frameworks/Plans vs. Learning Agendas

Measurement Frameworks/Plans tend to focus on *what* results have been achieved. Consider our example program, 'Women Uplifted'. Its Measurement Framework/Plan might measure results such as: 'Who attended the training?', 'How many attendees started new income earning activities?', and so on.

A **Learning Agenda** will help us go further – to understand what works / doesn't work, why, for whom, and in what circumstances.

In this guide, we will focus on creating the learning agenda.



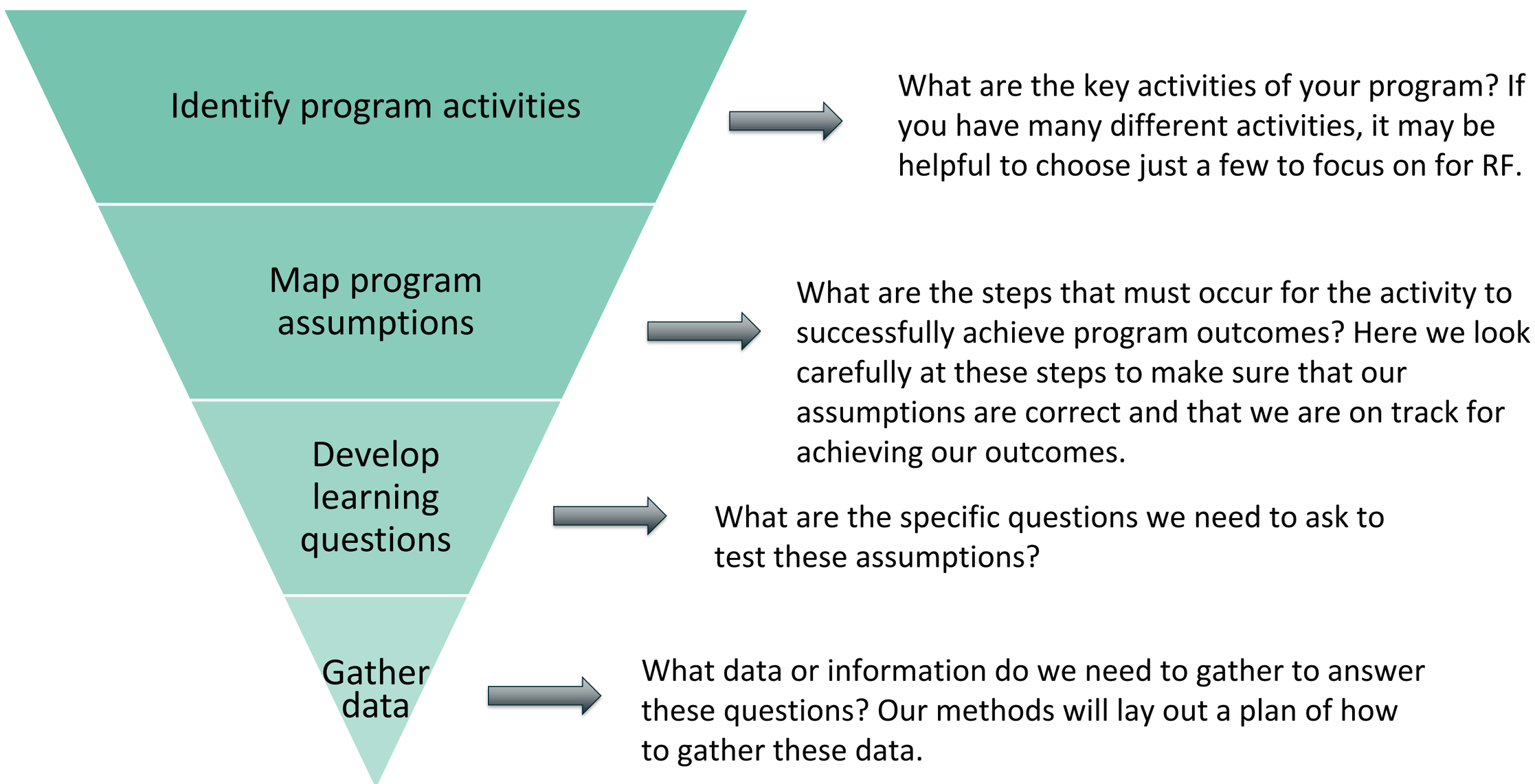
UNCOVER ASSUMPTIONS

A. Creating a Learning Agenda

A learning agenda is like a framework that helps us to structure each element of our continuous monitoring and learning. We can think of this like an inverted pyramid: First we identify our program activities that we would like to focus on and begin to think more deeply about how they work. Then, we identify specific questions to ask about our activities and gather information to answer these questions.

It is important to note that this learning agenda is a flexible, living document. It serves as a roadmap to guide the way but can adapt as needed to meet your program's goals.

In the remainder of the document, we will walk through the steps needed to create this learning agenda.



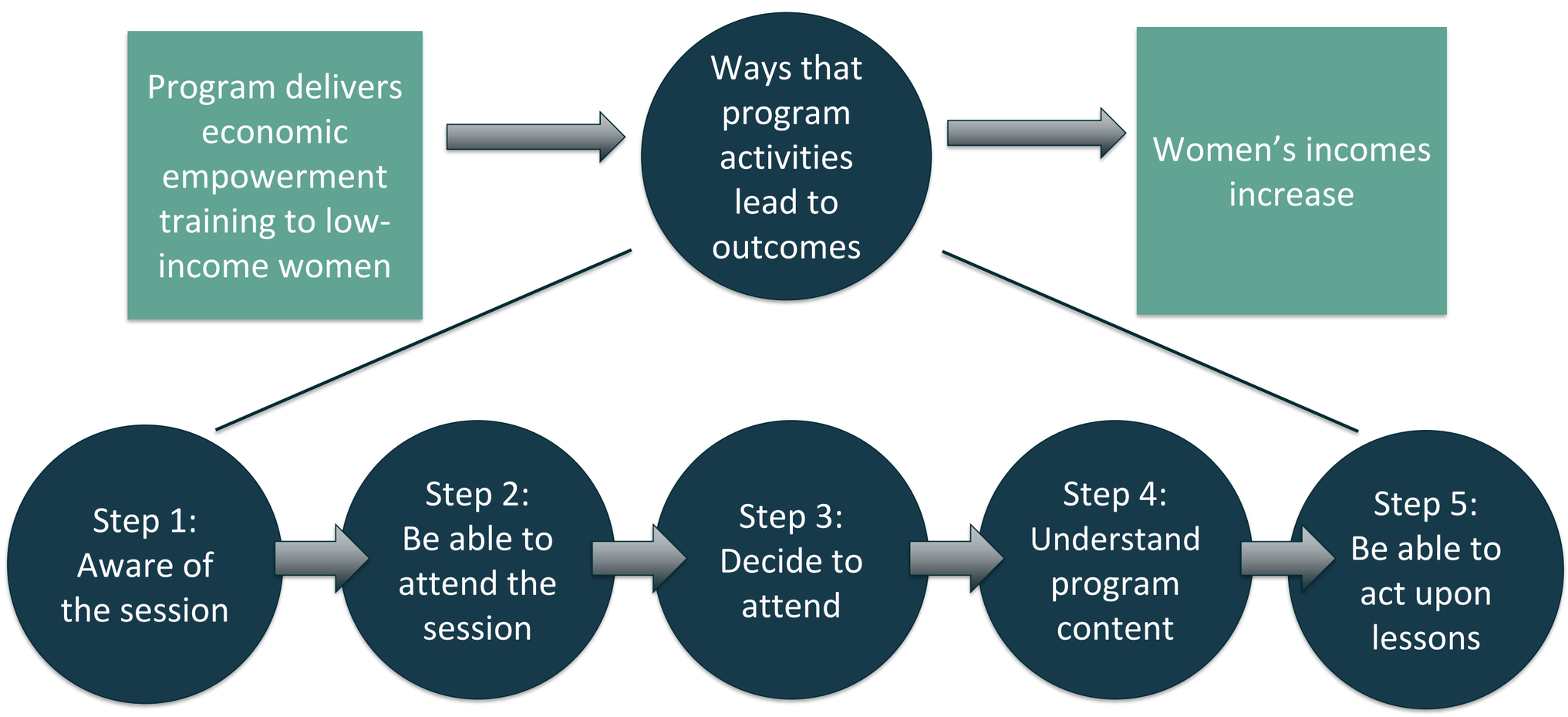
A Special Note: Many organizations may have a Theory of Change (TOC), which is a formal roadmap of activities and outcomes of a program. If you already have a TOC in your organization or program, this is a great starting point to identify activities and outcomes. However, even if you don't already have a formal TOC, you can follow the process outlined in these pages to identify activities and assumptions from your program for testing.

B. Identify Activities and their Assumptions

Within each program activities are our own explanations about why the program will work and how the activity will lead to the program outcomes.

Let's take the example from Women Uplifted. A key activity of the program is providing economic training for women. After women attend this training, the anticipated outcome is that their incomes increase.

However, holding a training alone cannot achieve an outcome. Several key steps must occur. We call these steps that a program must complete our *assumptions* about our program activities.



Each step on the chain is connected. If one step on the chain fails, the program may not be successful. For example, if women are unable to attend the training or are unable to understand or relate to program content, the program may not work as anticipated.

It is useful to understand where you have the *least* knowledge as we determine where to probe assumptions.

UNCOVER ASSUMPTIONS

Example: Women Uplifted

As we walk through this process, we may discover that there are some key steps in our activities that may need to be our focus. We can start building out a learning agenda here. We can put our activity or activities in the first column, and then identify a few assumptions in the next column.

Activity	Assumptions (key steps in how these activities are expected to lead to outcomes)
Economic empowerment training to low-income women	Women are interested in and able to attend the sessions
	Women are able to access community assets to increase their income after the training

REVEAL LEARNING QUESTIONS

REVEAL LEARNING QUESTIONS

What is this step about?

In this step we develop particular, specific questions that can let us explore our assumptions. Although you may have a long list of potential questions about your program, we will also work to prioritize the questions to select for our RF activities.

Activities in this step

A. Develop learning questions

B. Prioritize learning questions

REVEAL LEARNING QUESTIONS

A. Develop learning questions

As we begin to lay out these steps, it is helpful to start thinking about factors that could help our program—or lead it off course. Here are a few helpful questions to ask:

- *Areas of the program we are less certain about*
- *Program components that could be better*
- *Where things might not be going as well*
- *Areas where experimentation may help to determine a better course of action*

The context, or environment of the program, may hold some clues. Below we have the environmental considerations for Women Uplifted—and potential ways this environment could impact our activities.

Example: Women Uplifted

Broader environment National and regional factors For example: Political, economic, social factors Policy, protocol, law, and regulations Technology, infrastructure, and media	Recession shrinks earning opportunities for low-income women
Local environment Local landscape that influences how activities received Community beliefs, norms, culture, and values Social networks and power dynamics Role of influencers	Community leaders are crucial influencers for women
Program environment Program factors that influence operation For example: Stakeholder networks and power dynamics Community support	Program has strong ties within the community that connect them with local leaders
Needs of the target population The barriers and facilitators to action faced by program beneficiaries that may impact program success. For example: Health-related beliefs (such as hesitancy about vaccines) that may impact how your program is received Challenges such as transportation, literacy, or time that could impact how people are able to interact with program activities Positive factors (such as interest in a health topic) that could be leveraged to help the program succeed.	Low-income women may lack self-belief that they can improve their situation Male family members may object to women joining training

Is the program fully leveraging these community ties to promote the training?

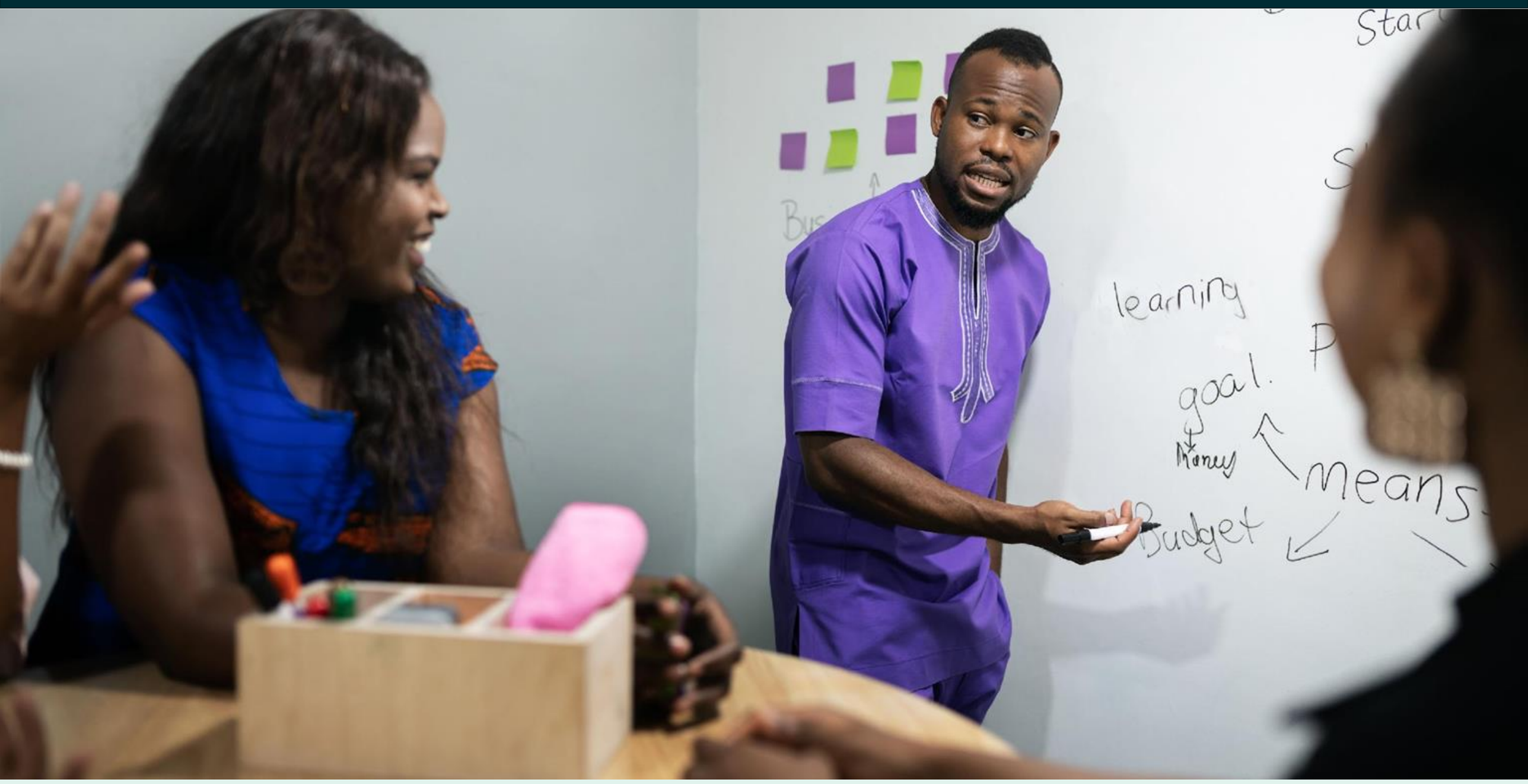
Will these factors challenge women's interest in or ability to attend the training?

A. Develop learning questions

We can take these initial ideas and begin to form specific questions. Ideally, learning questions should link to the assumptions we have made about our program activities. For guidance, consider using specific forms of these general questions:

- What works or what doesn't seem to work?
- Why does it work, or why does it not seem to work?
- For whom does it work?
- In what circumstances?
- Are there any particular challenges in the environment (see page 18) that may need to be addressed or overcome?
- What resources do we have that we could be using more fully?

REVEAL LEARNING QUESTIONS



Example: Women Uplifted

Activity	Assumptions (key steps in how these activities are expected to lead to outcomes)	Learning Questions
Economic empowerment training to low-income women	Women are interested in and able to attend the sessions	What are the potential barriers to women attending the session?
		What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?
	Women are able to access community assets to increase their income after the training	Can women access the resources they need to use what they learned in the training?

Consider how specific you wish to make your learning questions. For example, instead of simply asking "What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?", the Women Uplifted team have asked questions of specific approaches to encouraging attendance

B. Prioritize learning questions

Prioritize your initial set of learning questions (low, medium, high) based on three factors:

1. **How <u>significant</u> is the learning question for programming?**

   For example, learning questions related to a component that accounts for 30% of program spend should be accorded a higher priority than a component that accounts for only 10%.

2. **How large is the <u>gap in knowledge</u>?**

   For example, what evidence and learning does the program already have, and how big is the remaining knowledge gap? What level of certainty do we have in terms of what know and the answer to the question? Learning questions with a large knowledge gap should be given a high priority.

3. **How <u>feasible</u> is it to address the learning question?**

   For example, how costly would it be to satisfactorily answer the learning question? Is there time to gather and analyse data while the program is still active in the field?

Low priority learning questions can be dropped from the list. Medium priority questions can be investigated if program resources allow. High priority questions should be investigated.

REVEAL LEARNING QUESTIONS

Example: Women Uplifted

Activity	Assumptions (key steps in how these activities are expected to lead to outcomes)	Learning Questions	Prioritizing Learning Questions
Economic empowerment training to low-income women	Women are interested in and able to attend the sessions	What are the potential barriers and facilitators to women attending the session?	Significance: High- fundamental to the program Gap in knowledge: High- there are many potential barriers that must be explored Feasibility: High- Can survey or interview community members and leaders
		What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?	Feasibility: Medium- conducting experiments on different attendance methods may be time consuming and the community may not have the resources
	Women are able to access community assets to increase their income after the training	Can women access the resources they need to use what they learned in the training?	Significance: High- fundamental to the program Gap in knowledge: Low- through the program's close relationships in the community, the staff already know that the resources are in place Feasibility: High- Have a close line to community resource contacts

Note that, as resources are tight, the Women Uplifted team have decided to take forward questions with the highest knowledge needs only

SEEK EVIDENCE

4

SEEK EVIDENCE

Value of this step

Good questions need good answers. Now that we have defined learning questions, we need to find the right evidence to answer them.

If a member of your Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team is not already involved (or leading this process), get them involved now. They will have the experience and proficiency required to understand and select the appropriate research methods needed to answer the learning questions.

Let’s get to it…

Activities in this step

A. Identify research methods needed for data gathering

B. Design individual strategies to answer learning questions

C. Execute methods

A. Identify research methods for data-gathering

Once the learning questions are agreed, a plan for how each question will be answered should be developed. A range of different methods and sources may be used including:

- Routine monitoring
- Evaluations
- Literature reviews
- Record reviews
- Case studies
- Action research and experimental design
- Facilitated team reflection
- Peer learning events

Effective learning may involve pursuing different activities, and synthesising lessons and insights from across different sources. This is called a mixed methods approach.

A good starting point is to consider whether existing measurement activities can be augmented to answer learning questions. For example, you might add some indicators into your routine monitoring, or add some additional questions to evaluations that you plan to do anyway.

To complete your Learning Agenda, begin to identify the methods that match with each learning questions.

SEEK EVIDENCE

Example: Women Uplifted

Activity	Assumptions (key steps in how these activities are expected to lead to outcomes)	Learning Questions	Prioritizing Learning Questions	Method(s)
Economic empowerment training to low-income women	Women are interested in and able to attend the sessions	What are the potential barriers and facilitators to women attending the session?	Significance: High- fundamental to the program Gap in knowledge: High- there are many potential barriers that must be explored Feasibility: High- Can survey or interview community members and leaders	Quantitative survey—add questions to currently scheduled midline data-gathering Qualitative interviews with current/potential trainees
		What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?	Feasibility: Medium- conducting experiments on different attendance methods may be time consuming and the community may not have the resources	Experiments to test different attendance strategies
	Women are able to access community assets to increase their income after the training	Can women access the resources they need to use what they learned in the training?	Significance: High- fundamental to the program Gap in knowledge: Low- through the program's close relationships in the community, the staff already know that the resources are in place Feasibility: High- Have a close line to community resource contacts	Learning question is parked due to high existing knowledge about community resources

Congratulations!
We now have complete learning agenda for answering learning questions
Time to execute!

B. Design individual strategies to answer learning questions

Each method will need to be designed.

For some activities this will be a short exercise. For example, if you decide to address a learning question through the program's routine monitoring, design work will consist of formulating some indicators that can be added to your program's measurement framework/plan. For other learning activities, design work will be more involved. For example, if you decide that a case study on a particular aspect of your program is required, this will need to be designed like any other research study. Key questions to consider are:

- Learning questions. Is your learning question sufficiently nuanced or does it need to be broken down into sub-questions?
- Indicators. What data will you need to collect in order to answer the learning question(s)? It can be helpful to articulate these data needs as indicators.
- Populations and samples. What or who is the target of your research – the group that you want to find out about? Once this is established, how can you obtain a representative sample? What is a 'good enough' sample size for you and how should it be selected?
- Responsibilities. Who will design the tools needed to collect data? Who will collect the data and who will analyse it to draw insights? Who will write-up the report?
- Timing. When is the best time to conduct research? Does it need to occur after certain events? Do you need to time the research so that memories are fresh?

We suggest that you do not try to capture the design of individual learning activities within the Learning Agenda. Think of your Learning Agenda as providing an overview of learning activities, with detailed designs for individual learning activities captured in separate documents.

SEEK EVIDENCE

Example: Women Uplifted

Overarching Learning Agenda

Activity	Assumptions (key steps in how these activities are expected to lead to outcomes)	Learning Questions	Prioritizing Learning Questions	Method(s)
Economic empowerment training to low-income women	Women are interested in and able to attend the sessions	What are the potential barriers and facilitators to women attending the session?	Significance: High- fundamental to the program Gap in knowledge: High- there are many potential barriers that must be explored Feasibility: High- Can survey or interview community members and leaders	Quantitative survey—add questions to currently scheduled midline data-gathering Qualitative interviews with current/potential trainees
		What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?	Feasibility: Medium- conducting experiments on different attendance methods may be time consuming and the community may not have the resources	Experiments to test different attendance strategies

The design of individual learning activities

Summary: Experimental pilot design

Learning/research questions:
What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?
Specifically:
> Are community outreach officers effective?
> Is inviting women in pairs effective?

Research methods:
Three methods of inviting women to training tested in three neighbouring villages, matched for similarities across social and economic variables. Structured interviews conducted with invitees following training course.

Sampling:

Respondent group	Type of sampling	Sample size
Women invited by programme staff in normal way (comparison)	Random sample from list of women invited using this method	30 individuals
Women invited by female member of local community (treatment 1)	Random sample from list of women invited using this method	30 individuals
Women invited in pairs by programme staff (treatment 2)	Random sample from list of women invited using this method	30 individuals

1

key indicators against which to report data:

Indicators	Definitions
% of women invited to training who attend the training (disaggregated by respondent groups)	Attend means attending for first full session at least
% of women invited to training who complete the training (disaggregated by respondent groups)	Complete means attending all three sessions
Respondents' reasons for attending the training	Qualitative
Respondents' perceptions on the method used to invite respondent	Qualitative
Respondents' suggestions for improving the method used to invite respondent	Qualitative

Timing and responsibility:
Design questionnaire: December (MEL manager)
Test questionnaire: December (Project Officer)
Data collection: January (Project Officer)
Data analysis and report write-up: February (MEL Manager)
Produce learning product for external audience: March (MEL Manager)

2

C. Execute methods

Typically, those responsible for monitoring and evaluation are responsible for overseeing methods. However, this does not mean that they are responsible for undertaking all data or information gathering for the program. Often, RF information gathering requires a combination of specialist M&E knowledge and a deep understanding of project strategy and implementation. Moreover, having implementation staff involved helps to ensure that lessons are internalized and acted upon. We recommend that you go through your Learning Agenda and consider who is best placed to undertake the various roles to address each learning question.

To aid the effective dissemination of learning, both internally and externally, and to ensure lessons are retained and not lost, consider capturing learning in a series of 'learning products'. Examples include: case studies, learning notes, blogs, presentations and webinars (which should be recorded), as well as informal internal 'products' such as summaries of 'Pause & Reflect' sessions (see next step). If you develop an annual report, this too is a good place to summarize key learning from the previous year.


C
CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS
U
UNCOVER ASSUMPTIONS
R
REVEAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
V
SEEK EVIDENCE
E
EVOLVE

EVOLVE

5

EVOLVE

What is this step about?

In this final step, all our hard work through this process pays off. Now we determine what the data is telling us and how we should act in response.

In this final step, we discover the answers to our learning questions. We may gain valuable insights. We may see ways that we can improve our programs. We may learn how to refine our ToC so it can guide more effective work.

Activities in this step

A. Pause and reflect

B. Make decisions

A. Pause and reflect

Pause & Reflect gives us an opportunity to seek lessons in new information and consider how we should respond. In these sessions, program teams reflect on priority learning questions, review any new evidence that has emerged since the last session, and consider to whether this suggests changes to the program. Ask:

- What is the evidence telling us?
- What should we do as a result?
- What did not go well?
- What should be changed for next time?

Pause & Reflect sessions can be set at regular intervals (e.g. quarterly, six monthly) or scheduled on an irregular basis, as and when needed. The frequency and timing of sessions will depend upon the availability of new learning. We recommend that you sit down with your Learning Agenda, consider when learning will become available, and schedule Pause & Reflect sessions accordingly.

It is valuable to think carefully about who should attend Pause & Reflect sessions. Key stakeholders, such as program decision-makers, are often involved. It may also be useful to include community stakeholders and all program staff. Consider the value of the different viewpoints that each person could bring to the table about how to interpret results and move forward.

B. Pause and reflect tips

Six tips to help you run successful group Pause & Reflect

1. Have clear questions to answer: Provide clear guidance on what the group is there to reflect on including the learning questions for the group to answer.

2. Include the right people: Make sure decision-makers and people with varied perspectives are included in discussion, while keeping the group small enough that everyone gets to contribute.

3. Choose the right format: In many cases, a simple discussion is the right format for a group Pause & Reflect. But alternative formats can have unique benefits (See USAID CLA's full list of creative formats)

4. Have a moderator: The moderator should keep the conversation on-track and ensure conclusions are reached.

5. Leave hierarchy at the door: People at every level of seniority bring a useful perspective. Do not defer to the highest-paid person's opinion, make the session inclusive to participants across the organization.

6. Welcome constructive criticism: Pause & Reflect is an opportunity to look for ways that we might do things differently or better. Invite participants to be a "critical friend" who makes constructive critiques.

Refer to The Curve Guide to Pause & Reflect for more guidance on this step.

C. Make decisions

To close the loop, learning should be used to inform program decision-making. These decisions can be strategic or tactical in nature and can cover a wide range of possible areas. For example, learning might inform how resources are allocated across program components; how particular activities are delivered; which partners to work with; which beneficiaries to target; and so on.

It is important to note that depending on your learning questions and focus, the types of decisions you will need to make—the decisions about if or how to change your program based on the answers to your learning questions—will differ. Some changes might be small, such as updating language to a brochure. However, some decisions may be larger and have wide-ranging implications for your organization, such as finding that the entire program strategy must be reworked. The factors below may be valuable to consider and discuss with your team as you determine how to proceed with your RF findings.

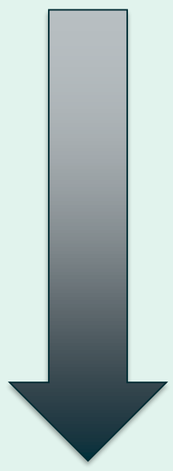
- How big is the decision?
- How costly is the change?
- What is the life stage of the program?
- Does the course of action match with program assumptions?
- Do decisions meet stakeholder needs?
- How urgent is the need for action?

EVOLVE

Example: Women Uplifted

Program learning:

Learning Question	Findings
What are the potential barriers and facilitators to women attending the session?	In many cases, women do not feel that their husbands will allow them to attend a training on their own The roads are dangerous to travel alone Husbands are often more comfortable with their wives going in groups to the village
What are the most effective ways of encouraging attendance?	Encouraging women to travel in pairs/groups to the training was the most successful strategy for increasing attendance

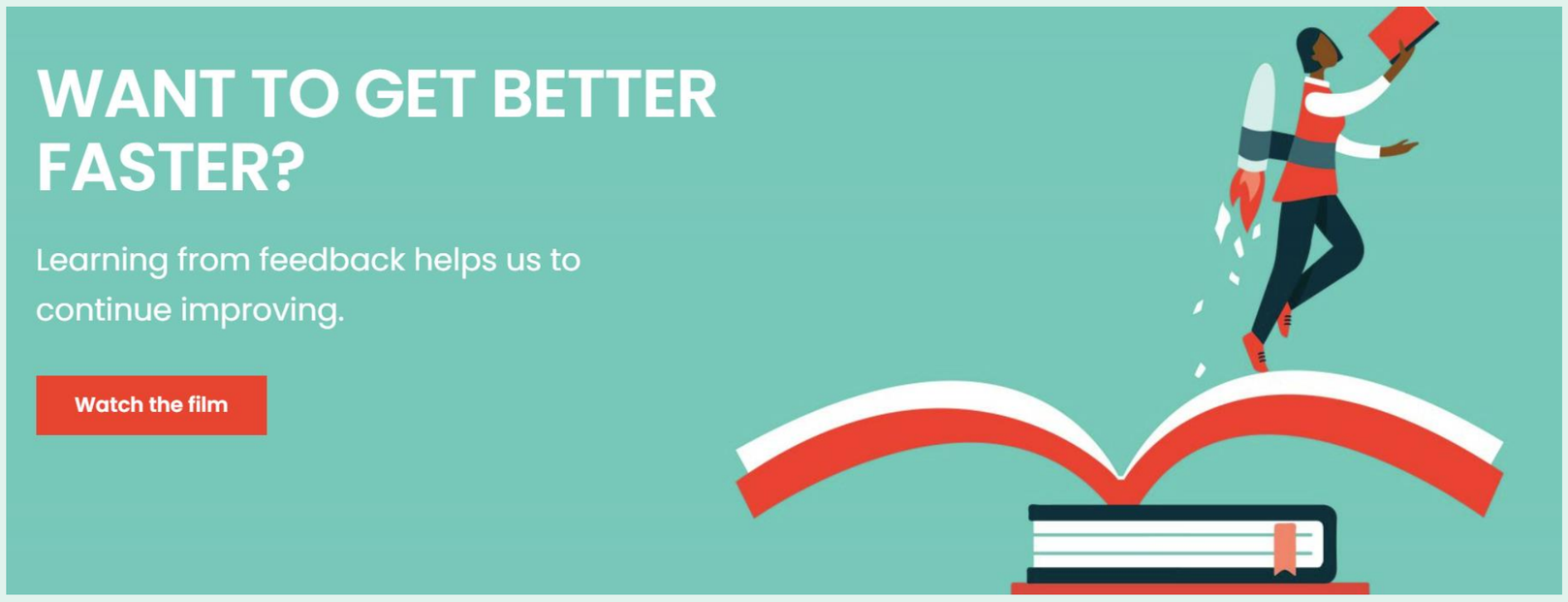


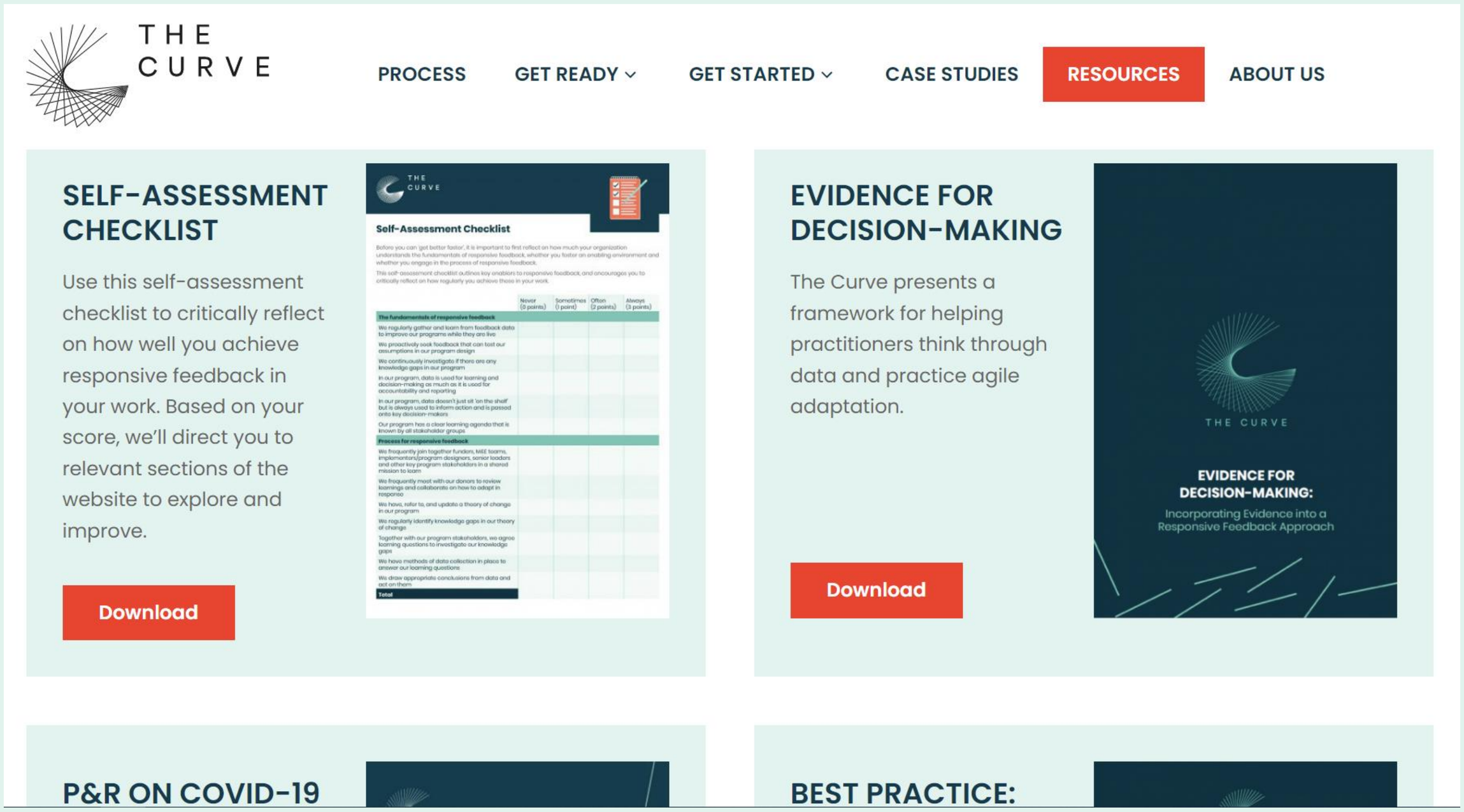
Due to these findings, the program adjusted its recruitment strategy to promote women attending the training in pairs or groups.

GET IN TOUCH

Get in touch…

Head to the-curve.org to see more Tools, Resources and Practical Guidance to help you learn and improve.





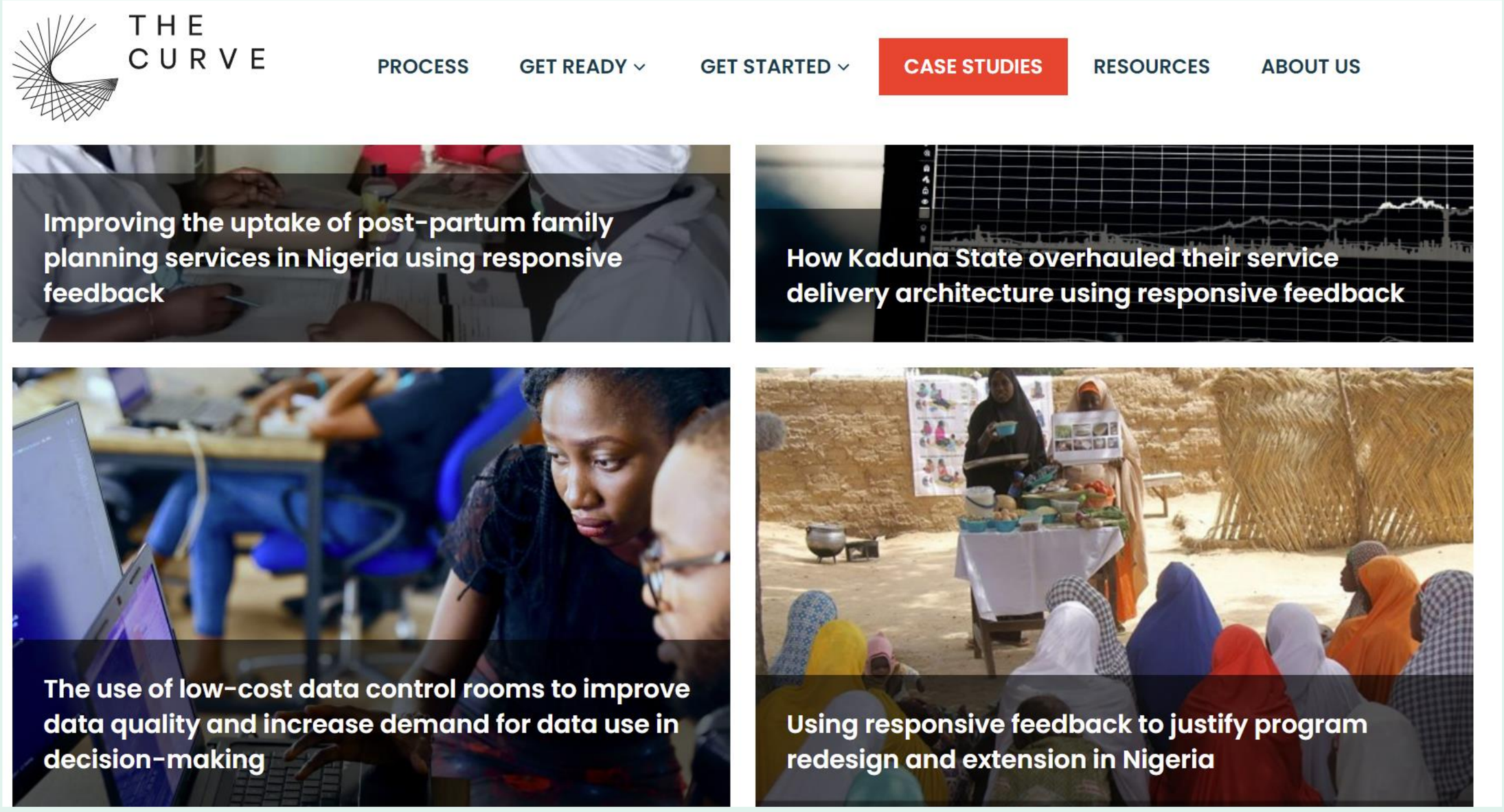
Bookmark our website: https://the-curve.org/

Connect with us on LinkedIn

If your question still needs answering, or you have new ideas for how to get better faster, email us: thecurve@mcsaatchi.com

Share your success…

The case studies on our website are in-action examples for integrating RF into your programs. They also feature on our LinkedIn and in trainings.



We always welcome your contributions, to build the case for RF and teach others. Share your examples via our LinkedIn or email!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

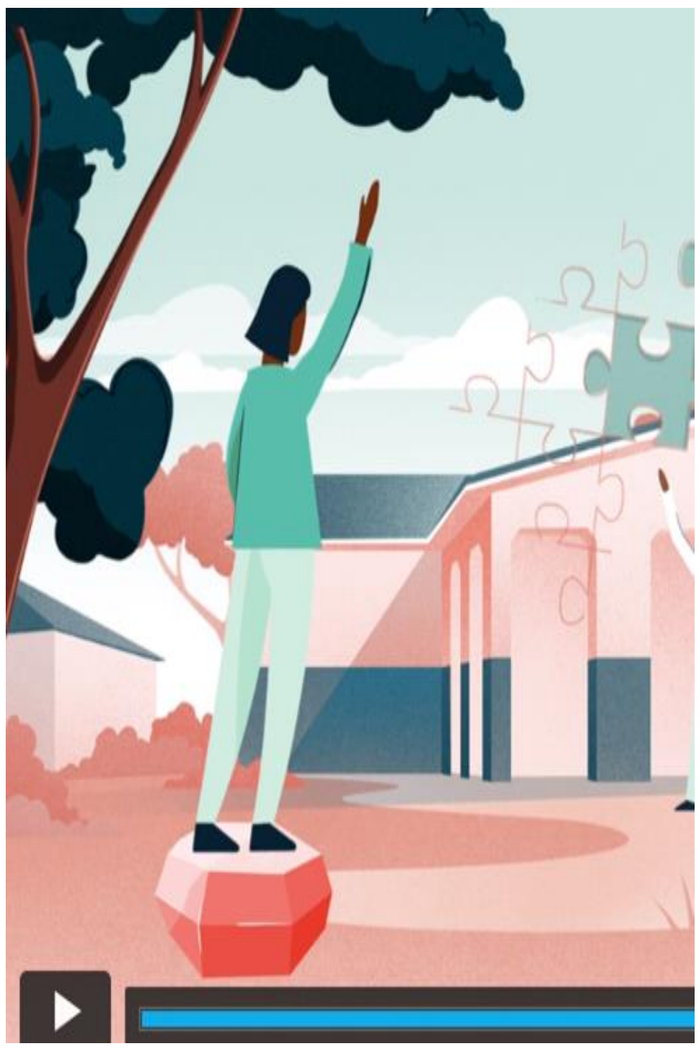
Here are a few resources to help you get people excited about the value of responsive feedback.

Talking points: key benefits of responsive feedback

- Hone our understanding of **how change really happens** (theory of change)
- Investigate **assumptions** or areas of uncertainty
- Better understand **on-the-ground realities**
- **Iterate**, **test, and learn** to find a better way
- Detect **unknown unknowns.** Stop problems before they start.
- Make **decisions** with greater confidence
- **Continuous** improvement
- Optimise program **success**

Value of Feedback Film

1-minute film that will get stakeholders excited about responsive feedback and its value



Case Studies

Examples of other programs that have iterated and improved using RF

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CURVE behaviours

The Curve guide to 'Pause and Reflect'

Curve Guide to Evidence for Decision-Making

Practical Guidance for Uniting Stakeholders

Guidance for when writing proposals

Curve Self-Assessment Checklist

Curve Donor's Guide to Making Grants Adaptive

VIDEO: *AFENET's example of creating an adaptive program proposal*

THE CURVE