

Risk Management and Do No Harm

SOURCE: The Do No Harm Project. Do No Harm and Risk - A Guidance Note. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2012.

Below, the questions are categorized according to the layer or type of risk. Those questions labeled "Risks to Context" are the risks from Staff Behavior, types and amounts of resources and how they are applied and an organization's decision to intervene. These are risks of unintended impacts to the context that can arise from an intervention.

When using DNH for Risk Mitigation

RISKS TO CONTEXT

- Are Dividers getting better or worse? Why?
- Are Connectors getting better or worse? Why?
- How will upcoming or recent events (elections, disasters, outbreak in fighting) affect Dividers and Connectors?
- How has/will the organization respond(ed) to these changes in the context?
- Is our intervention appropriate for this context? (Why us, here, now?)
- How does the organization hear and respond to local voices?
- Are local partners respected by the people they represent?

RISKS TO STAFF

- How are codes of conduct or personnel policies enforced?
- How do staff behave toward local people during working hours?
- How do staff behave toward local people during off hours?
- How do local people respond to staff in official engagements?
- How do local people respond to staff in casual engagements?

RISKS TO STUFF

- How are the organization's assets (building materials, computers, goods to be distributed) protected?
- Who controls access to stuff?
- How do beneficiaries get access to stuff in the course of the project?

RISKS TO STANDING

- Are local people receptive to having organizations enter their communities?
- Are local people defined and treated as organizational partners? As risks to programs or their success?
- What history does the organization have in the community? The district? The country? The region? The continent?
- Was there media coverage about the organization beginning operations in the area? What was the tenor of the coverage?
- What are local expectations? Do these align with organization expectations?

When using DNH for Risk Mitigation

RISKS TO CONTEXT

- How often is Divider/Connector analysis revisited?
- Has the organization's response to changes in the context made Dividers stronger/weaker?
- Has the organization's response to changes in the context made Connectors weaker/stronger?

RISKS TO STAFF

- Why are people exhibiting violent behavior or threats toward staff? Because of the organization's actions? Because of external factors? Because of individual staff's behaviors?
- Who is exhibiting violence towards staff? How are they placed in the community? What do other groups say?
- How does community act to protect staff? Can this capacity be utilized or supplemented by the organization?

RISKS TO STUFF

- Why are organizational assets at risk? Location? Timing? Amounts? Unfair distribution?
- What is being distributed? Is it of appropriate value? Is there enough for all in need?
- Do people who do not receive benefits from the program understand why?

RISKS TO STANDING

- Why is the organization facing reputation risk? Action of program staff? Action of national level staff? Action of Headquarters?
- Are staff transparent about the reasons for the decisions that led to the risk?
- Has the organization accepted responsibility for its errors?