



# Malteser International External and independent evaluation of the People First Impact Method

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**MomoLogue**

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# Summary

## 1. Background and rationale for the evaluation

Malteser International is the relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. Already for many years Malteser International works with participatory approaches. In 2016 Malteser International started to introduce the People First Impact Method (P-FIM) in the organization.

P-FIM is a methodology for community engagement in humanitarian, development and peace building action. P-FIM has been applied in many countries around the globe. The overall objective of P-FIM is to give communities a voice, to identify and to attribute impact in order to improve the work of aid agencies.

P-FIM is founded in a specific way of seeing communities and the role of aid that comes in from the outside. P-FIM represents a particular approach, a mind-set, a way of being and doing the work of an aid worker.

Malteser International today aims to scale up the approach within the organisation. In order to inform this process the organisation commissioned this evaluation with the following primary purpose: To learn about the way P-FIM works and the results it achieved in selected case studies for future use of P-FIM within Malteser International and for scaling up of the method organisation-wide within Malteser International and potentially in any other aid agency.

A secondary purpose is to demonstrate accountability to donors and partners by learning from an outsider's perspective on the method and its application in practice.

## 2. Approach, methodology and evaluation questions

The evaluation analysed three case studies from DR Congo, Uganda and Myanmar, including a data collection phase in the field. The evaluation applied a mixed method approach: Desk study<sup>1</sup>, direct observation and interviews with 86 persons.<sup>2</sup>

The three main evaluation questions were:

- To what extent has P-FIM fulfilled its overall objective in the case studies?
- What is new about P-FIM and why is it important? To what extent is P-FIM innovative?
- What can be learned from the case studies regarding possibilities for a wider / organisation-wide use of the method within an organisation such as Malteser International and the context it is working in?

## 3. Findings by topic and criteria

### 3.1 Reasons given why the community engagement with P-FIM is important in the context of Malteser International (Relevance)

The method addresses a core aspect of humanitarian work, the need to serve people. The method helps aid workers in actualizing common principles and standards and P-FIM can help in avoiding a so-called donor or agency bias, where project priorities are predetermined from actors far away from the communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix for the list of documents.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix for the list of people interviewed.

### **3.2 Results in giving the communities a voice (Effectiveness)**

Interlocutors explain the high-level quality of conversations with the communities and refer to the diversity of the topics that come up in the goal-free part of the engagement. The way the participants of exercises speak about their experiences indicates that the experience was true and meaningful.

There have been examples in the case studies where P-FIM helped in including special population groups that otherwise might not have been heard or more difficult to listen to.

### **3.3 Results in identifying and attributing impact in order to improve the work of aid agencies (Effectiveness)**

Whether the application of P-FIM in the case study contexts has improved the work of Malteser International is difficult to determine. There certainly is the intention within the organisation to use P-FIM for improving its work. And there are promising entry points for the method to contribute to better work.

Above all the case studies show concrete examples where P-FIM directly contributed to project design, to applications for funding and to on-going implementation. Statements of communities and staff indicate a new quality of ownership. Two examples are described in the main part of the report in more detail.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.4 Elements of P-FIM that are perceived as significantly different to Malteser International's usual way of working (Effectiveness, Innovation)**

P-FIM has a number of features that differ significantly from Malteser International's common way of working. Those are in particular the highly exploratory approach, specific preparation for community dialogue and dedicated time for community engagement, quality of listening, opportunities for empowerment and building on what exists and on what works already.

### **3.5 Applicability in emergency and conflict contexts (Relevance)**

All interviewed stated that it makes absolute sense to apply P-FIM during an emergency response and that this is feasible in different ways. Malteser International has applied P-FIM in volatile and conflict prone contexts.

### **3.6 Transferability, acceptance, scaling**

The method matches well with Malteser International and the method is overall accepted among Malteser International staff members. Interlocutors within this study encouraged a scaling up of P-FIM.

## **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **4.1 Relevance and readiness for scaling**

P-FIM offers viable solutions and real alternatives for common ways of thinking and working in the humanitarian sector and in an organisation such as Malteser International. With P-FIM, Malteser International has chosen a method that is ready for rollout and scaling up. The method is overall accepted and trusted within Malteser International and the organisation is operating in and contributing to an environment that is open to the method.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Regarding a rollout and scaling up, there is no reason to wait any longer, be it for further development of the method, for better understanding of how it works or for further acceptance.

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<sup>3</sup> See the example from the DR Congo Ebola response and the BMZ funded programme in Uganda in chapter 6.3.

## 4.2 Effectiveness and integration of results

Whether the application of P-FIM has improved the work of Malteser International cannot be fully concluded. However, there is a favourable environment for an improvement of Malteser's programmes through the application of P-FIM. There are promising entry points in Malteser's way of working, there are concrete steps to use P-FIM for improvements. The case studies show first success stories where the results of the application of P-FIM have led to changes.

It is up to the agency now to find the appropriate way of doing things differently in the spirit of P-FIM and integrating the approach into the existing structures.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Aiming for an iterative process of integrating and learning in the rollout of the method within Malteser International might help the organisation in finding its own appropriate ways of integrating the results, of adapting existing structures and of adapting the ways of working while not compromising the core of the P-FIM approach.

## 4.3 Acceptance

P-FIM practitioners within the organisation feel overall confident in applying the method and there is a good number of staff trained and ready to use the method.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** The rollout will require that more staff gain solid experience. Preferably, Malteser International finds a simple way of connecting and supporting P-FIM practitioners within the agency for mutual learning and exchanges between contexts.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** In order to further increase the buy-in of staff, Malteser International could encourage particularly management staff to be present at presentations during feedback sessions at the end of P-FIM exercises.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** At the core of the rollout could be a group of Malteser staff members and external support persons (from P-FIM or other).
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Gradually, this group could also build up a simple quality assurance process for the future application of P-FIM within the organisation.

## 4.4 Integration of the method

Malteser International staff has questions about the method mainly when it comes to the uptake of the results and the integration of the method into the organisation.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Continuous support of the founders of P-FIM is in general useful and desirable. At the same time Malteser International can now more and more build on the knowledge and the capacity of Malteser staff members who already practice the method and who fully embrace the approach.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** The rollout will require more testing of various ways of doing P-FIM within the context of Malteser International.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** These explorations and adaptations need to be accompanied with a simple way of learning and support within the organisation.

## 4.5 The inter-agency component

The inter-agency component of P-FIM risks to be neglected in the rollout and in the scale up of the method within Malteser International.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Malteser International should clearly commit to the inter-agency approach and ensure that the inter-agency component is appropriately maintained.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Malteser International should not only limit the roll out to Malteser staff and to its direct partners but should continue to accept the responsibility to contribute to a "P-FIM friendly" environment to the extent possible.

# Main Report

## 1. Background and rationale for the evaluation

Malteser International is the relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. Malteser International works in almost 30 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Its mission is to provide emergency relief as well as to implement rehabilitation measures and to facilitate the link between emergency relief and sustainable development.

Christian values and the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence form the basis of its work in the following areas: Relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); livelihood and social programs and disaster risk reduction.

Already for many years Malteser International promotes a people centred approach and works with participatory approaches. In 2016 Malteser International started to introduce the People First Impact Method (P-FIM) in the organization by sending selected staff from headquarters to P-FIM trainings in Berlin and Bonn, Germany. Subsequent P-FIM exercises and one Training of Trainers (ToT) were implemented by P-FIM Co-Founder Gerry McCarthy with co-facilitation of trained Malteser International staff in the following countries:

Year	Country/ies and location(s) in which the exercises /ToTs have been carried out	Sector or subject area	Humanitarian or development context
2017	Germany (organized by VENRO)	ToT Training attended by 2 MI staff	
2017	Kenya, Marsabit	Cash transfer program (Drought)	Humanitarian
2018	South Soudan, Yei	Assessment in crisis context	LRRD/Development
2018	Myanmar- Kayin State	Multisector BMZ project	LRRD/ Development
2018	Myanmar - Shan State	Health program	LRRD/ Development
2018	Myanmar -Sittwe	BMZ community based DRR project with WASH	LRRD
2018	Myanmar - Yangon	ToT	
2019	DRC, Ariwara	South Sudanese Refugees	LRRD/ Assessment
2019	Ethiopia, Omorate	BMZ cross border resilience project	Development
2019	Germany (organized by VENRO)	ToT Training attended by 2 MI staff	
2019	Uganda, Kampala	In combination with ReflACTION Conference	Development
2020	Uganda	Refugees and host communities	LRRD/ Development

Malteser International wants to build on these experiences and aims to scale up the approach within the organisation. In order to inform this process, the organisation commissioned this evaluation with the following purpose:

### Primary purpose:

This evaluation has been planned with the primary purpose to learn about the way P-FIM works and the results it achieved in selected case studies for future use of P-FIM within Malteser International and for scaling up of the method organisation-wide within Malteser International and potentially in any other aid agency.

### Secondary purpose:

A second purpose is to demonstrate accountability to donors and partners by learning from an outsider's perspective on the method and its application in practice.

### **Primary users of the evaluation:**

Malteser International, which is interested in scaling up this approach within its programmes, in particular: Africa and Asia department, ToT trained staff at headquarters.

### **Secondary users of the evaluation**

Partners and donors of Malteser International, which are potentially interested in applying the method within their organisation, funding its application and contributing to its wider application in the humanitarian aid sector and finally the wider community including academics and the public.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Approach**

The evaluation uses a case study approach and analysed three case studies in three different countries, including a data collection phase in the field. The three case studies are not meant to be representative for P-FIM implementation within the context of Malteser International's programmes but reflect a variety of contexts, stakeholders involved and time period since its completion, including one on-going exercise.

### **2.2 Methods**

The evaluation applied a mixed method approach by combining a variety of standard evaluation methods and used diverse sources of information, allowing for triangulation to the extent possible. The principle methods and sources are:

- **Desk study:** P-FIM material (toolkits, handouts, Malteser International reports from completed exercises, reports about P-FIM from other agencies (in particular the P-FIM Review of Learning 2019), films with interview statements about P-FIM, GIZ/CPS documentary "Listen to us" and more.<sup>4</sup>
- **Direct observation:** Visits to communities where P-FIM was applied and observation in an on-going exercise allowed for direct impression and provided access to informants directly after they participated.
- **Interviews:** Key informants in on-going and past exercises, group discussions, members of communities where P-FIM was applied, background informants, community leaders and key actors, P-FIM founders, P-FIM training participants, Malteser International staff at HQ and in case study countries, interviews in person and by phone/Skype

In total the team has interviewed 86 persons (48 women and 38 men). This includes bi-lateral interviews, group discussions and eleven bi-lateral interviews by phone.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.3 Limitations**

The evaluation was not meant to do a systematic comparison with other participatory methods. However, to the extent possible, the interviews covered the aspect of which methods are typically applied in contexts comparable to the case study contexts and what exactly is different/new with P-FIM.

The team could not assess to what extent the communities themselves see the effectiveness of P-FIM. Such an analysis would be interesting to do but requires more time and resources for appropriate data collection with the communities.

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<sup>4</sup> See list of documents in appendix.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix for the list of people interviewed.



### 3. The case studies

Location	Time	Participants	Facilitators	Context	Participating community members
<b>Myanmar</b>					
Kayin state	22 to 26 January 2018	34 participants from 19 agencies	Gerry McCarthy and Maren Paech	Multisector BMZ project	120 people in 8 community groups
Shan States	29.01.-02.02.2018	27 participants from 11 agencies	Gerry McCarthy and Maren Paech	Health program	109 people in 8 community groups
Rakhine State in Sittwe	03 to 07 December 2018	18 participants from 9 agencies	Gerry McCarthy, Shane Fischer and Janine Rothmayer	BMZ community based DRR project with WASH	151 people in 7 community groups
ToT Yangon	10 to 14 December 2018	21 participants	Gerry McCarthy		
<b>DR Congo</b>					
Ariwara, Health Zone of Adi, Ituri Province	04 to 08 March 2019	27 participants from 17 agencies	Gerry McCarthy and Anne Hild	South Sudanese Refugees Assessment	151 people in 8 community groups
Ariwara	07 to 11 June 2019	40 community leaders	Antoine	Community members in 3 health zones in the Ebola context	4057
<b>Uganda</b>					
Uganda, Arua District	January 2020	24 participants from agencies and communities	Gerry McCarthy	Rehabilitation and protection of natural resources in refugee settlements and host communities, Arua District, Northern Uganda	

## 4. Evaluation questions and criteria

### 1. Results: To what extent has P-FIM fulfilled its overall objective in the case studies?

#### Criteria: Effectiveness

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- a. What can be learned from the case studies in terms of:
- Giving the communities a voice and related topics (communication, consultation, decision-making, choice involvement of marginalized actors, etc.), see further under b.
  - Improving the work of humanitarian agencies such as Malteser International by putting P-FIM into practice and the changes P-FIM has resulted starting from early use/early influence examples, e.g.
    - To what extent has MI changed the way project activities are designed, implemented and monitored?
    - Have responsibilities been shifted to beneficiaries? To what extent?
    - How did MI staff use the learning from the trainings to change the ways activities are implemented?
    - What adaptations in project activities have been necessary?
    - Who were the drivers behind putting P-FIM into practice?

How has MI used the results of the P-FIM exercises in needs assessment to change its response (e.g. the sectors we work in, the country program steering and decision-making) based on needs identified? Have unmet needs been referred to other agencies?

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- b. What elements in the case studies contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives?
- Giving the communities a voice
  - Quality of information obtained (truth spoken)
  - Focus on relationship building, trust and respect
  - Ownership
  - Decision-making
  - Application of P-FIM core elements like goal-free approach and two-way communication
  - Inter-agency approach
  - Choices
  - Power
  - Community as a starting point for solutions
  - Involvement of marginalized actors
  - Other
  - Knowledge management, application and learning within the organisation after exercises implemented
- 

- c. In the case studies, how did P-FIM contribute to the improvement of humanitarian work?
- In the case studies, what is/was possible because of the results of the P-FIM approach? What process steps and factors in particular contribute to these possibilities?
  - E.g. by achieving a common and in-depth understanding of the context
  - E.g. by building a quality relationship between the actors involved
  - In opening up new perspectives
  - E.g. by influencing the roles of actors (external actors, within the communities, authorities, etc.) as a basis for the current and future collaboration
  - By creating common intentions and the willingness to continue based on a shared experience and a deeper level of relationship
  - In decision-making for programming in joint learning for continuous development of P-FIM?
  - In any other way
- 

- d. What unintended or previously unnoticed results happened because of the application of P-FIM in the case studies?

## **2. Innovation: What is new about it and why is it important? To what extent is P-FIM innovative (i.e. new or better than existing alternatives and how does it differ from those)?**

**Criteria: Effectiveness and relevance**

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What problem does P-FIM want to address and why is this an important problem for the humanitarian sector?

- in community engagement
- in assessment
- in MEAL
- in any other area that P-FIM contributes to

## **3. Transferability and scalability: What can be learned from the case studies regarding possibilities for a wider / organisation-wide use of the method within an organisation such as Malteser International and the context it is working in?**

**Criteria: Relevance and appropriateness**

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a. Where is P-FIM most suitable for in Malteser International's working context? Where are its limits?

- Transferability or adaptability
- To other countries
- To other sectors.
- In comparison to other approaches

b. To what extent is the P-FIM way of engaging among the various stakeholders accepted?

- crisis affected people,
- local aid workers,
- authorities,
- international aid workers, etc.
- internally at Malteser International

c. What conditions need to be in place in order to integrate P-FIM into the work of Malteser International? What are obstacles for its application?

- Context
- Resources
- Timing/Timeliness (especially considering emergency contexts)
- Partners
- Other

**Additional questions (will be addressed to the extent possible):**

- Conflict sensitivity
- Compliance with humanitarian principles and Malteser International internal principles.
- How is learning built in for continuous improvement of P-FIM?

## **5. Description of P-FIM**

### **5.1 P-FIM logic and objective**

P-FIM is a methodology for community engagement in humanitarian, development and peace building action. At the same time P-FIM is more than a method or tool. P-FIM is founded in a specific way of seeing communities and the role of aid that comes in from the outside. P-FIM represents a particular approach, a mind-set, a way of being and doing the work of an aid worker.

The overall objective of P-FIM is to give communities a voice, to identify and to attribute impact in order to improve the work of aid agencies. P-FIM aims at identifying the causes of positive, negative and neutral change in communities.

P-FIM is based on the following self-defined logic: External agencies cannot add value to communities unless they know the existing value. Agencies cannot know the existing value unless the communities tell them and communities will not tell them unless they trust the intervening agency. Communities will not trust the agencies unless their personnel know why and how to communicate.<sup>6</sup> This is the entry point for P-FIM: P-FIM provides insights and training on why and how to communicate.

P-FIM the method has been applied in almost 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Central America and Europe. A variety of humanitarian and development agencies have convened exercises, mainly NGOs and NGO alliances and consortia and UN agencies, local governments and technical cooperation agencies.<sup>7</sup>

## 5.2 The issue P-FIM wants to address and the key features that respond to this need

The developers of P-FIM observed that aid agencies often unintentionally side-line the people they aim to serve by taking important decisions from distance and frequently based on limited or inaccurate context knowledge and assumptions. Agencies focus on projects and by doing so they do not see the priority issues for the community.

In consequence, aid interventions are frequently not in line with the communities' priorities (relevance), do not build on existing capacities and abilities and ultimately this influences ownership and sustainability.

P-FIM takes communities as the starting point, not donors, not organisations, nor mandates or projects. In consequence, agency assumptions and proposals to donors are accurately informed by communities and relevant to them. Agencies can better balance their responsibilities between donors' priorities on the one hand, and the local communities on the other.

Furthermore, it puts the understanding of the context from the community perspective at the centre by highlighting that an external actor can only add value to a community if it knows the existing value. And it is the community that is best placed to inform what exists already. This approach can be seen as fundamentally different from traditional

working approaches that focus primarily on needs and gaps.



*Image 1 – Participants of a P-FIM exercise in Myanmar reflect on their lives, families and communities to fill a Life-Project-Life Diagram. We often think that our projects are a large part of the life of a community. There are many actors who influence community life and our project is often only a small part of the life and context of a community.*

<sup>6</sup> 'Community Engagement – A Challenge for All', Gerry McCarthy and Paul O'Hagan – September, 2016

<sup>7</sup> GIZ CPS, WVI, IFRC, DFID, EU, NDMA, CARE, PLAN, ICHA, OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, SCFI, WHO, UNHCR, Trócaire, GPEI, Johanniter, Malteser International, Bread For The World, ACT Alliance, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, ReDDS, BRCiS and more



### 5.3 The method in practice

The predominant way of learning P-FIM is through running a five-day exercise including two main parts, a two-day training and three days community engagement in small groups (field work).

**P-FIM Five Day Schedule**

Time	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
08.30	Opening	Learning Review	Travel to Field	Goal-Free Review	Travel to Field
	Setting the scene	Open Questioning Techniques	Community Discussions <u>Goal Free</u>	Goal-Free Reporting	Community Discussions <u>Two-Way</u>
	Community Group Identification	Role of Facilitator, Reporter and Observer			Return to Venue
10.00-10.20	Tea Break	Tea Break			
	Mapping Group Locations	Start up Question Translation			
	The Communication Pyramid	Giving & Receiving Feedback			
13.00-14.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
	The Wheel of Life	Role Play	Team Report Writing	Selection of Issues for Two-way Discussion	Application of Learning
15.30-15.50	Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break
	Understanding Context	Team Selection	Team Report Writing	Two-Way Discussion	Evaluation
		Role Play in Teams		Field Work Logistics	
	Day 1 Evaluation	Day 2 Evaluation			Issue of Certificate
17.00	Close	Close	Close	Close	Close

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Image 2 - Five Day Schedule of a P-FIM exercise

Participants of the exercise are commonly local staff, volunteers and community representatives from a range of organisations operating in an area where the organizing agency is planning, carrying out or has completed work (inter-agency approach).<sup>8</sup> And it is worth noting that participation is focused on local staff meaning that the method deliberately emphasises the importance for people to engage in their own language and culture in an ‘us and us’ conversation and reduces participation of externals to the context.

As P-FIM promotes the community as starting point for any development or relief initiative, the training promotes the person as starting point to engage. The first training day participants become aware of individual and human aspirations, as well as personal ways of communication.

The highly participatory training prepares for the community engagement part of the exercise by introducing roles and techniques. At the same time the two training days go beyond a skills training by conveying compelling messages about values and views regarding the work of aid agencies in communities. In particular the training covers the following areas:

- understanding community context
- levels of communication
- open-questioning techniques
- human-personal development
- roles of facilitator
- reporter and observer and
- how to work as a team

<sup>8</sup> The P-FIM Toolkit states 24 as the desired number of participants.

The second part of the exercise is the actual community engagement using two core tools:

- The goal-free discussion where communities are encouraged to discuss their priority issues without agency or programme bias, and
- Two-way discussion, where communities discuss the most important issues raised in the eight goal-free discussions along with issues important to the agencies.

During the second part of the exercise the group splits in teams for community visits for goal-free discussions and work on the results (day 3), presentation of findings and preparation of discussion issues and questions for second community discussion (day 4), two-way discussions in communities and final presentations (day 5).

For the documentation of the results P-FIM applies concrete steps, focussing on statements that are grouped and categorized. A report about the exercise describes the process and contains findings and recommendations. Furthermore, P-FIM offers guidance and simple tools for the application of the learning from the community engagement exercise, for drafting simple Action Plans and for a so-called “P-FIM Logframe”.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond the five-day exercise P-FIM can be integrated into the daily work of agencies in all phases of the project cycle to add value to existing practices. The most obvious option for integrating P-FIM and for combining it with other tools lies in assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes (context understanding from the community perspective).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore P-FIM can contribute in the implementation phase and to better communication at all levels within an organisation and with outside actors (dialogue and listening skills).

## 6. Findings by topic and criteria

### 6.1 Reasons given why the community engagement with P-FIM is important in the context of Malteser International (Relevance, evaluation questions 1 and 2)

During interviews many reasons were stated why P-FIM addresses an important aspect of the work of Malteser International and other actors engaging in humanitarian work.

First, the method addresses a core aspect of humanitarian work, the need to serve people. P-FIM takes people as the starting point and thus focuses on what aid is all about in the first place. The method offers a concrete way of working, allowing aid workers to be in line with their genuine motivation and mandate.

Second, the method helps aid workers in actualizing common principles and standards. The need to serve people is reflected and recommended in the humanitarian principles, in major standards and in quality guidelines such as the Red Cross Code of Conduct, the Sphere standards and the Core Humanitarian Standards.

Third, P-FIM can help in avoiding a so-called donor or agency bias, where project priorities and decision-making are predetermined from actors far away from the communities. This is needed in particular in crisis contexts where only slight support is available. In these contexts, communities might accept project activities even if they are not their priority, just because they consider it as better than nothing.

And the method can help in considering local cultural norms and community structures. People in communities have a larger projection of their lives, to be self-reliant. Agencies often have a shorter planning horizon within their project driven interventions. By asking closed questions about specific needs, the wider context does not enter the picture (evaluation question 1 b).

Individual community members and local groups often have difficulties in expressing their voices vis-à-vis the stakeholders at a higher level, to share the way they do things and to be drivers of their own development. P-

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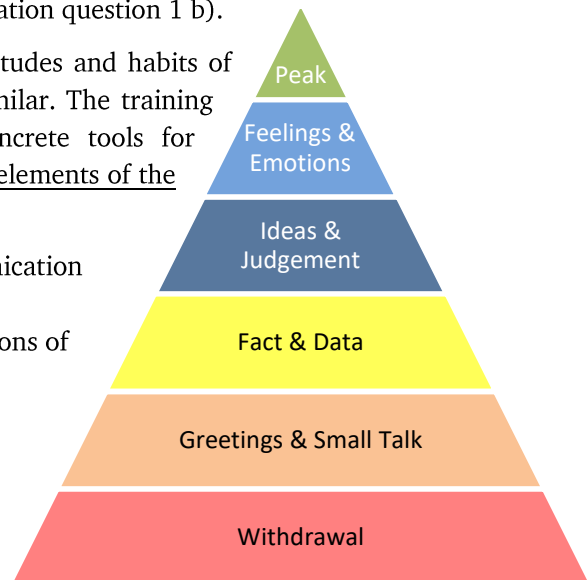
<sup>9</sup> P-FIM Handout 11 and 12

<sup>10</sup> P-FIM Handout 13: P-FIM Applied to Monitoring and Evaluation

FIM is a way of listening to the voices of these actors (evaluation question 1 b).

Furthermore, P-FIM helps in overcoming unfavourable attitudes and habits of knowing better, perception of superiority (power), and similar. The training part of P-FIM is highly transformational and gives concrete tools for dialogue. Interview partners commonly state the following elements of the training as the key parts of the first two days:

- Communication Pyramid showing levels of communication and varying degrees of quality and depth
- The wheel of life showing five inter-related dimensions of being fully alive and recognizing the whole person, beyond job titles, affiliation with organisations, possessions or mandates
- Listening techniques and in particular how to use open and probing questions.



*Image 3 - Illustration of the Communication Pyramid*



*Image 4 - Participants work on the "Wheel of Life's" five dimensions Having, Doing, Knowing, Relating and Becoming*

Additional reasons why P-FIM addresses central needs of aid agencies concern the efficiency of the work. Applying P-FIM allows for the recognition and integration of the communities' own actions and assets, which risks being left out of externally planned interventions. P-FIM can help in saving time as there is no need to design an additional strategy for ownership because the community already owns the activity, and resources are spent more efficiently (evaluation questions 1 b).

The inter-agency approach of P-FIM helps in avoiding duplication among agency interventions and can contribute to using synergies among different actors active in the area (evaluation question 1c).

## **6.2 Results in giving the communities a voice (Effectiveness, evaluation question 1 b)**

Informants confirm that P-FIM fulfils this objective. Interlocutors explain the high-level quality of conversations with the communities and refer to the diversity of the topics that come up in the goal-free part of the engagement. Furthermore, the interlocutors describe the richness and the depth of the information received during the exercises. Interviews and reporting give numerous examples of the conversation topics and about the quality of dialogue with the communities (evaluation question 1 b).

Interlocutors also confirm that P-FIM in the context of Malteser International has worked when it comes to capturing what already works in the communities.<sup>11</sup>

The way the participants of exercises speak about their experiences indicates that the experience was true and meaningful. Participants do not only repeat what has been documented. They speak about their personal listening experiences, about their emotions and about their level of understanding and learning. As in any other qualitative assessment method, there appears to be room for interpreting statements from community

<sup>11</sup> One example is from Myanmar where the exercise brought up the aspect of business people forming their own fire brigade that is functioning well. (Kayin State Report)



members during the debriefings and feedback process. However, due to the thorough preparation of fieldworkers and due to teamwork, the risks of influencing the statements are controllable.

Some interlocutors (from different case studies) describe that some community representatives and their leaders expressed appreciation just for the fact of being listened to in this particular way. They valued the experience highly and independent from any assistance that they might receive afterwards (Evaluation question 1 d).

On the other hand, interlocutors also spoke about challenges with particular community members dominating discussions during the conversations. However, the problem exists also in traditional ways of community engagement. In the case of P-FIM the fieldworkers are prepared to address the challenge (e.g. through the skills training) and the method has built in elements to address this challenge (e.g. by having multiple groups and by having more than one conversation). (Evaluation question 1 b)

Finally, there have been examples in the case studies where P-FIM helped in including special population groups that otherwise might not have been heard or more difficult to listen to, such as orphans, young people and students. In the case studies the method has been adapted for that purpose.<sup>12</sup> (Evaluation question 1 b)

These findings are coherent, certainly in the cases when the method was applied in a five-day exercise. When it comes to the application of the method in other formats e.g. integrated into project related meetings with community members - the results are more difficult to determine. There are indications from some interviews that staff fall back into “old habits” and make compromises in order to fulfil the project related requirements of their visits.

On the other hand, the in-depth case study example from DRC shows that the quality of the conversations could be achieved also in other formats, leading to joint decision-making and community empowerment. In DRC community members that have been briefed shortly in order to facilitate a combined goal-free and two-way discussions described precisely the changes in conversation and relationship created in the interaction. (Evaluation question 1 b)

### **6.3 Results in identifying and attributing impact in order to improve the work of aid agencies (effectiveness, evaluation question 1 c)**

Whether the application of P-FIM in the three case study contexts has improved the work of Malteser International is difficult to determine within this study. Nevertheless, the data collected clearly shows that there certainly is the intention within the organisation to use P-FIM for improving its work. And there are promising entry points for the method to contribute to better work.

Above all the case studies show a number of concrete examples where P-FIM directly contributed to project design, to applications for funding and to on-going implementation. Statements of communities and staff indicate a new quality of ownership. Two explanatory examples are described in the following part in more detail.<sup>13</sup> (Evaluation question 1 c)

#### ***In depth case study: Ebola response in DRC***

Malteser International has for a long time been working in the Health Zone of Adi in the Province of Ituri, DRC. The organisation commissioned a P-FIM exercise between the 4th and 8th of March 2019 in order to collect information for a new project.<sup>14</sup> Three months later, the region was confronted with the Ebola Virus.

The outbreak created panic and resistance. Quickly rumours spread within the community that Malteser International brought the case to town to make money.

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<sup>12</sup> See example from Kayin State, report page 19

<sup>13</sup> Both in-depth cases are from DRC. A concrete example from Myanmar is the recent application of P-FIM for a BMZ application for a project in Monghsat, Eastern Shan State. In the Uganda example, P-FIM is being used for an integrated BMZ funded intervention.

<sup>14</sup> 28 participants from 17 agencies



The Malteser Team was technically prepared with an isolation station and trained people to address the situation. Vaccination was missing and the team feared that people in rage were turning against them. In particular young people were very aggressive. Logistics, hospital workers, medical staff and drivers could not do their work because of the fury of people. Closing the doors in order to protect the staff was not an option in a relatively remote area.

Nine staff members from the Malteser International team had participated in the P-FIM Training three months earlier. They decided to apply the approach and to listen to the community. They were not sure if it would work but did not see alternatives and applied the method in the following steps:

- The team identified ten community leaders and briefed them in teams of three (facilitator, reporter and observer) to meet different community groups in Ariwara, asking only one open question: “*What was the most important issue that marked your life during the last 2 weeks?*” The community leaders met with taxi drivers, drug users, church members, restaurant owners, and all groups present in the community.
- People responded by talking about different issues like access to safe water, unemployment, drug abuse, and finally came up with the fear of Ebola, their children missing classes because of the fear, and all the related rumours that had been circulating in the community. The community leaders commented that everybody had their own interpretation of the Ebola case, and many of them were not sure whether it was an Ebola case or not.
- The community leaders shared all the issues of the community with the Malteser International team. After an analysis of the issues, the community leaders went back to meet the community groups again. They talked about five prioritized issues, and among them asked “*You say that you are afraid of Ebola. What are you doing about it to protect yourselves? How would you like to be supported?*”
- The community leaders described how Malteser International started to meet with the community and fear was turned into comprehension and mutual. They defined the process as listening – reporting – rising awareness. Everybody engaged; small children, schools, churches, etc.
- The leaders met with 30-40 groups, area by area, and had about 1-hour chat with each. They worked from 8 am to 5 pm. After the first briefing, 10 more people were briefed per health zone (Ariwara, Aru and Adi). A total of 40 people from the communities were mobilized. A total of 4,057 people were consulted. The budget was released from a regional Emergency Program of Malteser International, financed by the Foreign Ministry.

Although Malteser International was broadcasting very concise and clear prefabricated messages of Ebola prevention from the beginning of the emergency, the messages had no impact on the community. Since people did not accept Ebola and mistrusted Malteser International, they did not believe the messages.

It was until they were listened to, and joint messages were developed with the community that awareness of Ebola and methods of protection could reach the people. A joint community and MI communication plan was prepared. People from the community spread the message, and rumours started to diminish. Trust was built, people had ownership of their situation and were actively involved in the Ebola control. New rumours were identified, discussed and responded to immediately. People consulted Malteser International with confidence to get up-to-date information about the disease.



*Image 5 – Recording of a radio spot based on jointly developed messages with affected communities*

The application of P-FIM took 3-4 days before the community-based operation mode started to work. From the 4th day on, the Ebola response acquired real efficiency.

Once the community was engaged, they were also open to welcome UNICEF, MSF, OIM and PMA to support the response. “Once we had the confidence of the community, there were no more obstacles to the response.” said the community leaders.



*Image 6 - Handwashing Station in Ariwara, DR Congo as part of Ebola Response*

One of the agreed measures was to promote hand washing. Facilities and soap were distributed and promoted. Nearly a year after the intervention the measures are still in place and the practice of hand washing is now integrated in their daily lives. One side effect is that up today, not only is Ebola under control, but also other diseases like typhus, diarrhoea have significantly diminished in the community.

Another community driven initiative to control Ebola that surged in Ariwara was a surveillance system per “block” (grouping of 10 houses). The community reports block wise if there are cases of suspicious diseases appearing in the community and make sure that they are attended to immediately. This is reported to be very functional.

**Key learning from the case:** The key to success was to recognize the capacity of the community, to reflect, propose solutions and provide resources. The community took ownership. It was important to avoid preconceived messages and become defensive. Prejudices among agency staff about violent and messy community members were also overcome, in order to engage the community with openness.

What was new for the team was that understanding the community, you don’t stop at a specific point of interest for your own organization. It is important to get the whole picture of what life is like in the community.

Another difference is that the agency does not meet the community with predetermined solutions and that the team gets so much information about solutions from the community.

One conclusion of the Malteser DRC team is that listening first to the community is of primary importance for effective interventions. In this specific case Malteser International could not have responded properly with a top down approach. With P-FIM the agency was able to address the situation and to adapt their intervention with a bottom up strategy.

The method has inspired further changes in the way of working in the area. The government health zone of Ariwara integrated monthly community meetings where the community prioritizes one or two issues, plans and puts into practice a solution, with the support of community promoters.

They recommend training people in other health zones that have not been included and involve local authorities in the trainings. Health workers and local administration require trainings to further integrate P-FIM into their work. The community appreciates the P-FIM approach to be extendible to agriculture, gender equality and other aspects of life.

### ***In depth case study: Example in project planning***

In Adi P-FIM had direct impact in the formulation of a 4 Mio Euro, BMZ financed development projects<sup>15</sup>. As the exercise was completed before the project was developed, the programme incorporated community priorities and capacities.

<b>Challenges identified by the community groups</b>	<b>Proposed project results to BMZ</b>
<b>water borne diseases</b>	R 3: Infection prevention, WASH-FIT-Plan 18 CS and Epidemic response R 5: Community WASH (ATPC in Azu, Rodo and Rumu): Villages, Sanitized Schools
<b>malnutrition</b>	R 1: Food security: Agro-pastoral System, Farmers' Entitlement, Food production/Quality, Purchasing power of local population and refugees: Cooperative R 2: Efficient, autonomous nutritional rehabilitation and strengthening of existing capacities
<b>insufficient healthcare</b>	R 4: Community-based rehabilitation of the infrastructures of all CS according to needs, equipment, etc.
<b>agricultural underproduction</b>	R 1: Food security: Agro pastoral System, Farmers' Entitlement, Food production/Quality, Purchasing power of local population and refugees: Cooperative
<b>lack of market access</b>	Linked to R1-5
<b>drug abuse</b>	Linked to R1-5
<b>access to education</b>	Linked to R1-5
<b>income of refugees</b>	Linked to R1-5

According to statements from community members, their main issues have been addressed. The ones at the end of the list, in their perspective, are closely linked to the results 1-5. E.g. drug abuse is seen as a result of youth unemployment, which is tackled by strengthening of cooperatives. Refugees are welcomed as brothers and sisters, homes, food and resources are shared with them. In improving access to safe water, food and agricultural production, pressure is reduced.

During the project start-up, the issues that had been raised by the community during the P-FIM exercise were repeated. The people could see that the project started with them right from the beginning.

The Team experienced how P-FIM can be applied to project-planning and are keen to apply it during implementation. For a monitoring system, they established a combined team with members from the communities, from local government and from Malteser International. It is planned to do a quarterly revision of the project. How exactly they will use P-FIM in this context, is still to be defined.

A representative from the education department in Adi related how they changed their practice from providing aid towards listening to the community and accompanying the change in a bimonthly cycle. They want to apply dialogic approaches also in other domains.

## **6.4 Documentation of outcomes**

Written products are the common way of documenting within aid agencies. Thus, the documentation of the process and the results of exercises play an important role in the uptake of the information by decision-makers and the management. Both the quality and the content of the conversations with communities need to be documented and transferred.

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<sup>15</sup> Title: "Improving the life prospects of Southern Sudanese refugees and the host population through community-based interventions in health, WASH and nutrition", target groups: 180.000 local people and 45.000 refugees



The method has successfully addressed the challenge of structuring and visualising the consistently rich outcomes of the exercises. The P-FIM toolkit for example offers a reporting format for the fieldwork and gives step-by-step guidance on how to present the findings from an exercise in a clear and concise way.<sup>16</sup>



*Image 7 – Communities discuss in a goal-free exercise and share the important statements of their lives without agency or programme bias. The goal-free report format is then filled by the teams after the exercise. It records impact statements combining quantitative (important issues in community life) and qualitative (how they relate to those issues) in one report.*

Still, there seems to be some limitations regarding documentation. First a report cannot properly capture the quality of the communication and the intensity of the observations as presented in feedback sessions during the exercise. The reports are extensive, but the quality of relationship is hard to describe.

Furthermore, the broad range of topics raised during the goal-free exercise poses a challenge. Participants ask if there is a way to separate the range of issues to facilitate the development of concrete action plans that would make follow-up easier than the current reporting format.

Malteser International commissioned the P-FIM exercises in the case studies and the facilitator also wrote the report as part of the assignment. The common practice at Malteser International has been to share the report within Malteser International and not beyond, e.g. among the participating agencies.

## **6.5 Results beyond the work of aid agencies (evaluation question 1 d)**

And finally, it is worth mentioning that interlocutors stated examples of how P-FIM participants apply the skills in different contexts separate from their project and work context. They are using P-FIM skills in various life contexts e.g. to relate with colleagues, with family and with friends.

## **6.6 Results of the inter-agency approach (Effectiveness, evaluation question 1 c)**

P-FIM is an inter-agency approach. Participants of the five-day exercises are composed of staff from different agencies operating in the area, volunteers, representatives from the government, from local businesses, and from community-based organisations.

A multi-stakeholder approach is important for Malteser International's working contexts, which are often complex and challenging. The approach responds to the need to address complex and diverse issues in a systemic way, inviting the whole system into the process.

Undertaking the fieldwork in mixed inter-agency teams helps to manage expectations from community members, overcoming bias from institutional mandates and avoiding predetermined agendas. The groups that encounter the community members are not seen as agency representatives anymore but as ordinary people from different contexts who come to listen and to understand.

Furthermore, according to the P-FIM Toolkit, the idea is that all participating agencies own the final outcome of each P-FIM exercise. They are credited equally in the final report and can use the information to improve their work. For this component of P-FIM the evaluation found a slightly weaker result. Interlocutors give this component slightly less importance and one could get the impression that this feature of the method is a part that can be dropped first - if one wants to deviate from the standardized approach with the five-day exercise.

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<sup>16</sup> Section 7 of the P-FIM Toolkit



However, skipping the inter-agency approach would not have an impact on the length of the workshop. The fact that reporting from the exercises is done for the commissioning agency only, could be seen as a visible result confirming this finding.

The importance of inter-agency teams and the potential of analysing and acting collectively are perceived as not to be given the same importance as e.g. the importance of being trained and prepared or the importance of using appropriate questioning techniques. This finding might be due to the fact that naturally, agencies primarily think within their own sphere and less from a systemic point of view.

At the same time, people from different organizations and institutions in Malteser's working context are already taking part in the exercises. They are important stakeholders in Malteser's locations. They themselves do not have a network or the possibilities to follow-up and to integrate the new way of working.

## 6.7 Elements of P-FIM that are perceived as significantly different to Malteser International's usual way of working (Effectiveness, Innovation, evaluation question 2)

P-FIM has a number of features that differ significantly from Malteser International's common way of working. Interview partners highlighted in particular the following:

- **Highly exploratory approach** in particular through the goal-free conversation e.g. not based on commonly used predetermined questionnaires.
- **Specific preparation for community dialogue and dedicated time** for community engagement: The two-day preparation is one precondition for the quality of the conversations with the community groups. The teams doing the fieldwork are focussed differently than in their day-to-day work in the communities. They are specifically equipped with skills and concrete guidance for a different kind of conversation.  
CERA is one of Malteser International's partners in Myanmar. The team has adapted this practice and takes dedicated preparation time for fieldworkers before departing for fieldwork. According to CERA this requires a certain discipline but helps in focussing team members.
- **Quality of listening** resulting in communities opening up, building of trust and feeling encouraged. This allows for a much deeper conversation and ultimately can lead to a higher quality of context understanding. Meetings with the communities do not have other purposes than the open listening. Unlike in common project-related meetings, there is no agenda distracting the listening.
- **Opportunities for empowerment:** The fact that solutions are identified and driven by the communities is not only important within the project or programme context. Interviewees said that caring about the perspective of the people could potentially empower them to take decisions and to become not only the drivers of their own lives but of the development of the wider context.<sup>17</sup>  
This way of working gives opportunities for moments of self-awareness for community members. According to the interviews, it is commonly not the case to ask questions properly about what the community already does to address issues identified in the conversations. This however triggers the community's awareness of its own potential and of actions it has already taken.
- **Building on what exists** and on what works already: The common perspective is to look out for the gaps, for the needs and for the weaknesses.

## 6.8 Applicability in emergency contexts (Relevance, evaluation question 3 a)

All interviewed stated that it makes absolute sense to apply P-FIM during an emergency response and that this is feasible in different ways.

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<sup>17</sup> One informant gave the example of a young person he works with. After the P-FIM session the person took a conscious and reflected decision about returning home to the family.

In particular during emergencies, where humanitarian workers feel the pressure to do assessments quickly, draft proposals with tight deadlines and to deliver fast. This pressure usually originates within agencies and still, this pressure is passed on to communities, e.g. by involving them in hurried assessments.

In the case of Malteser, the emergency contexts the organisation operates in are commonly complex, thus require a sophisticated context understanding.

P-FIM brings Malteser the advantage of identifying local coping capacities, which can be accompanied and supported if there is need for it. In addition, the listening approach enables communities feel that agencies are concerned, which triggers hope and can contribute to a faster recovery.

Commissioning a P-FIM exercise does not undermine existing assessment processes in emergencies but can run in parallel, when time allows and when the community is ready. It can help to complement and to triangulate the finding from other assessments. Some interviewees suggest applying P-FIM after the survival phase, while others would apply it right from the beginning. A reduced sample size could be listened to.

### **6.9 Applicability in conflict contexts (Relevance, evaluation question 3c, additional question)**

Malteser International has applied P-FIM in volatile and conflict prone contexts (parts of Myanmar, DRC, South Sudan and others). P-FIM is relevant to work for vulnerable and oppressed people in conflict situations.

Interviewees stated that including authority representatives or conflict parties in P-FIM team could potentially be risky in conflict-laden communities. The case studies show examples where representatives of the authorities in conflict areas were present during exercises but this has not led to any problems. In contrast, some interlocutors see the potential in P-FIM to contribute to peace and reconciliation.

If needed, P-FIM can be adapted in order to be even more conflict sensitive. Options mentioned for adaptations were regrouping the community groups or individual listening. An example of the health sectors is to listen to the workers separated from their managers. Every conflict party could be listened to separately in order to know their expectations, before starting a dialogue.

In conflict settings, access to project locations is often restricted. The example of Myanmar shows that the P-FIM approach can help in cases where international personnel are restricted in accessing project locations. Personnel from outside the intervention area are excluded from the fieldwork anyway and the method works over distance.

### **6.10 Transferability, acceptance, scaling (evaluation question 3)**

#### ***Transferability***

The method matches well with Malteser International as a faith-based organisation. The focus on respect, participation and listening for example are central in Catholic Social Teaching. Malteser International traditionally builds its work on a trust relationship with communities. Furthermore, Malteser International is strongly committed to CHS and P-FIM helps in fulfilling the standards (in particular commitment 4 “Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them”).

Examples from the case studies show that P-FIM can be combined with or integrated into Malteser International’s assessments, into its proposal development processes as well as into monitoring, evaluation and learning processes.

Most Malteser programmes run for more than a year. Consequently, the investment in understanding the context and in a trustful relationship with the community will pay off in the long run. Furthermore, this project duration gives time and opportunity to build in P-FIM into monitoring and evaluation.

The case of Myanmar in particular shows that the method can easily be transferred into the organisation and

integrated into teams and structures. Today, there is an appropriate number of staff trained in the method and already applying the method independently. There is a local partner who has embraced the method. There is a dedicated focal point for the method who for example currently translates P-FIM material into the local language<sup>18</sup>.

### ***Acceptance of the method among staff members and partners***

The method is clearly accepted among those Malteser International staff members who were trained and those who experienced the method in practice. They do not only accept the method but they often become active supporters. Their level of confidence in the method and enthusiasm helps in convincing others in being open for this way of working.

The example of CERA – one of Malteser International’s partners in Myanmar- is a remarkable example for the acceptance of the approach. Inspired by PFIM the team adapted it’s routine practice of fieldwork by adding dedicated preparation time for fieldworkers before departing for fieldwork.

The fact that only staff working at community level is taking part in the conversations with the community groups sometimes results in a lower level of interest in the method among the management staff. At the same time, it is remarkable that a very high level of confidence and commitment can be found even among some of the management staff and international staff that do not take part in the field work and thus do not get directly involved in community conversations during the exercises. They experience parts of the method remotely only. Still, some of them fully accept the method and promote it for further use.

Staff members who have not been trained are partly open to the method and partly keep their reservations. For some it is not easy to understand what P-FIM is exactly and what it can achieve. Sometimes there are misconceptions and the method is reduced to a tool or an assignment that provides data for assessments.

### ***Scaling and conditions needed for further roll out of P-FIM within Malteser International***

Interlocutors within this study encouraged a scaling up of P-FIM.

Furthermore, the case study examples show that Malteser International is working in a favourable donor environment. The two main donors are open to the application of the method and the method is already integrated in donor-funded activities in the case study contexts.

Currently the organisation has a critical mass of staff trained in order to further roll out the method in the organisation. Even with staff fluctuation there is sufficient staff in headquarters in Germany and in field locations that allow for a scaling up of the method.

Still, a scaling up of P-FIM within the organisation will gradually require a favourable environment with the understanding and acceptance far beyond Malteser International frontline staff and the P-FIM practitioners at community level.

Management and donors need to give the space and opportunity for the application of P-FIM. And this means not only financial resources. They need to support by allowing staff to take the time. They need to contribute to inviting other actors to join in the inter-agency effort. They need to be open and flexible for the uptake of the results and more.

Eventually, it might get problematic to apply P-FIM at field level without practicing its key features also at all levels of the organisation. While the latter might be seen by some as a challenge (or even a threat), applying the “P-FIM way” has a lot of potential e.g. when thinking of staff appraisals, teamwork, knowledge management, etc. The scaling up will thus require a double effort in further applying the method at field level and simultaneously in working on a favourable environment within the organisation and outside.

The application at the field level will bring more experience into the organisation, will raise the number of people trained and also means exposing more staff members and colleagues from partners and local actors to the method. In particular the direct exposure leads to a change of mind-set, which is central to an effective use of the method and of the results it can deliver.

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<sup>18</sup> According to P-FIM material has already been translated into Spanish, Laos, Myanmar, French

In order to find Malteser International's own way(s) of applying the method, the application at the field level will also mean testing of various ways of integrating P-FIM within different areas. It will require decisions about when and how the organisation can be pragmatic in the integration and when it needs to preserve core elements in order to avoid undermining the approach.

Learning from these experiences and building up internal knowledge and continuous learning and improving will soon require more investment into knowledge management about P-FIM. The same applies for ways of doing quality assurance for the application of P-FIM. Such a scheme is not yet established within the organisation.

Scaling up the application will give more opportunities for already trained staff to gain more confidence and to take up more roles in facilitating P-FIM, in integrating it into the organisation and in creating a favourable environment. Already now, the trained personnel ask for further guidance and express the wish to exchange among each other and to get refresher trainings.

Contributing to a favourable environment means awareness raising and campaigning for the method. This will require the appropriate messages and material.

Scaling up P-FIM within the organisation will most likely impact on the organisation's human resources policy and practice, with an increased focus on skills and experiences relevant to P-FIM.

## **6.11 Limitations, challenges and risks**

A couple of limitations and risks have been identified for the roll out of P-FIM and its further application in the working contexts of Malteser International.

In the contexts where Malteser International is working for many years and along other aid agencies the expectations from the outside and deeply rooted conducts are very strong. In general, but even stronger in these contexts, there is a constant risk for P-FIM practitioners to fall back into old habits in conversations with community groups (e.g. rushing to predetermined conclusions, giving advice and similar).

One example given for moments when risks are high to fall back into common habits and roles, were the dialogue practice during project kick-off workshops. Due to their purpose and nature, the aid workers find themselves back in the role of NGO personnel informing what has been planned and approved beforehand and what is going to happen in the coming weeks and months.

Secondly, P-FIM is perceived as relatively time consuming. Malteser International often works in very limited timeframes for proposal development and drafting. This is a challenge for properly engaging with communities. Furthermore, the case studies have shown that the investment in time (five days) is a limiting factor in convincing the decision makers to acquire the method.

Those who fully embrace the method within the organisation say that the investment in time pays off in many ways, for the interventions and also beyond. However, this is not easily apparent for everyone. Better communication of this fact and additional evidence might be needed.

With Malteser International being a specialised agency in a limited number of sectors, the diversity of issues identified in communities means a challenge. On top, most of Malteser's funding is tied to a specific intervention.

Malteser International often works in context where traditional hierarchies and long-time oppression from authoritarian regimes dominate (all three case studies). In locations where protocols and procedures are more formal (e.g. Kayin State from the Myanmar case study), more efforts are required for people to open up, to feel comfortable in talking about sensitive issues and to learn new ways of dialogue with the authorities. Applying P-FIM in these contexts might require more time than the exercise period allows.



## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

### 7.1 Relevance and readiness for scaling

P-FIM offers viable solutions and real alternatives for common ways of thinking and working in the humanitarian sector and in an organisation such as Malteser International. The philosophy and the entry points of the method correspond very well with the values and priorities of an organisation such as Malteser International (social sector, faith-based, community focus, etc.)

With P-FIM, Malteser International has chosen a method that is already well developed and applied by multiple organisations. As far as the method is concerned, it is ready for rollout and scaling up in an organisation such as Malteser International.

Furthermore, the method is overall accepted and trusted within Malteser International. This includes staff at field level and also the management in some country offices and at headquarters. Outside the organisation, Malteser International is operating in and contributing to an environment that to a good degree is also open to the method. This includes the two main institutional donors of Malteser International as well as some NGO partners in country and in also in Germany.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Regarding a rollout and scaling up, there is no reason to wait any longer, be it for further development of the method, for better understanding of how it works or for further acceptance.

### 7.2 Effectiveness and integration of results

Whether the application of P-FIM in the three case study contexts has improved the work of Malteser International cannot be fully concluded within this study. However, there is not only the willingness to use P-FIM for improving the work. There is also a favourable environment for an improvement of Malteser's programmes through the application of P-FIM. There are promising entry points in Malteser's way of working, there are concrete steps to use P-FIM for improvements and the case studies show first success stories where the results of the application of P-FIM has led to changes.

P-FIM offers solutions in order to break with the common ways of working in the humanitarian sector. The method wants to counterbalance certain attitudes, habits and routines within aid agencies. The latter are often related to the project logic and agencies' focus on projects and donor requirements. At the same time, the application of the method depends on projects and donors. Agencies see the need to connect P-FIM to the project cycle and to donor requirements.

The method includes a lot in order to meet this challenge. Still, for Malteser International it remains a balancing act and ultimately it is up to the agency to find the appropriate way of achieving both, doing things differently in the spirit of P-FIM and integrating it into the existing structures and requirements (internal and external). Managing this balancing act will not be straightforward and is not likely to happen quickly or in a linear way.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Aiming for an iterative process of integrating and learning in the rollout of the method within Malteser International might help the organisation in finding its own appropriate ways of integrating the results, of adapting existing structures and of adapting the ways of working while not compromising the core of the P-FIM approach.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Integration and learning could be done by first identifying specific areas and occasions for which the P-FIM approach could be applied and integrated. One area is obviously the early assessment phase and further potential areas are among others the daily routines in fieldwork, project kick-off meetings, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

### 7.3 Acceptance

P-FIM practitioners within the organisation feel overall confident in applying the method and there is a good number of staff trained and ready to use the method. They will require some support in doing so and there is not yet a proper mechanism in place to ensure the quality of the application of P-FIM within the organisation.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** The rollout will require that more staff gain solid experience. They best do this by not only participating in exercises but also by more and more facilitating exercises themselves. This ideally happens in pairs of two staff members, and also interagency as recommended by P-FIM.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Preferably, Malteser International finds a simple way of connecting and supporting P-FIM practitioners within the agency for mutual learning and exchanges between contexts. Having focal points at HQ and at regional level might be helpful. As P-FIM is about mind-set and attitude, it will help to create dedicated opportunities for joint reflections among colleagues.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** In order to further increase the buy-in of staff (and in particular of management staff), Malteser International could encourage management staff to be present at presentations during feedback sessions at the end of P-FIM exercises.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** At the core of the rollout could be a group of Malteser staff members and external support persons (from P-FIM or other), meaning a group that no longer needs to be convinced of the method but that can focus on gaining more experience, that can concentrate on integrating and on adapting.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Gradually, this group could also build up a simple quality assurance process for the future application of P-FIM within the organisation.

### 7.4 Integration of the method

Malteser International staff has questions about the method mainly when it comes to the uptake of the results and the integration of the method into the organisation. For that purpose, staff express the wish for more guidance and supporting tools from P-FIM while P-FIM does not give answers to all these questions and desires for further guidance.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Continuous support of the founders of P-FIM is in general useful and desirable. At the same time Malteser International can now more and more build on the knowledge and the capacity of Malteser staff members who already practice the method and who fully embrace the approach.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** The rollout will require more testing of various ways of doing P-FIM within the context of Malteser International with the aim of finding its own way(s) of applying the method.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** This process will benefit from a comparative analysis of existing similar approaches and their key elements. Learning from this analysis could lead to a deeper understanding of these key elements and thus might help in the process of integration and adaptation.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** The roll out will include decisions about when and how the organisation can be pragmatic in the integration and when it needs to preserve core elements in order to avoid undermining the approach. Furthermore, the integration process will certainly include determining various ways of documenting the results from exercises and how they are taken forward in action plans and follow-up processes.
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** These explorations and adaptations need to be accompanied with a simple way of learning and support within the organisation. It seems likely that such a learning and support environment will work if it is in line with the nature of the method, focussed on individuals, their personal experiences and on conversations, rather than a formal, paper-based systems.

## 7.5 The inter-agency component

The inter-agency component of P-FIM risks to be neglected in the rollout and in the scale up of the method within Malteser International. However, the importance of the component goes far beyond the requirement to coordinate with other actors. It seems to be essential for Malteser International to nurture a favourable environment that includes NGO partners, local authorities, business leaders and more.

- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Malteser International should clearly commit to the inter-agency approach and ensure that the inter-agency component is appropriately maintained. Establishing an inter-agency structure post the exercise or linking exercises to existing inter-agency structures could be options here.
  
- ⇒ **Recommendation:** Malteser International should not only limit the roll out to Malteser staff and to its direct partners but should continue to accept the responsibility to contribute to a “P-FIM friendly” environment to the extent possible.

# Appendices

## **Appendix: List of documents, sources and background information**

P-FIM Review of Learning, Berlin 29.11.2019 – Summary Report – The VENRO P-FIM Hub Berlin

The People First Impact Method, A community engagement tool to enhance relevance, effectiveness, protection, accountability to affected people, localisation, coordination and learning – Personal reflection and experience on PFIM exercises in Berlin, DRC and Kenya, Inez Kipfer-Didavi, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe

The Philosophy of the People First Impact Method (P-FIM), Gerry McCarthy and Paul O'Hagan June 2017

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Exercise Ariwara, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, Full Report, Anne Hild, Malteser International Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Guinea and Gerry McCarthy, April, 2019

“Putting People First”, Community Engagement in Humanitarian Practice, Summary Report and Evaluation of P-FIM Exercises in Germany and DR Congo 2016, Gerry McCarthy and Dr. Inez Kipfer-Didavi, 2016

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Exercise Ariwara, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, Exercise Evaluation Results, 2019

Presentation of P-FIM in the Ebola response in Ariwara Health Zone, DRC PowerPoint presentation, 2019)

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Exercise, Kampala, Uganda Summary Report, Gerry McCarthy, January, 2020

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Exercise, Omorate, Ethiopia Full Report, Anne Hild Malteser International, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Guinea, and Gerry McCarthy, June, 2019

‘Community Engagement – A Challenge for All’, Gerry McCarthy and Paul O’Hagan – September, 2016

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Training in Kayin State, Myanmar, Gerry McCarthy, January 2018

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Training in Shan State (Kengtung program), Myanmar, Gerry McCarthy, January 2018

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Training of Trainers (TOT) Yangon, Myanmar, January 2018

People First Impact Method (P-FIM) Training Sittwe, Rakhine State, Myanmar, January 2019

Website of P-FIM: <http://p-fim.org/>

Documentary “[Listen to Us](#)”

**List of P-FIM Handouts for P-FIM trainings:**

P-FIM Handout 0 - Pre Planning Guide.docx
P-FIM Handout 1 - Introduction.docx
P-FIM Handout 2 - Pyramid of Communication.docx
P-FIM Handout 3 - The Wheel of Life.docx
P-FIM Handout 4 - Understanding Context.docx
P-FIM Handout 5 - Asking the Right Questions.docx
P-FIM Handout 6 - Role of Facilitator, Reporter & Observer.docx
P-FIM Handout 7 - Symbols & Communication.docx
P-FIM Handout 8 - Receiving & Giving Feedback.docx
P-FIM Handout 9 - Goal-Free Reporting.docx
P-FIM Handout 10 - Two-Way Communication.docx
P-FIM Handout 11 - Application of Learning.docx
P-FIM Handout 12 - P-FIM Logframe.docx
P-FIM Handout 13 - P-FIM Applied to M&E.docx
P-FIM Handout 14 A - Two-Way Case-Study for Facilitators.docx
P-FIM Handout 14 B - Two-Way Case-Study for Participants.docx
P-FIM Handout 15 - Taking P-FIM to Scale.docx
P-FIM Handout 16 - How to Measure P-FIM Added Value.docx
P-FIM Handout 17 - P-FIM Applied to OECD DAC Criteria.docx
P-FIM Handout 18 - P-FIM Summary.docx



## **Appendix: List of persons interviewed**

List interviews in person (Uganda and DR Congo): In total 41 women and 34 men.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Institution</b>
28.01.20	10:30	Kampala, UG	Jane Nakanwagi	X		MEAL Coordinator	Malteser International
	11:30	Kampala, UG	Brother Pascal		X		Missionaries of the Poor
	12:30	Kampala, UG	Dr. Solomon Razafindratandra		X	Regional Emergency Coordinator	Malteser International
			Elizabeth Asige	X		Project coordinator	Malteser International
	15:00	Kampala, UG	Joy Mukasa	X		Coordinator	Amani Sasa
29.01.20	12:30	Arua, UG	David Otoa		X	Business development manager	Malteser International
	16:00	Ariwara, DRC	Antoine Mopepe		X	Superviseur Suivi et evaluation redevabilite et apprentissage	Malteser International
30.01.20	08:00	Ariwara, DRC	Dr. Jean-Paul Uvoyo Ulangi		X	Regional Health Advisor	Malteser International
			Richard Manya		X	Point focale Ebola	Malteser International
	09:30	Ariwara, DRC	Atsidri Assea Sylvain		X		
			Esepa Kazimadri, J.Gregoire		X		
			Tapho Ondo Alphonsine	X		Community Leader	Ariwara
			Andre Mobembo Naema		X		
			Deru Droku Bela	X			
	10:30	Ariwara, DRC	Jean-MarieENZEMA Bhayo		X	Animateur Communautaire	Health Zone Ariwara
11:30	Ariwara, DRC	Lomo Yile Ernest		X	Sous Proved	Adi	
31.01.20	13:00	Rhino camp, UG	Group of school drop outs	9	4	refugees	Ofua III community
	14:00	Rhino camp, UG	Group of child mothers	12		refugees	Ofua II community
	16:00	Rhino camp, UG	Group of business people and Sacco	12	13	refugees	Ocea community
			Joyce Nyoka	X		Community leader	Ofua community
			Wilembe Maurine	X			Caritas
			Madira Alex		X		TVRA
			Anzo Jacob		X		Community leader
	19:00	Arua, UG	Mary Martin	X			Occa
			Xavier Nyinod Mugumya		X		Ecological Christian Organization - ECO
			Samuel Mugaya		X		ECO
Anthony Wolimbwa				X		ECO	
01.02.20	16:00	Kampala, UG	Godfrey Ogena		X	Project Director	JRS

List per people interviewed remotely (phone/Skype):

In total 7 women and 4 men

Date	Name	f	m	Organisation, Position
30.01.	Annette Wächter Schneider	x		Program Director, MI HQ Cologne
30.01.	Maren Paech	x		Program Manager Myanmar, MI HQ Cologne
03.02.	Claudia Plock	x		Program Adviser, MI Myanmar team, Yangon
30.01.	Dr. Khine Ei Ei Hein	x		Former MI staff in Myanmar, now consultant
04.02.	Khin Saw Wai	x		Assistant Program Coordinator, MI Myanmar team, Rakhine State
03.02.	NweYee	x		Project Manager, MI Myanmar team, Rakhine State
Per email	Ms. Anna	x		Health Education Supervisor Malaria P-FIM Focal point Eastern Shan State, MI Myanmar team, Shan State
05.02.	Kyaw Naing Soe		x	Director of Community Empowerment and Resilience Association (CERA); partner organization of Malteser, Rakhine State, Sittwe
05.02.	Michael Fuchs		x	Program Coordinator, South Sudan, Wau
04.02.	Johannes Schildknecht		x	Program Manager DR Congo, MI HQ Cologne
02.02. / 08.02.	Gerry McCarthy		x	P-FIM Founder, co-designer and trainer