Decision Guide for Program Managers: What You Need to Know About the Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) Approach

December 2016

Decision Guide for Program Managers:

What You Need to Know About the Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) Approach

The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program is the USAID/Food for Peace-funded learning mechanism that generates, captures, disseminates, and applies the highest quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in development food assistance programming, to ensure that more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government's investment in fighting global hunger. Through technical capacity building, a small grants program to fund research, documentation and innovation, and an in-person and online community of practice (the Food Security and Nutrition [FSN] Network), The TOPS Program empowers food security implementers and the donor community to make lasting impact for millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

Led by Save the Children, The TOPS Program draws on the expertise of its consortium partners: CORE Group (knowledge management), Food for the Hungry (social and behavioral change), Mercy Corps (agriculture and natural resource management), and TANGO International (monitoring and evaluation). Save the Children brings its experience and expertise in commodity management, gender, and nutrition and food technology, as well as the management of this 7-year (2010–2017) US$30 million award.

Disclaimer:

Recommended Citation:

Contact:

Acknowledgements

This document was informed by *Designing for Behavior Change: For Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, Health and Nutrition* (2013) authored by The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program.

Decision Guide for Program Managers: What You Need to Know About the Designing for Behavior Change Approach

When deciding whether or not to train your staff in the use of the Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) approach, a number of questions may be considered to help make the decision. These might include:

1. What is the DBC Approach and what is its purpose?
2. How will using the DBC Framework help us achieve our projects' objectives?
3. Can the DBC framework be used by staff working in different sectors of our country program?
4. What costs are involved in getting my staff trained and then using the DBC framework?
5. What type of staff are most appropriate to send?
6. What preparation and follow up is required by my organization?
7. What have other attendees said or done as a result of the DBC workshop? What does successful implementation look like?

This document will attempt to answer these questions and point to resources that will answer others.

1. What is the DBC Approach and what is its purpose?

Using the DBC Approach starts with filling in a framework to better understand how to integrate the approach into programming. The DBC framework is a relatively easy-to-use tool that helps project designers and implementers to design (redesign or modify) an evidence-based behavior change strategy or intervention so that it is more effective in prompting beneficiaries to adopt a new behavior. It does this by identifying, through simple formative research, which determinants of behavior change are blocking or enabling the practice of the behavior, and then planning a strategy that addresses those barriers and motivators.

The DBC Approach the Framework is not sector specific; it can be used to design behavior change activities in any sector (such as health, nutrition, agriculture, natural resource management, economic development, WASH, education, and gender equity). Additionally, the Framework can be used at any time in the project life-cycle: proposal development, detailed implementation plan development, after a mid-term review, during implementation, at the end, or when designing a new project. It is best, however, to use the approach at the time a program is being designed in order to get the most out of the process.

When using the DBC Approach, we have to first define our Behavior Statement. The Behavior Statement tells who will do the behavior + Action Verb in present tense + the details (such as frequency, quantity, and duration.)

Here is an example:

Corn producers sun-dry their grain at least 3 days before storing it.

For some programs, identifying the behavior can be less straight-forward than the example. This doesn't mean that the DBC Approach is irrelevant; rather, you must carefully consider your program's goals and look at it again, through the behavior change lens. It can be helpful to think about what you hope to see people doing when they are adopting the behavior change.

After identifying the behavior that we want to promote, we need to identify the priority group and the influencing groups. These are in the second column. Through Barrier Analysis (BA) we will identify the determinants of behavior change. This will help us to will define why some of our priority group members are and some are not doing the behavior we want to promote. There are usually very good reasons, and Barrier Analysis will help us understand- from the priority group's perspective- what those reasons are.

We will also use our BA results to identify the Bridges to Activities, that is, we will plan to minimize the barriers we've identified, and reinforce motivating factors. Finally, we'll identify activities that help us achieve our goal, using our research. Remember that the research we do is critical; without it do not know why our priority group is or is not changing. Program staff often feel certain that they do already know why community members are not adopting the changes being promoted, but they are quite often surprised by the results of the Barrier Analysis study.

The Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) Framework

Behavior	Priority Group / Influencing Groups Description	Determinants	Bridges to Activities	Activities
To promote this behavior….	Among this Priority Group…..	We will focus on these determinants of behavior change….. (identified through formative research)	By minimizing these barriers and reinforcing these motivators…	By Implementing these Behavior change activities.
Outcome Indicator:		**Process Indicators:**		

2. How will using the DBC Approach help us to achieve our projects' objectives?

The DBC Approach will help you achieve your project's objectives through the following ways:

- **The DBC Approach is evidenced-based.** Donors such as USAID and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) recognize that the Barrier Analysis (and other types of formative research used in the Approach) is a useful tool for helping to answer the all-important question "Why aren't people adopting these behaviors?" Using such tools to design interventions may make the project more attractive to donors.

- **Instead of guessing what beneficiaries think**, users learn to **conduct simple, quick, and cost-effective formative research** (such as the Barrier Analysis) to create their Framework, **which reveals the perspectives of the people who would be performing the new behavior**. The findings of the study are then used to design new, or to modify existing, activities that minimize (or eliminate) those barriers, thus paving the way for behavior change. Projects whose behavior change activities are informed by formative research are likely to be more effective.

- **Using the Framework, the DBC Approach can help more clearly define (and measure progress of) behaviors associated with the project's objectives.** When we speak about complementary feeding, do we mean food diversity, meal frequency, or meal size? When we talk about conservation agriculture, do we mean selecting drought-resistant varieties, use of zai holes, or inter-cropping? The step of clearly defining the behaviors the project seeks to change is as important as targeting the barriers to their adoption; yet surprisingly few projects take the time for this critical step. Without this clear definition, some projects can miss out on the finer details that help change behavior and measure it.

- **The DBC Approach can be used across all sectors**. Staff from different sectors can use the same tool to design interventions to promote the behaviors associated with their objectives. It provides a simple and effective behavior-change focused tool that is useful across multiple sectors. Using the same tool can help the users from different sectors to integrate their activities so that the same activities promote behaviors in different sectors.

- **Your staff will grow in understanding and empathy for project participants.** Using project staff to conduct the research not only reduces the cost, it also helps them gain insight into their beneficiaries' thoughts about the behavior and to begin to empathize with them. Furthermore, when project staff conduct the survey, and help with the coding, tabulation and analysis, they discover the results for themselves, thus avoiding the need to explain where the results came from and why they hold meaning. Because they helped gather and analyze the data, there is immediate ownership and buy-in, even if the results are counter to their original perspective.

3. What costs are involved in getting my staff trained and then using the DBC Approach?

There are a few cost considerations for attending and then applying the DBC Approach:

- **Attendance at a workshop is the best way to learn skills needed to conduct formative research (e.g., Barrier Analysis) and create a DBC Framework.** Courses range from five to seven days or even longer, depending on the participants. Longer workshops develop more concrete skills related to implementing Barrier Analysis. Twenty-five to thirty people can be

trained at once and they can represent several sectors, different projects and even different countries. The TOPS Program offers trainings on the DBC periodically, and there is no fee to attend (apart from transport to the locale, lodging and some meals). Many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including World Vision, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Medical Corps (IMC), Goal, have organized regional trainings for their staff over the years, using their own trainers, or hiring a consultant, or a combination of both. To find a consultant with experience and training skills you might like to ask DBC practitioners through the Food Security and Nutrition's DBC discussion board. The costs associated with holding DBC training are included in Annex 1.

- **Your staff will be eager to share what they have learned and need your support. They may want to conduct a one-day orientation** on the DBC Approach. Your support in making this happen will help reinforce these skills in your organization. Trained staff may want to lead a behavior statement writing exercise during which staff members list all the behaviors being promoted by the project (one trainee did this and found over 75 behaviors!). In addition, staff may want to lead an exercise to decide which behaviors merit further investigation.

- **Barrier Analysis is an inexpensive way to get profound results.** A Barrier Analysis study is typically a straight forward task that can be accomplished with little to no outside assistance and in as little as 3-4 days. It is even more affordable when staff are used to help conduct, code and tabulate the results. Bias is not usually an issue, as the questionnaire does not ask about knowledge but rather about individual's opinions. The timeline for including Barrier Analysis in your training is found in Annex 2.

- **Save time and money by conducting Barrier Analysis (or other formative research) and creating a Framework during program design or at onset of implementation.** This will reduce costs compared to conducting them later and making changes once a program is underway.

4. Can the DBC Approach be used in a humanitarian response?

Yes. Many development projects find themselves contending with an emergency such as a conflict, natural disaster, or epidemic, and reconsidering the relevance of their behavior change approach. In cases like these, the same behaviors (e.g., breast feeding, hand washing, care seeking) that were being promoted to save lives during 'normal' times, will likely save lives during the emergency period. During emergency periods, the DBC Framework, especially the second column where the Priority Group and context are described, can be especially useful in understanding what has changed in the surroundings, mindset or priorities of the beneficiaries and therefore how the behavior change strategy needs to be modified.

If a population has been displaced, a Barrier Analysis study can be conducted once it has been re-settled inform how the behavior change strategy should be refocused to help people cope in their new circumstances. For example, IMC has conducted Barrier Analysis studies to displaced populations in Lebanon, Turkey, and South Sudan.

5. What type of staff are most appropriate to train?

The workshop is designed for:

- Field-based program managers and behavior change officers that are in charge of designing behavior change strategies for community-based development programs and have strong facilitation skills
- Headquarters backstops who can replicate the training in other country/program sites

You may also want to consider inviting a few local counterparts—staff from government ministries or NGOs—that will be involved in designing or implementing the programs to the workshop.

6. What preparation and follow up is recommended for my organization?

Participants do best when:

- They are prepared to attend every day of the workshop.
- They have the support of management to implement change based on what they learn, especially at the design phase of program development. Organizational buy-in is crucial to using the new skills participants have learned.
- They can immediately apply their knowledge by implementing in their organization, training others as needed, and applying what they have learned so that entire teams are equipped to use the DBC Framework.

7. Are there any testimonials from other organizations that have implemented the results from a DBC Framework?

"The story I love is from our Child Survival and Health Grants Program in Liberia and [the behavior was] … getting four antenatal care checks. We had assumed that the sheer distance to the clinics would be a major barrier - in the long rainy season, when the roads turn to mud, it can day a whole day of hard slogging (carrying a toddler or baby) to get to the clinic and back. But the women said they had no problem with the long walks, even when very pregnant - they were used to it. The problem was the "heart men" - witch doctors from secret societies, who reputedly murdered people on lonely roads and took out their hearts to cast spells, and the persisting culture of rape that was cultivated during the civil war to terrorize people. So they were afraid of getting murdered or raped while walking to the clinic. It was then just a matter of arranging male accompaniment and/or having the women travel in groups. Coverage of 4 ANC increased from 25% to 74%. The other was the diarrhea prevention behavior, using a latrine/improved toilet facility. The informants thought diarrhea was airborne as well as water- food-borne, so a latrine, with its nasty smells, was a place you would go to contract diarrhea. Care Group

education plus a [small] grant to build properly ventilated latrines that didn't smell nasty did the trick. Use of improved toilet facility increased from 25% to 96%."

<div align="right">--Ira Stollak, Curamericas Global</div>

"A great success story for us at GOAL was when I was in Ethiopia. I led a DBC training, and then we went down to the south of the country to undertake a Barrier Analysis on [the behavior] Delivering at a Health Facility. Key barriers were transport, childcare and attitudes of the clinic staff. We held a stakeholder meeting with local community leaders to discuss the results of the BA [Barrier Analysis], and asked them for their help in filling out the DBC Framework (bridges to activities and activities). The activities developed by the community members were all very strong, and focused around things they themselves could initiate with very little support from the NGO! Including creating a savings fund for transport costs, supporting childcare groups for mums who have to go to hospital to deliver, and advocacy to the MoH [Ministry of Health] for improved training on bedside manner for the health workers! The DBC Framework has since been used as a monitoring tool for the community members as well for us to offer support as needed as they did these activities. Our staff loved how they were able to take on a more facilitative role with the community to discover solutions to problems, using a systems approach to formative research and activity development. I would highly recommend the DBC training!"

<div align="right">--Gillian McKay, GOAL</div>

8. What other resources exist?

You can download copies of the following resources:

- [Designing For Behavior Change Manual](#) in, [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Bangla](#);
- [Practical Guide for Conducting Barrier Analysis Manual](#) (also in [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#)).
- [Barrier Analysis questionnaires](#) that others have used, many translated from English to various languages.

There is also a [Behavior Bank](#) where practitioners share results and reports from their Barrier Analysis studies [1] and related documents may also be helpful resources [2].

---

[1] The information in the Behavior Bank is quite interesting and may inform your work, but is not a substitute for doing your own study, unless you are working in the very same locale, because results will vary greatly in different contexts. . . .

[2] See [caregroupinfo.org](#) and navigate to tools/narrated presentations and related Care Group Tools/Methods for more information about Barrier Analysis.

Annex 1. Costs Associated with Holding a DBC Training

Costs for attending a TOPS sponsored DBC workshop:

1. Transportation to and from venue
2. Dinner and weekend meals[3] and activities
3. Out of pocket expenses

Costs for conducting an in-house DBC workshop (either 5 or 7 days, typically):

1. Trainer:
   a. Staff trainer: free or base pay
   b. Consultant: Number of days multiplied by the daily rate
      i. International travel
      ii. Per diem
2. Venue rental
3. Meals for workshop participants (suggested maximum: 30 people)
4. Transportation and lodging costs of workshop participants
5. Optional: Barrier Analysis practicum costs
   a. Materials
   b. Drivers and vehicles
   c. Per diem for those conducting the Barrier Analysis surveys
   d. Venue for preparation and analysis after conducting the surveys
6. Training Materials

---

[3] Refer to a specific TOPS workshop to note what meals are *not* covered.

Annex 2. Designing for Behavior Change Approach using Formative Research

Task	Duration	Short Cuts/Job Aids
1. Decide which behavior(s) to study	½ day	
2. Develop the questionnaire on the behavior(s) to be studied	½ day per questionnaire	Barrier Analysis: Look here to see if the questionnaire has already been developed: www.fsnnetwork.org/barrier-analysis-questionnaires-0 Or ask other practitioners through the DBC Discussion Forum.
3. Translate the questionnaire into local language(s)	5 days	Contact other practitioners through the DBC Discussion Forum to see if it has already been translated.
4. Select interviewers and train	2 days	Use Chapter 10 from The Practical Guide to Conducting a Barrier Analysis.
5. Plan the logistics	1 day	Refer to Lesson 11 in The Practical Guide for sampling guidance and the logistics checklist on page 120 and the Supervisor's check list on page 122.
6. Conduct the interviews	½ – 1 day	This assumption is that there are about 15 interviewers and the respondents live within two hour's drive from the starting point.
7. Code, tabulate, analyze the results	½ day	Refer to Lesson 12 in the Practical Guide; coding and tabulation have to be done with the interviewers, it is recommended to involve them in analysis as well.
8. Write Bridges to Activities for the significant findings	1 – 2 hours	Refer to Lesson 13 in The Practical Guide.
9. Develop/modify behavior change activities based on the Barrier Analysis findings	½ – 1 day	Use the Activity Description Handout in the Practical Guide for projects in progress usually the existing activity can be modified to address the barrier.