Supervision and Support of High-Quality Group-Based Nonformal Education Services: The Use of Observation Checklists

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by Freedom from Hunger

Primary Authors:
Barbara MkNelly, Ann Brownlee and Regina Nakayenga

Other Contributors to the Document:

Freedom from Hunger: Robb Davis, Vicki Denman, Bob Richards, Ellen Vor der Bruegge

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1. Introduction: Defining the Need

Group-based education is one of the most common strategies for development interventions, whether they are focused on maternal and child health, agriculture, water and sanitation or any number of sectors. Typically, staff or community volunteers are trained in the specific content area that they are expected to share with community members. The up-front training community educators receive is important, but mechanisms beyond the classroom training are essential for ensuring education quality (Heiby, 2001). People learn in a classroom but they need tools and support mechanisms to ensure that what is learned is incorporated or transferred to their work.

The paper draws upon the experience of three *Credit with Education* practitioners in the Philippines, Uganda and Bolivia in applying observation checklists for promoting good-quality delivery of nonformal and participatory health and business education. These checklists underscore the critical importance of supervision and field-based feedback for decentralized community education activities. It is anticipated that this paper will further serve as a guide to other practioners in facilitation of nonformal, adult education principles.

Quality Improvement and Verification Checklists (QIVC) are observation tools that are reportedly being used in many Title II agriculture and health projects as well as child survival projects throughout the world (Davis and Mobley, 2001). A supervisor uses them to conduct a detailed check of how staff or volunteers carry out a particular process. For example, QIVC have been developed to give feedback on specific tasks such as the weighing and measuring of children for growth-monitoring or specific health protocols in a clinic-based setting (Davis and Mobley, 2001; Valadez, 1991). QIVC have been shown to rapidly improve the quality of development workers' performance of key tasks when they are intentionally used to promote improvement rather than simply monitor activities (Davis and Mobley, 2001).

The importance of participatory, learner-centered, and interactive techniques for engaging adult learners in a behavior-change process is well documented (Vella, 1994, 1995, 2000). Freedom from Hunger and its partners who implement *Credit with Education* have incorporated these principles into the design of learning sessions and the training of the field staff who facilitate these sessions with groups of predominantly rural women. Rigorous evaluation research of a *Credit with Education* program in Bolivia underscored the importance of the amount and quality of education community members receive (MkNelly and Dunford, 1999). Of course, resources such as transportation and education materials are important aspects of the "support system." Also critical to service quality are the less-tangible supervisory and feedback tools, planning mechanisms (workplans and schedules) and incentives inherent in any staff performance-review system.

Freedom from Hunger is working with local partners who implement *Credit with Education* to develop monitoring systems and approaches, called progress tracking, that will help them better achieve their dual goals of sustainability and positive impacts. Progress tracking uses a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide necessary information beyond the simple documentation of program inputs and activities. Progress tracking refers to an information system embedded in regular program operations and includes components focused on financial performance, supervision, service quality and client outcomes, including satisfaction. However, common features of all progress tracking activities are that they must provide, as cost-effectively as possible, reliable signals on key performance areas for follow-up action needed at the various institutional levels.

The FANTA project has supported Freedom from Hunger to work in a collaborative process with several local partners, and in particular with FOCCAS Uganda. Specifically, FANTA support has enabled Freedom from Hunger and FOCCAS Uganda to collaborate on the development and testing of specific progress tracking approaches such as the learning session observation checklist. This experience has influenced similar recent collaborative work with CARD in the Philippines. In addition, one of the first implementers of *Credit with Education*, CRECER in Bolivia, also integrates an observation checklist into its staff performance and incentive system. **As a result, the report documents in the greatest detail the experience of FOCCAS Uganda with the observation checklists but also draws upon the examples of other *Credit with Education* partners**.

The learning session observation checklist is a monitoring tool with several uses:

1. It helps to systematize supervisory feedback to individual field agents so that they are both encouraged by what they are doing well, and clear about areas of their performance that need improvement.

2. When used by the field agents themselves, the checklist is also a "job aid" that clearly lays out what is expected of them and in this way helps them to prepare for the learning sessions they facilitate with women's groups.

3. In aggregate, items that field agents tend to do especially well indicate training that has worked well. Conversely, areas of widespread weakness indicate the need for refresher training and possibly revision to the initial training approach. In this way, the checklist can provide information that informs in-service training and/or clarification of procedures and policies.

This documents contains the following sections:

- Defining the Context: What is *Credit with Education*?
- Step #1: Setting Standards for the Education Services—Developing the Checklist
- Step #2: Training and Implementation of the Learning Session Observation Checklist
- Step #3: Using the Information
- Other Strategies for Tracking Educational Progress and Outcomes
- Conclusion: Adapting the Education Checklist for Use in Other Programs

This observation checklist approach has widespread applicability to other group-based nonformal education activities. It can provide practitioners with the type of useful information necessary for managing toward their impact goals, especially when combined with other monitoring approaches such as those that assess which educational messages the community members are learning and which they are trying to implement.

2. Defining the Context: What is *Credit with Education*?

Freedom from Hunger, together with local partners in 15 developing countries,[1] is implementing a strategy called *Credit with Education* which provides (1) financial services to women in poor, rural areas in the form of small loans and savings and (2) nonformal adult education about basic health, nutrition, family planning, business development and Credit Association management issues. The credit provides a tangible resource that can be invested in income-generating activities that the recipients already know how to do. The education promotes good breastfeeding and weaning practices, diarrhea prevention and management techniques, and family planning practices, as well as improves Credit Association management and income-generating activities. Women are the primary focus of *Credit with Education* because of the central role they play as caretakers of and providers for their families.

Credit with Education is an integrated approach designed to address the underlying causes of chronic hunger and malnutrition. It is the inadequate access of poor households to food, rather than food scarcity itself, that most often causes chronic hunger. Yet simply raising the incomes of poor households, while a necessary step, is not a sufficient means for eliminating malnutrition which is also related to health and health-seeking behaviors as well as economic resources. For this reason *Credit with Education* combines small working-capital loans with nonformal maternal and child health education.

2.1 Credit component

The credit component is based on the village banking and Grameen Bank methodologies. A series of small ($10 to approximately $300), short-term loans (four to six months) are provided with a minimum of paperwork at commercial interest rates. Loans are repaid in weekly installments with mandatory savings. Women typically invest in activities in which they are already engaged such as petty commerce, processing and selling food, raising animals, operating small shops or making or buying and selling clothing. The loans enable women to expand and diversify their income-generating activities and often replace more costly sources of working capital or inputs.

Loans are made on the basis of a group guarantee rather than on an individual borrower's physical collateral. Both the credit and education components are channeled to community-based Credit Associations made up of 20 to 30 poor but economically active women.[2] Members organize themselves into self-selected solidarity groups of five to seven women. A Credit Association is made up of several solidarity groups. The solidarity groups have primary liability for each group member's individual loan. If the solidarity group cannot repay, the Credit Association becomes responsible, establishing a dual guarantee system for loan repayment. Members are eligible for loans of increasing size if their repayment performance is good and if their group is not in arrears. A member of each solidarity group is represented on the Credit

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[1] Bénin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, the Philippines, Togo and Uganda.

[2] *Credit with Education* programs use different terms for the borrower group—Centers, Community Banks, Village Unions. For simplicity, the term Credit Association is used uniformly in this paper.

Association management committee to promote democratic representation of the membership and the dissemination of important programmatic information to all members. Initially, field staff train the Credit Association management committees, but eventually the members themselves assume a significant degree of self-management for loan repayment and savings mobilization.

Members meet regularly (weekly or biweekly) to make repayment installments and deposit savings. During these same meetings, the field agent also facilitates a learning session about a health, nutrition or business-related topic.[3] For each of the topic areas, a series of six to ten learning sessions have been developed that use nonformal adult education techniques. Through the interest charged on the loans, members pay for the combined financial and education services and make possible the continuity and growing scale of the services.

2.2 Education component

Given the focus of this document, it is necessary to understand in greater depth the methodology and approach inherent in the strategy's educational component. Health and business education modules designed for use in the *Credit with Education* strategy use a behavior-change approach that targets identification of barriers to behavior change and plans to overcome them. Education sessions have several important characteristics. They are **group-based** and draw on the strength of the group to identify and solve problems related to the health or business topic in question. They **create dialogue** in that participants interact with the material and compare it to their experiences. They are **rapid**, usually lasting only 30 minutes. However, they are also **comprehensive** since participants have the opportunity to discuss each topic over seven to twelve sessions during the Credit Association's regularly scheduled meetings.

An education module contains several parts but has at its core a set of detailed and scripted **Learning Session** guides. (For an example of a learning session about breastfeeding, see Attachment 1.) Field agents (the frontline staff) use these guides to facilitate the education session with 20–40 people—usually but not always women. The number of sessions is determined by the complexity of the topic but ranges from seven to twelve sessions.

To support the field agents in the delivery of the education sessions, modules also include the following:

1. **Resource materials** on the topical area the field agent can refer to for more information.
2. A **Trainer's Guide** and **Trainer's Toolkit** that an experienced trainer uses to teach the field agent how to deliver the learning sessions to the group. The Trainer's Guide includes learning tasks on key **principles and practices of adult learning**.
3. An **Adaptation Guide** used to adapt the "generic" learning sessions to the local context.
4. A **Supervision Checklist** that supervisors can use to provide immediate feedback to field agents on the quality of the delivery of the learning session.

[3] Multiple terms are also used to refer to the staff who work directly with the borrower groups—field agents, technical officers, field officers, promoters. For simplicity, the term field agent is used uniformly here except with examples of actual program forms.

Education modules developed so far (or to be developed by July 2002) include the following:

Health topics	Business topics	Other
➢ Diarrhea Prevention and Management ➢ Breastfeeding: Improving Breastfeeding—Everyone Can Help ➢ Infant and Child Feeding: Helping Young Children to Eat and Grow Well ➢ HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care ➢ Family Planning ➢ Malaria Prevention and Treatment ➢ Immunization ➢ Women's Health: Healthy Women, Healthy Families ➢ Facing Illnesses that Attack Our Children (IMCI)*	➢ Manage Your Business Money ➢ Increase Your Sales ➢ Plan for a Better Business ➢ Become More Profitable	➢ Self-esteem ➢ Credit Association Management including ▪ group formation ▪ leadership selection ▪ setting and enforcing rules ▪ record-keeping ▪ member loan analysis.

*IMCI = Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses

2.3 Design and delivery of the education modules

When Freedom from Hunger designs an education module, it invites technical content experts to participate. This assures that each module contains the most current technical information on a given topic. Equally important is that a set of basic principles and practices of adult learning influence the design of an education module. Therefore, field agents must understand both technical information and adult learning principles. Assessments of how well field agents deliver education sessions must account for how well they cover technical content and practice the adult learning principles.

While all the principles of adult learning are important, field agents can demonstrate some directly while other learning becomes apparent as they follow the design. The distinction between direct and inherent application is important when one considers how field agents deliver sessions and how one assesses their performance. The following table summarizes the key principles and practices of adult learning and shows those that are fundamental to design and those that field agents must themselves display during a session.

Table 1: Important Principles and Practices of Adult Learning

Principles that Field Agents Must Practice	Principles that are Incorporated in Session Design through Exercises or Open Questions
Respect. Learners feel respected and feel like equals.	*Relevance*. Learners learn best by drawing on their own knowledge and experience. Learning must meet the real-life needs of the adult—for example, jobs and family life.
	Dialogue. Learning must be two-way to allow the learner to enter into a dialogue with the teacher.
Affirmation. Learners need to receive praise for even small tries.	*Engagement*. Learning must involve learners through discussion, small groups and learning from peers.
	Immediacy. Learners must be able to apply the new learning immediately.
Safety. Learners need to feel that others value their ideas and contributions—that others will not ridicule or belittle them.	*20/40/80 Rule*. Learners remember more when visuals support the verbal. Adults remember best when they practice the new skill. (We remember 20% of what we hear, 40% of what we hear and see, and 80% of what we hear, see and do.)
	Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor. Learning should involve thinking and emotions as well as doing.

Designers are responsible for including the principles on the right side of the above table in the module. Field agents are simply expected to follow the instructions. By following the instructions (for example, asking the suggested questions, using small groups as directed and doing all the steps), field agents guarantee that these principles are followed. On the other hand, it is not possible to design respect or safety. These are practices the field agents must exhibit during the session. Assessment of field agents' performance must therefore consider three basic questions: Did they cover all technical content as directed? Did they use the steps as instructed—thus putting into practice key principles of adult learning that were designed into the lesson plan? Did they show respect, give affirmation and create a safe learning environment?

2.4 Training for the education component

Field agents are trained with their supervisors. During the training they are exposed to **basic technical information** about the topic—information that goes beyond the content as presented in the learning session guides. This is to give them more confidence about the subject matter. They typically do a brief **field visit** to discuss the topic with local community members. This part of the training helps field agents begin to understand the language, terms and perspectives of community members as they relate to the topic. Most of the training involves **practicing the sessions** in simulation—either in the classroom or in a field setting. These training sessions are an opportunity to use and practice giving feedback with the same observation checklists that supervisors will later use in the field to assess education delivery.

One week of the initial orientation training that new field agents receive is devoted to the education component. During these five days, field staff is introduced to the curriculum for two of the education topic areas as well as adult education principles and practices. For each subsequent education module, field staff participates in 2–3 days of training which includes review of the principles and practices of adult learning as incorporated into the learning sessions. Assuming six topics per year (three health and three business), 12–18 days of in-service training per year would be devoted to the education component

2.5 How is *Credit with Education* implemented?

In the period 1988–92, Freedom from Hunger developed *Credit with Education* as its specific program strategy. In the subsequent years, Freedom from Hunger has further developed, tested, expanded and replicated the *Credit with Education* service model in partnership with other organizations. In fact, *Credit with Education* is now delivered solely by other organizations—currently 38 (credit unions, rural banks and non-governmental organizations) in 15 countries (mostly in Africa but also Asia and Latin America). Boxes 1–3 provide descriptions of the three *Credit with Education* implementing organizations whose experience is drawn upon for this document. Freedom from Hunger (with a staff of 33 worldwide, most based at the International Center, Davis, California) provides its collaborators with technical assistance, training and resource mobilization for *Credit with Education* start-up and expansion activities.

Box 1: *Credit with Education* in Latin America: CRECER—Bolivia

Crédito con Educacion Rural (CRECER) is an independent Bolivian NGO. Beginning in 1990, CRECER was one of the first implementers of *Credit with Education* and originally operated as a subsidiary of Freedom from Hunger. CRECER's mission is to enhance the food security and well-being of its clients, their families and their communities by providing high-quality, affordable financial and educational services primarily to women and especially to those in rural areas where access to financial and educational services is limited or nonexistent. CRECER has considerable rural outreach and operates in five departments of Bolivia (La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Sucre and Potosi). As of September 2001, CRECER had over 28,000 *Credit with Education* members organized in just under 1,500 Credit Associations. CRECER members are predominantly indigenous peoples who speak either Aymara or Quechua. CRECER has 14 branches and 71 field agents or "promoters." As of June 2001, the amount of outstanding loans was over \$3.9 million with an average loan size of \$139. The organization's operating self-sufficiency (interest revenue earned/operating costs) was 102 percent.

Box #2: *Credit with Education* in Eastern Africa: FOCCAS—Uganda

FOCCAS Uganda is an indigenous not-for-profit microfinance institution operating in eastern Uganda. It commenced business in 1996, using the *Credit with Education* methodology with technical assistance from Freedom from Hunger and start-up funding from USAID, UNDP and UNICEF. The organization's mission is to sustainably provide financial and educational services that are responsive to the basic needs and wants of very poor families in rural Uganda. FOCCAS currently operates in six districts in eastern Uganda and has three "branches" with 30 field agents. As of September 2001, FOCCAS had over 16,000 members organized in 416 Credit Associations and a total value of outstanding loans at \$521,002 (or \$40 per borrower). For the same reporting period, FOCCAS Uganda's operational self-sufficiency was 44 percent.

Box #3: *Credit with Education* in Southeast Asia: CARD—the Philippines

The Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) is a non-government organization (NGO) and registered bank that implements a replication of the Grameen Bank model in the Philippines. CARD was organized in December 1986 with it headquarters in San Pablo City, Laguna in Southern Luzon. Its mission is to build a sustainable financial institution owned, managed and controlled by landless rural women. CARD is committed to providing continued access to financial services to an expanding client base by organizing and empowering landless rural women and by instilling the values of discipline, hard work and saving in an atmosphere of mutual respect. CARD has over 50,000 members and 32 branch offices. Approximately one-half of these branches are associated with the commercial bank arm of the CARD organization. In 2000, CARD collaborated with Freedom from Hunger to incorporate the education component into one of its branches. As of September 2001, approximately 1,100 CARD clients were receiving *Credit with Education* services. Based on this pilot experience, CARD management plans to extend its collaboration with Freedom from Hunger in order to incorporate the education services into all CARD branches.

Although the specific staffing structure of *Credit with Education* differs by specific implementing organization, there are certain staff roles and responsibilities that are consistent.

Field agents work with 10–20 different Credit Associations, or approximately 350 *Credit with Education* clients. The great majority of the field agents' time is spent in the communities either at or traveling to the regularly scheduled Credit Association meetings. From the members' perspective, one of the attractive features of *Credit with Education* is that it brings financial and education services relatively close to their homes and businesses.

Field agents and Credit Associations are organized into a branch or local operating unit (LOU). Cost recovery is first applied and achieved at this administrative level. Approximately five to ten field agents operate from a single branch or LOU. The **branch or LOU coordinator** supervises the field agents and manages the overall system for delivering both the financial and education services. Depending on the age and institutional outreach of the implementing organization, *Credit with Education* programs have 3–30 branches or LOUs.

At the regional or national level, additional staff with expertise in operations management, finance or training support the work at the branch or LOU level through regular visits and/or meetings. For example, field auditors conduct periodic and unannounced visits to branches and specific Credit Associations to assess the financial recording-keeping and internal controls. Operations managers routinely work with the area offices on a range of implementation and policy issues. Training managers travel to the field to observe field agents facilitating the regular meetings and the learning sessions as well as hold regularly scheduled in-service trainings, typically at a central venue. Some of the larger *Credit with Education* programs such as CRECER in Bolivia have two tiers of trainers both at the regional and national level. The learning session observation checklists are designed for use by the branch or LOU coordinators, training managers and the field agents themselves.

2.6 Management Information Systems: the need for information about education delivery quality

As described above, the *Credit with Education* service is an integration of three components—credit, adult education and savings facilitation. The systems for supervision, support and information management should cover all three aspects of the service. This information is necessary if *Credit with Education* practioners are to properly manage and monitor service delivery, assess the adequacy of services, and follow up with appropriate action.

The systems of most microfinance institutions provide adequate information on the credit services—if and when what loans are given to whom, and the resulting portfolio size, quality, growth, etc. The best practices for assessing a loan portfolio have been well defined and refined by the microfinance community. In addition, the monitoring systems typically used by *Credit with Education* implementers also provide basic information on the education service, e.g. the number of the various types of learning sessions that were delivered, which field agent delivered them to which Credit Associations, and when. However, this information depends upon field agents reporting their own activities, with no systematic means for verification. More importantly, one key piece of information that cannot be provided by the field agents is the quality of education delivered. Managers need additional tools for assessing, promoting and reporting the quality of education delivered. For example, FOCCAS management identified four key uses of the observation checklist (see Box 4). These are felt needs common to other *Credit with Education* implementers.

Box 4: Uses of the Learning Session Observation Checklist
1. To provide an assessment of a specific education session which can be used in a feedback session between the supervisor and field agent, with particular emphasis on areas of good performance and areas where improvement is needed. To serve as a job aid for field agents.
2. To verify, to a limited extent, the field agent's self-reporting on the education delivered. (Does the field agent deliver the planned session? Do the clients know what was supposedly done in the previous session?, etc.)
3. To provide input into the formal performance-appraisal process for that field agent.
4. To contribute to a compilation of assessment information that will provide guidance on where additional field agent training and support is necessary.

The specific uses of the checklist guide the design of systems for implementing the assessment approach and utilizing the results. The checklist is meant to provide the supervisors (usually the branch managers) a tool to boost morale by recognizing what is being done well and to identify areas where improvement is needed to pinpoint where further support is necessary. This emphasis on "support" is quite different from some of the other supervisory and internal audit mechanisms used that make field staff perceive supervisors as "police/auditors" more interested in catching them doing something wrong than helping them improve.

3. Step #1: Setting Standards for the Education Services—Developing the Checklist

3.1 Examples of Learning Session Observation Checklists

A simple definition of quality is "doing the right thing, right" (Bornstein, 2001). An observation checklist highlights what specifically is expected and how a task should be done. Three example checklists are included here.

- Example #1: FOCCAS, Uganda—Learning Session Observation Checklist and Feedback Form[4]
- Example #2: CARD, Philippines—Learning Session Observation Checklist[5]
- Example #3: CRECER, Bolivia—Qualitative Evaluation Form[6]

The first two examples were more recently developed. They both focus solely on the field agents' delivery of the learning session and include items to promote good quality of *what is taught* (**content**) and *how it is taught* (**process**). The third example, from Bolivia, was developed several years ago. This checklist assesses both how the field agents provide education but also, more generally, their management of the Credit Association meetings. As a result, the CRECER example includes less detailed assessment of the non-formal education techniques used by the field agent relative to the checklists used by FOCCAS and CARD. This, in part, reflects the need to limit detail when two distinct tasks are being assessed. But the FOCCAS and CARD examples also reflect the increased emphasis by Freedom from Hunger and its *Credit with Education* partners on non-formal education methods. The learning described here pertaining to the development of the checklist draw from the FOCCAS and CARD experience. T he section on the use of the checklist approach draws from all three organizations including CRECER.

Like CRECER, FOCCAS and CARD managers also believe it is important to assess and give feedback on the field agents' overall meeting management. However, they have opted to have a separate checklist for this task. (See attachment 3 for an example of CARD's Center Meeting Observation Checklist.)

[4] The FOCCAS Uganda tool actually includes four parts: 1) introduction, 2) the checklist, 3) a page for documenting feedback and 4) a guide on non-formal education techniques that is a reference for staff that gives more detailed explanations about the aspects of educational delivery included in the checklist. Parts #2 and #3 are included here and #1 and #4 are available upon request.
[5] The CARD Philippines tool has instructions that accompany the Learning Session Checklist (Example #2) and the Center Meeting Checklist (Attachment 3).
[6] The instructions for the CRECER Qualitative Evaluation form can be found as attachment 2.

Example #1: FOCCAS Uganda—Learning Session Observation Checklist—page #1

Field Officer's Name: ____ Date: _______________
Credit Association's Name: __________________________________ CA No.: _______________
Supervisor's Name: __________________________ Designation: _________________________
Topic and Title of the Session: ____
Time started:______ Finished: ______

Scores: 2 = Doing well; 1.5 = Needs improvement; 1 = Needs a lot of improvement
0 = Not Done. (Award 0 points unless an acceptable substitution was made.)
2 = Not Applicable. (Award 2 points. There should be very few N/A's) (Total possible score: 50)

Items	**Scores**
1. Preparing for the learning session	
a. Customized stories/examples/concepts and language for this particular group.	
b. Adapted materials for the group (visuals, notes, props, etc.) and had them ready and organized.	
c. Encouraged women to select an appropriate venue and sit so they could see each other's faces.	
2. Managing the learning session sequence	
a. Used a purposeful and interesting warm-up.	
b. Involved members in reviewing the previous lesson/action points and any take-home tasks.	
c. Made a brief and clear introduction to the learning session.	
d. Followed learning session steps/activities in the session plan (or improved on them).	
e. Effectively managed the sequencing or flow of the session	
f. Summarized main learning points or asked women to do so.	
g. Asked how members were going to use the information or agreed on a take home task.	
h. Started session on time and completed on time (30 minutes).	
3. Displaying appropriate attitudes towards the participants/group	
a. Was respectful to women and created a supportive learning environment.	
b. Listened attentively to participants' contributions and made use of them.	
c. Gave meaningful affirmation or praise to members for their contributions.	
4. Managing technical information	
a. Presented ideas correctly and shared key messages accurately, clearly and confidently.	
b. Gave constructive feedback/guidance when members had erroneous or differing ideas.	
c. Acknowledged questions beyond his/her ability & referred them to the group or technical people.	
5. Using adult learning methods/facilitation techniques	
a. Appropriately used skits, role-plays, stories, demonstrations, group discussions, visuals, etc.	
b. Effectively managed group activities (i.e. gave clear instructions, formed effective working groups, supervised them & gave them enough time to work and report back).	
c. Focused on problems/issues women faced, or made discussions as relevant as possible.	
d. Encouraged experienced/knowledgeable members to share experiences and demonstrate to others.	
e. Involved most members (even shy ones) while diplomatically controlling domineering ones.	
f. Probed to deepen and personalize discussion of topics and possible solutions.	
g. Did not impose own views or act in a domineering way.	
h. Did not lecture too much but, rather, encouraged dialogue as often as possible.	
Total score	**___/50**

Using the checklist. Some items on the checklist have several components that may be observed. It may be helpful if the supervisor ticks on the specific items the field agent did well to aid in the award of scores. It may be best to wait to award some of the scores until near the end of the session.

Example #1 (Continued): FOCCAS Uganda—Learning Session Observation Checklist—page #2
Feedback from the Observation of the Learning Session

Giving feedback to the field officer. The supervisor should give feedback immediately following the session; if possible, in a private place. The exercise should last for not more than 10 minutes. The supervisor should

- begin by positively acknowledging the field officer's efforts to conduct the session;
- ask the field officer to describe what he/she did well, followed by areas where he/she could improve; and
- give feedback, starting with areas done well, and then areas for improvement.

Finally, work together to identify areas for improvement, new strategies to try, and further support needed. If there are many areas that need to be improved, make an appointment for further discussion.

Field Officer	**Supervisor**
1. What did you do well (or best)?	3. What were the field officer's strengths?
2. What could you have done better? How?	4. What could the field officer have done better? How?
Field Officer and Supervisor Together:	
5. Agreed-upon areas for improvement, who will do what, when and how (Plan of Action):	

Processing the completed checklist and feedback report and following up. After the feedback session has been completed, sign the form at the bottom and ask the field officer to do the same. Upon returning to the office, make a copy of these results to give to the field officer and file the original in the field officer's file. Insert required information in the "Field Agent Monthly Performance Report," including that observation has been conducted and the total score. Remember to follow up and give any needed support, according to the "Plan of Action" agreed upon.

Signature of Field Officer: ___________________________________ Date: ___________________

Signature of Supervisor: ____________________________________ Date: ___________________

Example #2: CARD Philippines—Learning Session Observation Checklist

Technical Officer Name:_________________________ Observer Name/Position: _________________
Session Name/Topic and Number: ____
Center Name: _________________________________ Date: ________________________________

1. Technical Content			
a. Communicated <u>all</u> technical information accurately	Y		N
b. Responded to questions accurately	Y	N	N/A
c. Brought focus back to the promoted behavior when "inaccurate" information raised	Y	N	N/A
d. Acknowledged when questions were beyond his/her technical knowledge	Y	N	N/A
2. Session Management and Organization			
a. Completed all learning session steps	Y		N
b. Completed all learning session steps in order	Y		N
c. Completed the session within ____ minutes of recommended time	Y		N
d. Had all materials (visuals, notes, props, etc.) ready <u>and</u> organized	Y		N
3. Facilitation and Teaching Skills			
a. Used small groups as suggested—including size of group (pairs, threes, etc.)	Y		N
b. Small-group management			
▪ Defined clearly the question/topic to be discussed	Y		N
▪ Helped arrange participants to assure they faced each other	Y		N
▪ Circulated around the room to clarify, help and encourage groups	Y		N
▪ Asked for reports (sample or all groups) according to learning session guide	Y		N
c. Open-ended questions			
▪ Used open-ended questions as indicated in the guide	Y		N
▪ Used open-ended questions to probe and encourage active discussion at other times—must give specific example ________________________________	Y		N
d. Spoke loudly and clearly	Y		N
e. Visuals			
▪ Showed <u>all</u> visuals included in the session	Y	N	N/A
▪ Assured that all participants could see visuals (moved around the room, passed them around the room, used a member to circulate with them or asked for participants to assemble around a picture to see it better)	Y	N	N/A
f. Used other teaching techniques/facilitation skills as written in session learning guide (stories, demonstrations, role-plays, games)	Y	N	N/A
4. Attitudes Displayed			
a. Provided praise/affirmation to the women—must give specific example _________ ____	Y		N
b. Demonstrated respect for the women—must give specific example_____________ ____	Y		N
c. Helped women feel at ease with participating—must give specific example_______ ____	Y		N
d. Attempted to create a dialogue and/or limit "lecture style"—must give specific example____	Y		N

Notes:
1. N/A should only be used if the technical officer did not have an opportunity to use or practice the element. Otherwise, "Y" or "N" should be used in each case. 2. For "must give specific example"—if no specific example can be given, "N" should be circled.

Example #3: CRECER, Bolivia—Qualitative Evaluation Form

Field Agent Name: ______________ Credit Association: _____________ Cycle: ____________

Meeting No.: _____ Date and Place: _________________ Supervisor: ____________________

CONTENT OF THE EDUCATION SESSION	YES	NO	Score
1. Topics are presented according to plan	5	0	
2. Sequence in session numbers is maintained	5	0	
3. The education topic can be completed in the cycle	5	0	
4. Key points are mentioned during the session	10	0	
5. All the steps of the education session are followed:	**YES**	**NO**	**Score**
• Animation/Warm-up (2 points)	2	0	
• Summary of previous session (2 points)	2	0	
• Session steps are followed (5 points)	5	0	
• Summary of current session (2 points)	2	0	
• Take-home message (2 points)	2	0	
• Reference to health services (2 points)	2	0	
6. Participation Over 50% of women speak in the meeting (10 points) Over 25% of women speak in the meeting (5 points) Less than 25% of members speak in the meeting (0 points)			
7. Ask the group what they learned in the cycle: (0-10 points) Plus key points: (1 point for each item, maximum of 10 points)			

MANAGEMENT OF THE MEETING			Score
1. The Board of Directors managed the meeting All = 10 Some = 5 Field Agent = 0			
2. The Board of Directors keeps the four notebooks up-to-date	**YES**	**NO**	
	10	0	
3. Transparent management of money	10	0	
4. PFC form up-to-date	10	0	

TOTAL SCORE	

______________________ Field Agent's Signature

______________________ Supervisor's Signature

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

There is considerable similarity in the FOCCAS and CARD checklists (Examples #1 and #2). The choice of categories and specific items are based on a knowledge of important aspects of adult learning and participatory methods. The goal of featuring them in the checklist is to reinforce the type of teaching and learning style Freedom from Hunger promotes.

The FOCCAS and CARD observation checklists include items that reflect the following categories:

- **Technical content or "managing" technical information.** Items in this category focus on whether the field agent communicates the "correct" technical information and fields questions appropriately.

- **Session management and organization or managing the learning session sequence.** Items in this category focus on whether the field agent completed all the learning session steps and flow.

- **Attitudes displayed towards participants/groups.** Items in this category focus on whether field agents' behaviors reflect the core attitudes of respect, affirmation and safety, all critical to adult nonformal education.

- **Facilitation and teaching skills.** Items in this category focus on a field agent's use of facilitation skills critical to adult nonformal education.

But there are also differences in the FOCCAS and CARD checklists reflecting the input of the education specialists, trainers and field staff who were involved in the specific tools development and testing. For example, FOCCAS Uganda added an additional category, **"preparation for the learning session,"** that includes items or steps that field agents should perform even before the session begins. One of the benefits of developing an observation checklist is that it requires careful thought and clear definition of what is expected of the community educator. It is essential that staff members be involved in the development and testing of any observation checklist. Their participation is a critical factor in whether the checklist has the intended positive effects on staff motivation and performance. Various levels of FOCCAS Uganda and CARD staff were involved in the development of the checklists. Supervisors were asked for ideas on what they would look for if they were trying to determine if field agents were delivering the educational sessions well. Field agents were asked to identify aspects of their educational delivery that were important to assess and judge their skills as trainers. For example, the following box summarizes the suggestions made by FOCCAS branch managers and field agents:

Feedback from Branch Managers and Field Agents On What to Emphasize in the Learning Session Observation Checklist	
Branch Managers	**Field Agents**
Whether the field agents: ▪ used local examples to illustrate points ▪ included guided discussions ▪ adapted their lessons to suit the local context ▪ had lesson plans as guides ▪ included appropriately timed warm-ups involving all the learners ▪ controlled domineering members and brought out reserved personalities ▪ gave meaningful praise to the women ▪ began and ended on time	Whether the field agents: ▪ used the best learning methods ▪ handled skits appropriately ▪ followed the steps in the lessons ▪ stayed within the time limits ▪ gave correct technical information

3.2 Issues addressed during checklist development

A number of design issues had to be addressed as the Learning Session Observation Checklist was developed. Drawing on the experience of the various partners, the key issues will be discussed in turn.

3.2.1 *Criteria for selecting good items for checklist*

After the general areas were determined, those involved in developing the checklist identified a set of "criteria for good items" that helped in determining whether particular items should be retained or dropped. The criteria were as follows:

- Items should **cover the range of important educational delivery/facilitation skills** that the training manager (program) feels must be assessed and reinforced.
- Items should focus on "**observable"** and "**concrete**" activities or actions as much as possible, thus reducing subjectivity.
- Items should focus, as much as possible, on aspects of educational delivery that should be expected to be **present in each session** (thus limiting the likelihood that observers would judge many of the items to be "non-applicable").
- When possible, each item should **focus on just one main aspect** or related aspects of educational delivery (avoiding, as much as possible, "two-in-one" type items).
- Some of the items should focus on criteria that **measure whether the session is meaningful** to the women, addresses their real problems, and empowers or motivates them.

The challenges in operationalizing and consistently applying some of these criteria have discussed in separate sections below.

3.2.1 *Covering the range of important skills and the length of the checklist*

The development of a performance checklist encourages careful thought and useful diologue about the key skills that require feedback. For example, early drafts of the FOCCAS checklist included items that reflect "design" issues such as "focused on one or two specific practices during the session" or "used methods that were simple and familiar to the local context." This led to useful discussions and distinction between what should be built into the design of the lesson plans provided to field agents and what was within the scope of the individual field agents to influence. Ultimately it was agreed that field agents didn't have the time nor was it their role to design learning sessions, but that the assessment process should be flexible enough to encourage and give credit for creativity. Thus, in the final version of the checklist, the items or activities assessed focused more clearly on criteria that related to principles that field agents must "deliver" rather than principles that are incorporated in session "design." However, the FOCCAS Uganda training manager felt strongly that she did not want to discourage creativity on the field agents' part by only awarding points for following the lesson plans strictly as given, with no credit for positive innovations. In addition, she wanted to encourage field agents to make whatever adjustments were necessary to ensure that the lessons were as relevant as possible to the women's real-life situations. Thus the wording of some items or criteria was consciously designed to encourage creativity and relevance. For example:

- The section on "preparing for the learning session" asked whether the field agent "customized stories/examples/concepts and language" for the particular group being taught.
- The key item concerning management of the learning session sequence was worded as "Followed learning session steps/activities in the session plan (<u>or</u> improved on them)."
- The section on "using adult learning methods/facilitation techniques" asked whether the field agent "focused on problems/issues women faced or made discussions as relevant as possible," and whether the officers "probed to deepen and personalize discussion of topics and possible solutions."

Some QIVC are multiple pages in length and include detailed items for all steps being observed. One of the benefits of including many items is that it gives the observer ample opportunity to provide positive feedback on tasks done well (Davis and Mobley, 2001). But since the observation checklist, as with all progress tracking tools, is integrated into the regular work routine, it is important to minimize the additional burden and time requirements it adds to staff's existing work. The goal was to keep the checklist "doable" for the average observer, while covering all the items that seemed important for good education delivery.

FOCCAS Uganda field-tested a variety of observation checklists that varied in length from only 15 items to 33 items. One of the early versions of the FOCCAS learning session checklists had 33 items. This was felt to be excessive and, for awhile, designers strove to reduce the items to at most 20. A version with 20 items was tested in September of 2001 and found to be relatively easy for the branch managers and other observers to complete. A review of the items covered revealed, however, that in the effort to streamline the tool and reduce the number of items, some of those that were felt to be important to good facilitation had been dropped (including one, for example, related to probing to deepen and personalize discussion of topics and possible solutions). In addition, those working on the checklist had found themselves combining several concepts in one item in an effort to "get everything in," while keeping the total number of items to 20. In the final revision, the decision was made to increase the number of items to 25, simplifying the items themselves and, whenever possible, limiting each item to only one concept.

3.2.3 *Observable and concrete*

It was difficult, for example, to ensure that all items were worded so they were fully observable and concrete without making the wording of certain items quite lengthy. In the CARD Philippines version of the checklist, this problem was addressed by listing specific actions to be observed under the less "concrete" concepts. Another tactic was to ask the observers themselves to list specific occurrences when the field agent had met the particular criteria. By providing a specific example, items in the checklist were validated and the observer was able to facilitate feedback. For example, in the "attitudes" section, items such as "demonstrated respect for the women" asked that the observer give a specific example of when he or she had witnessed the field agent do this. This helps to reinforce and clarify the observable and concrete ways these attitudes are expressed as well as provides specific examples during the feedback session. In an effort to keep the wording relatively simple, the FOCCAS version of the checklist uses neither of these strategies. However, as an alternative, a guide that details what is meant by the major concepts or criteria in the checklist was developed.

3.2.4 *One concept per item*

As with the goal of using only items that were completely "observable," this criterion of "one concept per item" was not always fully met. "Two-(or even more)-for-one" items found their way into earlier versions of the checklist. These types of items tended to "slip in" inadvertently in the effort to cover as many of the important issues as possible with the fewest number of items. Double-barreled items are more difficult to score and, once scored, it is difficult to determine whether the points have been given based on achievement of one or another of the "parts" of the item or on all of them.

If more than one concept was included in an item, the designers of the checklist(s) tried to make them as related as possible. For example, in the FOCCAS checklist, the "two-for-one" item at the end of the "learning sequence" set of items: "Started the session on time and completed on time (30 minutes)" covered both the goals of punctuality in beginning the lessons and of keeping the lessons 30 minutes or less in length. This two-pronged item was retained to keep the total number of items to 25. It was expected that if the field agent was graded down on this item, the supervisor could easily indicate which part of the criterion had not been met during the feedback session.

3.2.5 *Chronological*

As the checklist was critiqued and revised, one key "design issue" considered was the ordering of the various criteria or items to be observed. For example, designers of the FOCCAS checklist felt it would be ideal if the criteria or items were presented "chronologically" in the order they would be observed in the learning sessions. However, it was recognized that this would not be fully possible. The "order" of many of the activities would vary from session to session and some of the items to be observed might be expected to take place several times during a session. For instance, attitudes such as whether the field agent was respectful to the women, listened attentively, gave meaningful praise to members for their contributions, etc., might be displayed and observed throughout the session. Management of technical information and use of various facilitation techniques also would be expected at varying times, depending on the session.

It was decided by FOCCAS and CARD checklist designers that, as much as possible, the ordering of the sections of the checklist should be "chronological." Where this was not possible, they should be grouped logically so that observers could easily find where particular items were, when they happened to observe them.

3.2.6 *Deciding whether to integrate the lesson content into the checklists or keep it separate*

Another key design issue addressed, as the checklists were being developed, concerned whether to integrate the lesson content into the checklists or keep it separate. Supervisors need to give feedback on how well field agents facilitate the learning sessions as well as on how accurately they convey the relevant technical information.

During the development and field tests of the observation checklists, several approaches were considered for incorporating the lesson content.

- Separate Checklists by Lesson Plan:
  With this approach, an observation checklist is developed for each learning session. This has been done for field tests of new education modules. These tailored versions of the checklist made it extremely easy for the observers to determine if the sessions were being delivered "as written."

- Generic Checklists with Summaries of the Learning Sessions for each Topic Area:
  With this approach, the observer can refer to summaries which outlined the specific steps to each learning session in the various topic areas. (See Attachment 4 for an example summary for the Breastfeeding topic.)

- Generic Checklist with the Full Learning Session:
  With this approach, the observer simply refers to the same learning session the field agent is facilitating to know the sequence and steps for the session.

While the first approach worked well for an intensive field-testing of a new module, the drawbacks to using this type of tailored checklist for routine observations were several.
The checklists were quite labor-intensive to produce and, if the session plans were revised in any way, the checklists would also require further revision. Over time, *Credit with Education* programs introduce new education modules that include from 6 to 12 individual learning sessions. This approach would require the development and management of close to 100 different observation checklists. Observers would need to bring copies of the checklists for each of the lessons they might observe in the field (if they weren't certain, as is sometimes the case, which lessons might be used). The "tailored" checklists also would allow for little or no flexibility in lesson delivery on the field agent's part. A creative field agent might improve the order of activities or add or substitute new and actually better material than suggested in the original lesson. These "scripted" checklists gave no "credit" for creativity and might, in fact, result in field agents receiving lower scores unless the steps were seen in the specified order.

Because of these various drawbacks at the outset of the trial period, it was clear that a generic checklist approach would be needed that included only those items that were expected to occur in virtually all learning sessions. Based on their experience, the CARD and CRECER staff opted for the second approach and use summaries similar to the one shown in Attachment 4. FOCCAS Uganda staff, however, prefer the third approach and supervisors bring along full versions of the plans for the lessons being observed.

3.2.7 *Scoring: deciding on a scoring system*

How supervisors record their observations and whether the checklist is used to generate a numeric score depends on the purposes and preferences of the implementing organization. The CARD and FOCCAS Uganda observation checklists are examples of two different approaches.

With the CARD example, supervisors simply mark “yes” if they observe a specific item and “no” if they do not. For several items, the supervisor might not have the opportunity to observe this step depending on the design of the specific learning session. In that case, a third category representing “not applicable” is included. These response categories could easily be converted into scores. At this point, CARD is mainly interested in using the checklist as a tool for giving on-the-spot feedback either during trainings or regular supervisory visits. Therefore, a numeric score is not necessary since it is not information feeding into a staff assessment system. Also, for simplicity, the checklist only focuses on whether the item was observed without regard to how well it was performed.

On the other hand, FOCCAS Uganda management intends to incorporate the checklist results into its staff performance system. As the checklists evolved, FOCCAS worked to develop a good scoring system to accompany it. Designers felt it would be useful if the scoring system fulfilled several criteria:

- Rather than simply score items as “yes” or “no,” or “done” or “not done,” observers should award scores from a range of possibilities. This would allow observers to indicate whether field agents performed relatively well or poorly and indicate areas where the most improvement was needed. (However, it needs to be appreciated that this more precise approach introduces the potential for greater subjectivity to inter-observer differences.)

- The checklist should use numeric scores, rather than give only letter designations (“A,” “B,” “C,” etc.) or word descriptions (excellent, good, etc.). This allows for tallying the results, summarizing them in an overall score that could be included as one component of the performance appraisal.

- It seemed practical for the scores on each of the two checklists (Learning Session and Credit Association Management) to be “50” each, giving a total of 100, for entry into the performance appraisal. Also, it seemed useful to give these two aspects of the field agent’s jobs an equal number of possible points, thus indicating that they are considered equal in importance. (In the past, branch mangers tended to put more emphasis on critiquing and providing feedback on Credit Association management because they had more experience and skill in dealing with this aspect of *Credit with Education*.)

- In an effort to emphasize the more positive role of the supervisor in providing encouragement and support for changes needed, it was decided to use descriptors for the numbers in the scoring system that indicated actions needed (for example, "Needs a lot of improvement," etc.) rather than that judging how the field agent was doing ("Very poorly," etc.).

- A method had to be devised for dealing with two possibilities, including that certain activities might be done when they should have been and that certain items or activities might not be applicable or necessary for certain learning sessions. The system for grading an activity as "not done" when it should have been, if no appropriate substitution was made, involved indicating "Not Done" (N/D) and awarding "0" points.

  In the interests of making as simple a system of scoring as possible while not "grading down" for non-performance of unnecessary activities, observers were instructed to indicate when an item was "not applicable" (N/A), but to award the full possible score (i.e., "2" points).

Box 5: FOCCAS Uganda Scoring System

The final system for scoring for the FOCCAS Learning Session Observation Checklist is:

2 = Doing well
1.5 = Needs improvement
1 = Needs a lot of improvement
0 (N/D) = Not Done (0 points unless an acceptable substitution was made)
2 (N/A) = Not Applicable (2 points. There should be very few N/As)

FOCCAS staff decided it did not want to give "0" points for the category of "Needs a lot of improvement," as this might be too discouraging to some field agents. However, in programs where this does not seem to be an issue, scores might be: 2 = Doing well; 1 = Needs improvement; and 0 = Needs a lot of improvement.

The CRECER checklist weighs items differently depending on their importance and whether the task is divided into several sub-points (see example 3). Supervisors assign scores of 1, 2, 5 or 10 if they observe the field agent carrying out that aspect of performance. If the item is not observed, the field agent receives a "0" in all cases. The scoring system is set up so those field agents can receive a maximum score of 100. This approach is familiar since it is typically used for grading in schools in Bolivia. However, since not all items have the same maximum score, it implicitly weights certain items higher based on their perceived importance.

3.2.8 *A format to encourage supportive but honest feedback to the field agents being observed*

A final aspect of the checklist that needed to be designed was the system for feedback from the observations. How feedback is given should itself incorporate important adult learning principles such as involving those facilitating the sessions in assessing their own strengths and weaknesses, beginning with the "positive" while encouraging honest assessment of areas needing improvement, and planning together for how to make the needed changes.

Davis and Mobley (2001) highlight certain practical tips for how the feedback should be given:

- For aspects that the field agents do well, they should be encouraged by specifically referring to what they did well (e.g., "You did a great job at the beginning of the learning session of organizing the members so that they could see each other's faces"). Several items that were performed well can also be listed or highlighted together (e.g., "You managed the time well so that you finished in 30 minutes while still encouraging participation and covering all the steps and content in the learning session"). If the field agent's performance is exceptionally good in some area, of course, this should also be mentioned (e.g., "Of all the field agents, you do an especially good job of signaling that you are actively listening to members by referring back to their comments and incorporating them into the session").

- For the aspects that the field agents do poorly, it is better to start with the field agents' own assessments of areas for improvement. A more open and less judgmental tone is likely set since it is typically easier to assess oneself than to hear someone else's evaluation first. Having the field agents evaluate their own performance also helps encourage this as a work habit. When the supervisors give feedback on areas of improvement, they should use open questions to encourage the field agents to propose solutions or strategies that would improve their performance in that area (e.g. "What might you have done to encourage the participation of the members sitting near the window who said little or nothing during the session?").

- A signal that the checklist needs to be more detailed is when the supervisor finds that they have several "mixed" comments for a single item about what was done well or needs improvement. In general, for each item in the checklist, it should be possible to say whether it was fulfilled adequately.

- After reviewing the specific points in the checklist, the field agent should be asked to summarize areas that needed improvement and how they will go about doing this. If necessary, the supervisor should add to these summaries.

- To end the session on a positive note, the supervisor can either refer again to the areas that were performed especially well or ask the field agent to do so.

The FOCCAS Uganda checklist example puts considerable emphasis on this area because branch managers asked that the feedback process be outlined as clearly as possible in the checklist itself. A feedback page was added to the checklist that clearly guides the "user" through a five-step feedback process:

1. asking field agents to share their views on what was done best;
2. asking field agents what, in their opinion, could have been done better;
3. providing feedback from the supervisor's point of view on aspects of the education delivery on which the field agents excelled;
4. discussing areas in which improvements could be made, based on feedback on the scores received during the observation; and

5. working with field agents to identify two or three "action points" that could be worked on and developing a plan for doing so, including who would do what, when and how.

This page also includes a brief description on how to give feedback, and then poses key questions, ending with a space for recording any aspects of education delivery that will be worked on and how (a brief "plan of action"). A place for both the field agent and supervisor to sign, indicating that feedback has been given, is provided at the bottom of the page. The checklist itself and feedback page can be printed on the front and back of one sheet of paper, thus ensuring that completed checklists are permanently linked with their corresponding feedback sections.

4. Step #2: Training and Implementation of the Learning Session Observation Checklist

How the observation checklist approach is introduced to staff and how they are trained to use it are essential steps in transforming a simple "tool" into a process that can successfully improve service-delivery quality. The Learning Session Observation Checklist is designed to be used by staff who have a role in supervising and/or training the field agents. In the case of *Credit with Education*, this includes the LOU or branch coordinators as well as training and operations managers who work at the regional or national level. Training for the field agents (?) who will be observed needs to be timed and facilitated in such a way as to promote the potential of the checklist as a job aid that field agents can use for self-assessment and improvement. Ideally, supervisors would be involved in these same trainings so that both have a common understanding of the purposes of the checklist and the language for feedback. Training for supervisors should also include the opportunity to observe them using the checklists to provide feedback in the field as well as exercises to improve inter-observer reliability.

4.1 Incorporating the observation checklist into regular staff training

As described in the earlier section about the education component, field agents are introduced to each education module through a two- to three-day training that includes classroom or field-based practice of the learning sessions in that topic. Ideally, the Learning Session Observation Checklist can be introduced and practiced during these same training workshops. Branch or LOU coordinators typically participate in these same trainings, so it is an opportunity to forge a common understanding of the purpose of the checklists and their proper use. When practicing the new sessions, field agents and their supervisors would use the checklist during classroom and field-based practice of the new sessions. In this way they become familiar with the checklist and practice giving and receiving feedback to each other using it. Attachment 5 outlines a session for practicing how to give and receive feedback that is typically included as part of these initial trainings on a new topic area.

Incorporating the use of the checklists into the regular training workshops helps to cultivate the use and perception of the observation checklist as a learning and capacity-building tool rather than a "policing" or "auditing" mechanism. Field agents are also more likely to use it as a job aid for self-assessments when they have used it to assess others in a training context. Also, the training setting provides an opportunity to work on standardizing supervisors' judgements and ratings. Inconsistency in how various observers assess the items in quality observation checklists is one of the challenges of this approach (Davis and Mobley, 2001). During the practice sessions, supervisors can observe the same field agent facilitating learning sessions and compare their assessments using the observation checklist. Items that are rated or marked differently by the supervisors should be discussed to forge a more common understanding of the items and judgement of performance.

For FOCCAS Uganda, once the observation checklist had been developed through a participatory process and field test, the training manager conducted group training with the field agents. Branch managers joined her in introducing the checklists to the field agents during several training sessions. The issues covered in these training sessions are presented in Box 6.

Box 6: Issues Covered in Training Sessions for Field Agents on the Observation Checklist

- The role of the observation checklists in FOCCAS's Progress Tracking system.
- Expectations of FOCCAS concerning the education facilitation and skills the field agents should possess or develop.
- How the observation checklist could be used:
  1) As supervision tools used to assess and provide feedback to the field agents on where they are doing well and areas where they can improve, both "on the spot" and as part of a performance-assessment process
  2) As self-learning tools, allowing the field agents themselves to review key criteria for good facilitation and Credit Association meeting management and rate themselves on these criteria.
- Practice in using the checklists as self-learning tools.

The exercise in using the checklists as self-learning tools proved to be a quite useful one, as shown in Box 7.

Box 7: Exercise in Using the Checklists as Self-Learning Tools

When asked to review the activities or criteria assessed in the Learning Session Observation Checklist and determine where they themselves were strong and weak, each field agent easily identified areas for needed self-improvement.

Some of the key areas included the following:

1) Strategies for encouraging "seating arrangements" more conducive to a positive learning environment
2) How to achieve better participation during the learning sessions
3) How to diplomatically control domineering members
4) How and why to use probing questions
5) How to better manage time and finish within 30 minutes

4.2 Using the checklist at regular Credit Association meetings

The checklist is principally designed for use during supervisory visits in the field. Field-based observations are typically unannounced. For example, with the FOCCAS Uganda *Credit with Education* program, field agents meet with their supervisors each week to file their work plan for the week, review the performance information for their Credit Associations from the previous week and discuss any issues that need to be addressed. From these weekly work plans, the branch manager knows what learning sessions have been planned as well as where and when they will occur. With this information, they can incorporate into their own work plan a schedule of observational visits to the field agents they observe.

When the supervisors arrive at the Credit Association meetings, they should let the field agents know that they intend to observe the meeting and complete the checklist, which they should make time to discuss immediately after. The field agents will be quite familiar with the checklist since they ideally had a role in providing feedback on draft versions and used the checklist themselves during trainings. Still, the supervisors should try to reduce the field agents' nervousness about being observed and remind them that the purpose of the checklist is to help them improve their work (Davis and Mobley, 2001). The supervisors should not interrupt during the Credit Association meeting and learning session. Although they are most likely already familiar with the Credit Association members, they can be briefly introduced at the beginning of the meeting but they should not disrupt the regular flow.

Immediately following the meeting, the supervisor and field agent should find a private place to review and discuss the experience and the checklist results. The feedback step is the most critical factor for realizing the potential for using the checklist as a tool for improving and not simply monitoring field agent performance. Training for both the supervisor and field agent in how to give and receive feedback is essential and is described with specific examples below (see Attachment 5).

4.3 Frequency

The frequency with which these field-based observations can and should be made will depend on the program. In general, *Credit with Education* programs using observation checklists have supervisors make these types of unannounced visits either monthly or quarterly. In the CRECER *Credit with Education* program, branch-level supervisors must review performance at three types of meetings. Checklists have been developed for bank opening and closing meetings and the education sessions, reflecting the different tasks to be accomplished. The supervisor observes each field agent facilitate a bank opening, a closing and two education sessions each quarter. Regional trainers and other staff members, observe these same field agents using the attached checklist (see example 3) once per quarter. Establishing an expectation and routine for these types of supervisory visits is critical. This requires a realistic determination of the time required for conducting and utilizing the information and the support system to do so. When the checklist frequency is left vague, even well-meaning supervisors may find themselves preoccupied with office work and not performing the type of field-based supervision that improves program service quality and keeps them informed of the actual program realities. Setting a specific frequency for these type of observational visits also can be an important eye-opening experience for senior program management (see Box 8).

Box 8: Freeing Supervisors to Supervise

Following the participatory process used to develop and test observation checklists for the learning sessions and Credit Association, FOCCAS Uganda senior management wanted branch mangers to use these checklists once a month to provide feedback to each of the field agents they supervise. Ultimately, they found that this frequency of supervision was not achievable at that time due to lack of transport to get out to the field and the branch managers' rather intensive involvement in loan disbursements. The target number was reduced to at minimum an observation of one learning session and one Credit Association meeting for each field agent each quarter. The program then made it a priority to purchase three additional motorbikes to allow the branch managers the means to get out to the field when the vehicles are on other missions. In addition, the situation led to the exploration of whether some of the loan disbursement responsibilities could be shifted to other staff to free branch managers to do more field-based supervision.

Depending on how the results of the checklist are used, one approach for reducing the management burden would be to conduct more frequent observations of the relatively new field agents. Once field agents achieve a certain minimum score or observed performance the frequency of observational visits could be reduced or discontinued (Davis and Mobley, 2001).

4.4 On-the-job training of branch managers in checklist use

Ideally, the training manager would observe supervisors using the checklists and giving feedback to the field agents. Programs such as CARD routinely have field staff assess the quality of their supervisors' work. This assessment could include how effectively the supervisors give feedback and use the observation checklist. In the process of developing and testing observation checklists, FOCCAS Uganda found that the on-the-job training with practice in modeling desired skills was one of the most useful tools for improving branch manager supervision and feedback. Although involved in their development, FOCCAS branch managers, when first asked to try out the checklists, gave limited and often very negative, in tone, feedback to field agents,. After watching demonstrations of the new feedback strategy, their own styles of supervision began to change, as explained by the example in Box 9.

Box 9: On-the-Job Training—A Powerful Tool for Change

When the branch managers were first observed using the checklists, their supervision techniques were not ideal. Techniques included the following:

- Giving feedback on just a few things the field agents did wrong concerning Credit Association management and then making the needed adjustments themselves, without providing any suggestions to the field agents on how to improve.
- Thanking the field agent for the education lesson but promptly offsetting the positive tone with negative observations such as "But the thing is, you started late. Why?" or "But you see, you should have done this, that and the other . . . ."
- Observing the session without scoring the checklist.
- In one case, giving no feedback at all following the meeting except: "I see you have a difficult group to deal with. I'll talk with you back in the office."

The training manager began to give the branch managers suggestions on how to give more supportive feedback, modeling what to do herself with the field agents. "This is a learning process for all of us. I'd like to demonstrate another way to give feedback . . . ."

During the second set of joint observations the techniques improved some:

- In some cases the branch manager began with positive feedback. The suggestions for areas needing improvement followed and in some cases were couched in positive terms but, in others, were still somewhat punitive in tone.
- When one branch manager felt a bit rushed and uneasy about giving feedback, a brief thanks was given, and then the field agent was just shown the scores and asked if she had any questions.
- In one case feedback was given to the field agents and *Credit with Education* members together, telling the group and then the field agent "publicly," in turn, what they needed to do better.

Each time the branch managers practiced, they were given suggestions concerning new, more supportive strategies to try. Each branch manager was observed twice and with this additional coaching they did quite admirable jobs of giving positive and supportive feedback.

5. Step #3: Using the Information to Improve Education-Delivery Quality at Individual and Programmatic Levels

There are various ways in which the information gathered through the checklist observations can be used to improve the quality of educational delivery (and Credit Association management) at both the individual and programmatic levels. In each case, it is important to clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of various staff, the system for informational flow, periodicity, recordkeeping and analysis. The experience of the three *Credit with Education* profiled examples of the variety of mechanisms for using the checklist results is reviewed below.

5.1 Assessing individual field agent performance

5.1.1 *Providing feedback and support for individual field agents*

The first use of the results would be to provide feedback and support for individual field agents. Three "strategies" or venues are used for this individual level feedback.

Feedback while still in the field. Feedback is likely to have the most impact if given to the field agents directly following the observation of the learning session or Credit Association meeting, because the experience is still very fresh in both the field agent's and supervisor's minds. This feedback process would include the steps described earlier.

Feedback during regularly scheduled meetings. Field agents typically are required to come into their branch offices for individual and group meetings on a weekly basis. Feedback and support on the issues identified should continue, if needed, during these meetings. At this time a copy of the results (both the checklist scores and feedback section) should be given to the field agents. Also, if there was no time for feedback while still in the field, feedback should be initiated at this time.

Further individual support, as needed. In cases where the weaknesses identified are many and the support needed is quite extensive, the "Plans of Action" agreed upon by the field agents may involve additional activities or support to strengthen the field agents' performances. This would be planned on an "as needed" basis and tailored to each situation.

5.1.2 *Using observation checklist scores in the field staff performance appraisal system*

Most of the organizations implementing *Credit with Education* have a system for appraising staff performance on an annual or semiannual basis. Field agents are assessed in the various areas of their work, including the following for example:

- Number of members and Credit Associations being served
- Performance of these Credit Associations in terms of members' regular attendance at meetings and on-time repayment
- Number of new groups that are being promoted or trained
- Number of learning sessions facilitated in a given period
- Completeness and timeliness of monitored reports

The results from the observation checklists—both for learning sessions and more general Credit Association meeting management—can be integrated into the field agents' performance objectives and appraisal systems. CRECER in Bolivia has done this. The FOCCAS Uganda performance appraisal system is currently being revised and the issue of how to include the observation checklist results in the system is being considered. Of course, when the checklist results are used in this manner it is especially important that scoring be considered fair and unbiased. Training exercises such as the one described above to reduce inter-observer differences are needed. In addition, training staff and LOU or branch coordinators should both have the opportunity to score observations of delivery of the same lessons during joint visits and to compare the scores.

5.1.3 *Using observation checklist scores in a bonus incentive system*

A similar use of the observation checklist results is to incorporate them into an incentive system for determining eligibility for financial bonuses. However, an important consideration for this use is an incentive system that is perceived as "fair" and not easily compromised by false reporting. A challenge for this use of the checklist is that it has the potential to undermine the openness needed for learning and self-improvement since the assessment results determine whether or not the field agent receives a financial bonus. Developing and vetting the incentive system through a participatory process that involves each staffing level is necessary if it is to be "owned" and successfully motivate staff in a positive manner. FOCCAS's Incentive System is also currently under review. As this review takes place, consideration will be given to whether and how scores on quality of education and Credit Association meeting management should be used as part of the formula in determining incentives.

CRECER's *Credit with Education* program in Bolivia has incorporated the checklist results into its staff incentive system. Field agents are eligible for bonuses on the basis of four measures:

1. Number of borrowers
2. Amount of loans outstanding
3. Percentage of late loans (eight or more days past due)
4. Quality of services

The quality of services pertain to both the facilitation of learning sessions and the general meeting and is based on the combined scores each field agent received from his/her supervisor (the average of four monthly observations) and the regional trainer (once per quarter).

The observations of the regional trainer were considered necessary to review the quality of supervision conducted by coordinators. Field agents must receive a minimum average score of 60 for the "quality of services" measure to be eligible for any bonus (financial or quality). The amount of the bonus they receive is related to how much higher their average score is above this minimum level. Quality of service scores of 61–70 earn the field agent an additional 45 Bolivianos (approximately US$9) while those with scores of 96–100 receive an additional 240 Bolivanos (approximately US$48). Field agents who receive the minimum score for quality of services also are eligible for additional bonuses depending on the other three measures: number of borrowers, amount of loans outstanding and percentage of late loans.

5.1.4 *Entering the checklist results in the regular progress reports and filing the checklists*

On a regular basis, the checklist scores for each field agent can be entered into a spreadsheet to track trends in performance either program-wide or by individual branch. Most *Credit with Education* programs also produce monthly or quarterly program-wide reports to regularly track achievement against performance targets. Branch or program averages for checklist scores could also be incorporated into this system. For example, FOCCAS Uganda generates a monthly report that focuses purely on quantitative information concerning the workload and various indicators of performance for each field agent, with just one page per branch. Suggestions for integrating the checklist information into the report included adding columns for listing the number of learning sessions and Credit Association meetings observed during the month and the average checklist scores received for each. In addition, it has been proposed that space be added at the bottom for listing "improvements needed." In addition to summarizing the results in the monthly report, the original checklists would be included in the files for the field agents so they could be easily referenced when determining what support is needed and for use in the performance appraisal and incentive systems.

5.2 Using checklist results to identify additional training needs

The checklist scores can also be used to identify aspects of the learning session facilitation that field agents in general tend to find more problematic. The initial training for these areas might be redesigned and additional retraining planned that will help raise skills in these areas. Again, simple spreadsheets can be used to identify areas of performance that receive lower than average scores. When the checklist results are used for this purpose, it is really only necessary to analyze a randomly selected sample for a given period or area (Davis and Mobley, 2001). Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) is very appropriate for doing this (Valadez, 1991).

5.2.1 *Organizing meetings to review information in the monthly reports and determining how to address identified needs*

Training managers can also convene periodic meetings to review the information in the monthly reports and determine how to address the identified needs. This meeting should involve all relevant personnel, including the branch managers, operations officer, auditors, training manager and, when available, the general manager. This would be a time to plan activities, adjustments in strategies, etc., for the following month. Time would be spent reviewing the "areas for improvement" related to the learning sessions and Credit Association meetings listed in the three branch "Field Agent Monthly Performance" reports, as well as discussing branch managers' views on what support would be useful, and then planning for any actions needed.

5.2.2 *Addressing needs identified through future training activities*

Ideas for future training for the field agents will come from the branch managers and other staff using the observation checklists. The training manager will need to compile these needs on the basis of discussions and supervisors' reports and decide what training is needed and the best methods for giving it. The field agents, for example, are likely to need coaching on how to encourage dialogue, how to keep from imposing their own views, how to deal with domineering members, how to prepare visual aids and other props using materials available in the local environment, etc. Training managers can also give periodic short classroom sessions for branch/LOU managers focusing on team building and the supervisor's role and tasks. Training managers should also periodically go to the field with branch managers to observe their use of the checklists and feedback, coaching the branch managers as necessary.

5.2.3 *Addressing needs identified through other programmatic measures*

Results from the observation checklists may indicate that there are problems that need to be addressed by other means. For example, if certain problems in Credit Association management arise repeatedly, adjustment of the meeting management strategies may need to be considered. If field agents continually score more poorly on delivery of certain education sessions, it may indicate that the session plans themselves need revising. Possibilities for programmatic changes that may improve field agent performance should be considered whenever appropriate.

6. Other Strategies for Tracking Educational Progress and Outcomes

The Learning Session Observation Checklist focuses on assessing the quality of delivery of the education sessions and is only one of a number of tools used for evaluating training educational progress and outcomes. A number of other strategies and tools have been developed by Freedom from Hunger and its partners for assessing other aspects of the educational component of its approach. While these tools are not the focus of this paper, each will be described briefly, indicate the range of approaches to "progress tracking" of education that are being developed and used by various programs.

- **Credit Association participatory discussion**
  These are participatory discussions facilitated by the field agent to explore clients' opinions and experiences typically through the use of a visual group exercise such as ranking, rating or creation of a calendar. The format of these discussions is very powerful as it allows for considerable learning about the wants and needs of clients in their own words. Table 2 summarizes the variety of different participatory discussions that have been used to learn from *Credit with Education* members. In terms of the education component, these findings have been used to identify new topics to add to the repertoire of modules as well as indicate the need for greater coordination with other health-oriented service providers in the area.

Table 2: Examples of Credit Association Participatory Discussions

Name/Title	Purpose
Client difficulties and coping strategies	➢ Better understand the difficulties and vulnerabilities faced by clients. ➢ Identify critical periods when these most occur and who in the household is most affected. ➢ Analyze the factors that cause these difficulties and how clients cope. ➢ Suggest steps that would help prevent or improve coping with these difficulties with implications to program services and actions clients themselves could take.
Trends in child health	➢ Learn whether in the clients' opinion the health and nutrition of the children in their neighborhood/village has improved, stayed the same or become worse, compared to two years ago. ➢ Learn why members think child health and nutrition has improved, stayed the same, or become worse. Explore how they judge and what factors are influential in change. Investigate implications for the program. ➢ Determine whether clients mention program services as affecting child health and nutrition.
Seasonal patterns of income, savings and expenditures	➢ Better understand the seasonal patterns of when clients earn more, spend more, save more. ➢ Explore implications of these patterns to program services and opportunities.
Clients' likes/ dislikes and recommendations for changes for program services	➢ Solicit feedback from clients on existing program services. Explore what they like and not like and what they suggest be changed. ➢ Organize client recommendations in terms of what field agents and branch-level supervisors could take immediate action on vs. others that would require more fundamental change to services/policies—consider analysis at senior-management level implications to organization and take back refined possible changes to clients for further evaluation.

- **Client satisfaction interview**
  These are brief interviews conducted with a sample of clients to determine clients' relative satisfaction with the education services. Satisfaction is captured in terms of clients' own ratings of the usefulness, applicability and demand for the various education topics covered. Clients are also asked to give specific examples for how they have used and shared the information that they have learned with others.

- **Knowledge and practice pre- and post-tests**
  Both CARD and CRECER are using a Lot Quality Sampling Approach (LQAS) to measure client knowledge and practice in the education topic areas before and after they participate in the learning sessions. Relatively short mini-surveys are used which include not more than 15 questions so that they can be administered after the regular Credit Association meeting. Results are being used to indicate which aspects of the education are being communicated effectively to the members and whether they are adopting these practices.

- **Research on the impact of *Credit with Education***
  Certain *Credit with Education* programs have wanted to engage in more rigorous impact evaluation research. These studies have used a more formal quasi-experiential design with control groups and random assignment to receive program services. These studies have been useful for testing the potential impact of the strategy on ultimate goals such as household food security and children's nutritional status.

7. Conclusion: Adapting the Education Checklist for Use in Other Programs

The Learning Session Observation Checklist could be a tool for assessing the quality of education delivery in a wide variety of programs. The steps needed for developing or adapting the checklist and determining how the results it generates should be used for improving education quality may vary from program to program. However, some key steps to consider, based on the experience with FOCCAS, CRECER and CARD, can be proposed.

- **Planning for how the results will be used within the program, both at individual and programmatic levels**

  An essential aspect of the design process is to plan for how the results will be used within the program. Some of the descriptions of how the checklists were used by these *Credit with Education* implementers may be useful to review, as the possible strategies for utilization of results are considered. Some of the key uses to consider are 1) for supervisors to use the results to provide immediate feedback to field agents on where their strengths and weaknesses lie and strategies for improvement; 2) for field agents themselves to use the checklists as self-learning tools; 3) for program managers to use the data in performance appraisal and/or incentive systems, and 4) for program managers to review the results for any indications that changes in educational strategies are needed at a programmatic level.

- **Reviewing the objectives of the educational component of the program and determining what aspects of "education quality" the checklist should measure**

  The first step in determining what an observation checklist should cover would be to review the objectives of the education component and decide what aspects of "education quality" should be measured by the tool. As described in this paper, Freedom from Hunger and its partners are using an "adult learning" or participatory approach to education, and so wanted to include criteria within its tool that would measure the extent to which adult learning principles were being adhered. Staff also wished to determine whether the learning session sequence was being followed and whether technical information was clearly and accurately transmitted to the learners. The educational approaches of other programs may vary and must be considered before development of the checklist begins.

- **Involving staff (including management and field personnel) in determining what items should be included in the checklist**

  As was seen in the experiences of each of the three *Credit with Education* programs profiled here, it is very helpful to involve staff, including management and field personnel, in brainstorming sessions on what items to include in the checklists. This can both provide useful information on what aspects of the education program are important to staff members and, at the same time, help gain their commitment to eventually using the checklist (either for supervision or self-assessment).

- **Drafting the checklist and field-testing it within the program**

  The next step would be to draft a preliminary version of the checklist, field-test it, and continue adjusting it, as necessary. As with the FOCCAS experience, this process can take some time, but is very useful in eventually developing a tool that will best meet the program's needs. If a review of the sample checklists provided in the annexes of this paper indicates that they have features or particular items that may be useful to include in the new checklist, it may save time to incorporate them in the draft. While the checklist "designers" may be the first to try it out, field tests of how well it is handled by the proposed "users" is very important before finalization.

- **Orienting supervisors on the purpose of the checklist and training them in its use**

  Orientation and training of the users of the checklist is also essential, if it is to be used properly. The review of the training activities undertaken by FOCCAS and other Freedom from Hunger partners may give some ideas of training strategies to consider. One of the most important types of training to include is "on-the-job" training, which may involve the trainer(s) observing the trainees completing the checklist and giving feedback and, when necessary, modeling what is to be done, with the trainer giving feedback while the trainees watch. The FOCCAS program found that this type of practice, with supportive coaching on how to improve, was essential.

- **Implementing use of the checklists and adjusting strategies, as necessary**

  The final step, of course, would be to actually use the checklists and whatever strategies have been selected for reporting and utilization of results, and then make adjustments, as necessary.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1:

Example Learning Session: Breastfeeding—Everyone Can Help

Improving Breastfeeding—Everyone Can Help
SESSION 2: LOCAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES CONCERNING BREASTFEEDING

OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the session, participants will have:
1. Described local breastfeeding practices to each other.
2. Reviewed recommended breastfeeding practices.
3. Compared local practices with the recommended practices.

TIME:
30 minutes

METHODS:
Solidarity Group discussions, group presentations, field agent presentation, large-group discussions

PREPARATION/MATERIALS:
1. Prepare a copy of the pictures that go with the three recommendations.

STEPS

1. **Large-Group Discussion to Review the Previous Session** - 5 minutes

   In the large group, ask:
   What important recommendations did we learn in the previous session from the story of Miriam and her children?

Key Review Points on Breastfeeding
- Babies should be breastfed as soon as they are born—within the first hour.
- Give only breastmilk for about the first six months and keep breastfeeding for up to two years while adding other healthy foods at six months.
- The advice that people give a mother about breastfeeding is very important.

2. **Solidarity Group Discussions About Local Breastfeeding Practices** - 15 minutes

   Have participants sit with their Solidarity Groups and remind them of the take-home assignment from the previous session. They should talk about their own experience and what they learned from the women with whom they talked.

How soon after your children were born did you, or those with whom you talked, start breastfeeding?

At what age did you, or those with whom you talked, start giving other food and drinks besides breastmilk to your children?

After about 5 minutes get everyone's attention and ask for one group to volunteer a summary of what was discussed. After they have finished, ask:

Would another group like to add anything different from what this group found?

Continue asking for different ideas until experiences related to both questions have been shared.

3. Presentation of Recommended Practices - 5 minutes

Present three breastfeeding recommendations that have been made by health experts in this country. Show the picture for each and ask the women what they see (to make sure it is clear).

Key Breastfeeding Recommendations

- Start breastfeeding within about one hour of birth to make sure that the baby gets the "first milk" or colostrum. There should be no other foods given before or after the colostrum, such as water, other liquids or ritual foods.
- Give only breastmilk (no other foods or liquids, not even water) until a child is about six months old. Feed the child frequently—when he or she wants, day and night—and give at least five complete feeds (about 20 minutes or more in length) during which the breast is emptied.
- Start to give other foods when the child is about six months but continue to breastfeed him/her for two years or beyond.

4. Large-Group Discussion to Compare Recommendations With Local Practices - 5 minutes

After your presentation, ask:

How does the recommendation about starting breastfeeding within about one hour of birth compare to practices here?

After several responses, ask:

How do the recommendations about giving only breastmilk until the child is about six months old compare to practices here?

Recognize local practices that are the same as the recommendations.

After several responses, close by thanking the participants for helping you compare the recommendations to what is done here. Tell them that you will be talking about the recommendations in the coming sessions and giving reasons for them.

Attachment 2:

CRECER: Instructions for Filling Out the Qualitative Evaluation Form

Attachment 2

CRECER: INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE QUALITATIVE EVALUATION FORM

The Qualitative Evaluation Form is an instrument that allows us to measure the quality of services offered in Credit Associations, especially in the area of education.

This instrument should be used by administrators, training coordinators and/or inspectors. One of the above should visit each field agent once every four months in a regular meeting (10, 11, 12, 13, 14 or 15) when the field agent is present. If the field agent is absent and does not have an excuse known to the administrator, the score is 0.

CONTENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SESSION

1. Topics are presented according to plan. Identify the current topic according to the plan from the National Office and whether it corresponds to the one being used in the Credit Association training. If it does correspond, the score is 5; if not, it is 0.

2. Sequence in the lesson numbers. The sequence can be confirmed by comparing the book of minutes with the PFC form. If the sequence is in order, the score is 5; if not, 0.

3. The education topic can be completed during the cycle. Since the visit will be as of Meeting 10, the education topics will not yet be completed. But, it is possible to determine whether the topic can be completed in that cycle. If it is possible, the score will be 5; if not, 0.

4. During the session, the key points were mentioned. Using the guide, observe the key points that were mentioned. If all the key points were mentioned, give a score of 10; if not, 0.

5. All the steps in the education session were followed.

- **Animation/Warm-up.** If there is a warm-up activity, 2 points; if not, 0.
- **Summary of the previous session.** Using the guide, verify that all key points were touched on from the previous session. If there is a summary, 2 points; if not, 0.
- **Session steps are followed.** Using the guide, determine whether the steps are being followed. If all are followed, 5 points; if not, 0.
- **Summary of current session.** Using the guide, verify whether the key points are mentioned. If all are mentioned, 2 points; if not, 0.
- **Take-home message.** Verify that the message was presented. If so, 2 points; if not, 0.
- **Reference to health services.** The field agent mentions the existing health services (whether or not there are agreements) and supports the work of the CBD.
- There are six steps that should be presented during the education session. The first five described on the form have a value of 2 points each. The sixth, which refers to the presentation of the topic, has a value of 5 points. For scoring, see the content summary of the education sessions.

6. **Participation.** Observe whether the women show an interest in and talk about the topic, whether in pairs, groups or in the large group, during the education session. If more than one-half of them do, the score is 10. If it is one-quarter of the women, 5 points, and if there is very little participation, the score is 0.

7. **Last cycle education.** Ask the group what they learned from the last loan cycle (0–10 points). One point for each key point mentioned.

Management of the meeting:

1. **Management by elected Credit Association leaders:** Every phase of meeting = 10 points, part of meeting = 5, the promoter is managing the meeting = 0.
2. **Elected Credit Association leaders maintain four record books up to date:** Yes =10, No =0
3. **Transparent management of the money:** Yes = 10, No = 0
4. **Promoter's form up to date:** Yes = 10, No = 0

Total Points

Attachment 3:

CARD Center Meeting Observation Checklist

Attachment 3

CARD Center Meeting Observation Checklist

TO Name: ________________________ Observer Name/Position: _______________________/_______

Center Name: _________________________ Branch Name: __________________ Date:_____________

Center Meeting Activities Management			
A. Opening Activities			
1. Started the meeting on-time	Y	N	
2. Dressed in the proper uniform, wearing his/her identification card	Y	N	
3. Had all materials (collection sheet, loan disbursement documents, etc.) organized for use	Y	N	
4. Checked attendance record signatures, used color codes (blue = on-time and red = late arrival)	Y	N	
5. Validated excused absences with the members	Y	N	N/A
6. Joined in the opening prayer	Y	N	
7. Responded to the recital of the 10 Decisions by members with the CARD staff pledge	Y	N	
8. Asked for additions/corrections to the previous meeting minutes read by the secretary	Y	N	
B. Business/Finance Activities/Agenda			
1. Acknowledged project reports of one group by asking for members' comments/problem-solving	Y	N	
2. Signed project notebooks for members of the group that reported	Y	N	
3. Co-facilitated the discussion of the Agenda with the Center Chief	Y	N	
4. Identified Center issues or concerns	Y	N	N/A
5. Followed the remittance tally procedure	Y	N	
6. Resolved any under- or over-payments	Y	N	N/A
7. Finalized the signing of the amortization schedule	Y	N	
8. Returned all amortization schedules and the attendance notebook	Y	N	
C. Closing Activities			
1. Completed the roll call	Y	N	
2. Announced the percentage for attendance and repayment	Y	N	
3. Paid attention to the reading of Letter of Understanding, Promissory Note(s) and Loan Application(s)—managed the process only if 100% attendance <u>and</u> repayment (MPL needs only 90% attendance)	Y	N	N/A
4. Stated clearly the schedule for loan disbursements, additional special meetings, etc.	Y	N	N/A
5. Completed documentation of resigning member(s)—letter, fund withdrawal slip, ledgers, etc.	Y	N	N/A
6. Joined in the closing prayer	Y	N	
D. Relationship to Clients			
1. Demonstrated respect. Give <u>specific</u> example of respect or disrespect: ________________ ____	Y	N	
2. Maintained focused attention of the group on each meeting activity.	Y	N	
3. Encouraged client participation by praise, invitation to speak, etc. Give <u>specific</u> example of encouraged or discouraged: ____	Y	N	
E. Additional Practices and Attitudes to Observe			
1. Facilitated group problem-solving and provided ideas and comments for the discussion. Give example: ____	Y	N	N/A
2. Helped clients resolve any conflicts that arise. Give example: _____________________ ____	Y	N	N/A
3. Demonstrated flexibility and open-mindedness. Give example: ____________________ ____	Y	N	N/A
4. Accepted feedback positively from the clients. Give example: ____________________ ____	Y	N	N/A

Notes: 1. N/A should only be used if the Technical Officer did not have an opportunity to use or practice the element. Otherwise "Y" or "N" should be used in each case.
2. For "Give specific example"—if no specific example of respect or encouragement can be given, "N" should be circled.

Attachment 4

Learning Session Summary—Breastfeeding Module

Attachment 4

Learning Session Summary—Breastfeeding Module

Session 1: The Importance of Good Breastfeeding Practices **Time:** 25 minutes

Technical Content:
- Breastfeed a child as soon as it is born—within the first hour
- Give only breastmilk for the first 6 months
- Keep breastfeeding for up to two years while adding other healthy foods at 6 months
- Breastmilk is always clean and ready and breastfeeding is good for the child and the mother
- Advice to mothers concerning breastfeeding is VERY important

Steps:
1. Introduction to module explaining objectives (5 minutes)
2. Story with pictures (3 minutes)
3. Paired discussions and large group sharing about story (12 minutes)
4. Activity to learn about community practices (5 minutes)

Methods/Material:
- Had pictures ready—everyone able to see them
- Used paired/small groups to discuss story
- Facilitated discussion on 2 questions from story: important lesson and role of advice
- Gave two questions to be used to learn about community practices

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Session 2: Local Beliefs and Practices Concerning Breastfeeding **Time:** 30 minutes

Technical Content:
- Breastfeed a child as soon as it is born—within the first hour
- Give only breastmilk for the first 6 months
- Keep breastfeeding for up to two years while adding other healthy foods at 6 months

Steps:
1. Large-group review of the previous week (5 minutes)
2. Solidarity Group discussions about local breastfeeding practices (15 minutes)
3. Presentation of recommended practices (5 minutes)
4. Large-group discussion to compare recommendations with local practices (5 minutes)

Methods/Material:
- Used Solidarity Groups to review take-home assignment
- Had pictures ready for the three recommendations—everyone able to see them

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Session 3: Breastfeed as Soon as a Child is Born **Time:** 30 minutes

Technical Content:
- Breastfeed a child as soon as it is born—within the first hour. First milk is colostrum
- Reasons for this recommendation: increases milk production, stops mother's bleeding, colostrum like a vaccination, colostrum has all the nutrients a baby needs, colostrum cleanses stomach, breastfeeding keeps the baby warm, teaches baby to suckle better

Steps:
1. Large-group discussion to review previous session (4 minutes)
2. Presentation about starting breastfeeding immediately after birth (6 minutes)
3. Solidarity Group discussions on planning how to encourage women to practice the recommendation (15 minutes)

4. Large-group presentations by Solidarity Groups (5 minutes)

Methods/Material:

- Had picture ready for the recommendation—everyone able to see it
- Used Solidarity Groups to discuss and plan
- Moved around the meeting area to help groups to develop plan

Session 4: Only Breastmilk for the First Six Months **Time:** 30 minutes

Technical Content:

- Give only breastmilk (no other foods or liquids, not even water) until a child is about 6 months old.
- Feed the child often—whenever he or she wants—even at night
- Reasons for this recommendation: breastmilk is free, delays return of period and prevents anemia, if done exclusively and when the child wants protects woman from pregnancy if her period has not returned, breastmilk has everything a baby needs, it protects child from sickness, if baby gets sick it is less severe, breastmilk is clean and safe
- Advice to give only breastmilk no matter the reason that might lead a mother to stop

Steps:

1. Large-group review of previous session and actions taken (5 minutes)
2. Presentation of recommendation to give only breastmilk for first 6 months (6 minutes)
3. Small- and large-group discussions on why women interrupt breastfeeding or give other food/liquids (12 minutes)
4. Presentation of advice for reasons raised (7 minutes)

Methods/Material:

- Had picture ready for the recommendation—everyone able to see it
- Used small-group discussions to identify problems
- Used a checklist (provided with the session guide) to note what groups identified and prepare advice

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Session 5: Helping Mothers to Give Only Breastmilk for the First Six Months **Time:** 30 minutes

Technical Content:

- See session 4—these points should be covered in the review in Step 1
- Advice to continue breastfeeding for 6 months—for each reason why do not follow recommendation

Steps:

1. Large-group discussion to review the previous session (5 minutes)
2. Presentation to review reasons raised why women interrupt breastfeeding (3 minutes)
3. Solidarity Group work to encourage mothers to keep breastfeeding until six months (11 minutes)
4. Presentations by Solidarity Groups (11 minutes)

Methods/Material:

- Used a checklist (used in the previous session) to note what groups identified and prepare advice
- Used Solidarity Groups to come up with ways to encourage women to continue to breastfeed

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Session 6: How to Breastfeed Better **Time:** 30 minutes

Technical Content:

- How to position a baby and focus on how the baby attaches to avoid problems
- Feed a baby frequently to avoid problems
- How to treat sore nipples

Steps:

1. Large-group discussions to review the previous session (3 minutes)
2. Paired discussions about problems with breastfeeding (3 minutes)
3. A story to be completed by participants to discuss problems they identified in Step 2 (8 minutes)
4. Presentation of keys to better breastfeeding (8 minutes)

5. Paired discussions about the keys to better breastfeeding (8 minutes)

Methods/Material:

- Used pairs or small groups to discuss problems with breastfeeding
- Told the story and allowed participants to complete it
- Had pictures ready for the recommendations on keys to avoiding problems—everyone able to see it
- Used pairs to discuss recommendations

Session 7: Improving Breastfeeding Practices in Our Community **Time:** 33 minutes

Technical Content:

- Positioning and frequency as means to avoid problems
- Add other foods at 6 months and help the child eat, while continuing to breastfeed
- Reasons for the recommendation: children can digest other foods and need them, children often stop growing well at this age—someone must help children to eat, breastmilk still protects children and has things that children need, breastfeeding helps children grow better and do better in school

Steps:

1. Large-group discussion to review previous session (3 minutes)
2. Presentation of recommendation to add other foods at 6 months (5 minutes)
3. Game to review all recommended practices (10 minutes)
4. Solidarity Group discussion and planning of how to promote better breastfeeding (15 minutes)

Methods/Material:

- Had pictures ready for the recommendations on keys to avoiding problems—everyone able to see it
- Had picture of recommendation to add other foods at 6 months while continuing to breastfeed—everyone able to see it
- Used game to review recommendations
- Used Solidarity Groups to discuss and plan actions

Attachment 5

Training Activity: Giving and Receiving Feedback

Training Activity: Giving and Receiving Feedback

PURPOSE:
To review principles of giving and receiving feedback that can act as a guide for participants as they provide feedback to their colleagues after the session presentations.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of the activity, participants will have:
1. **Reviewed** a set of principles concerning giving and receiving feedback.
2. **Added** to the list any principles that are missing.
3. **Agreed** how the principles will be applied during the learning session presentations.

TIME: 20 minutes

METHODS:
Reading, large-group discussion, trainer presentation

PREPARATION/MATERIALS:
- Summarize the key principles of giving and receiving feedback on a large sheet of paper without the examples.
- Copies of the summary page "Giving and Receiving Feedback" for each participant.

STEPS

1. Individual reading and analysis of principles of giving and receiving feedback (10 minutes)

Distribute a copy of the paper "Giving and Receiving Feedback."

Ask the participants to read it and underline or highlight the parts that are particularly important to them. Encourage them to add any additional principles they think are important.

Ask for volunteers to share what are the most important parts to them.

2. Group discussion to identify how the principles will guide session feedback (10 minutes)

Post the flip-chart summary of the principles on the large sheet.

Ask for volunteers to suggest any additions to it.

Tell the participants that you will keep these principles posted throughout the session for practicing the observational checklist and that they should refer to them during the feedback time.

Ask for volunteers who would be willing to help the group be vigilant about applying the principles and reminding the group, when necessary, that they are deviating from the principles. *Write the names of volunteers on the sheet.*

Attachment 5

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving Feedback:

1. **Be specific** – come up with specific examples.

   Don't say: "You did not ask good open questions…"

   Try instead: "When you asked the question – 'Did you understand what I said?' – you might have said instead – 'What points, in what I just said, are still unclear?' This makes it an open question and encourages the participant to think about specific things they did not understand."

2. **Make a suggestion for an alternative practice or approach** (see the example above).

   For example, you might say: "When you showed the picture, the people in the back could not see it. Why not arrange beforehand with the health animator to carry it around the group – encouraging her to move to the back – while you are explaining it."

3. **Be appreciative** – feedback does not have to focus just on what did not go well. It should focus also on what people did well.

   For example, you might say: "I really like the way you paused a bit extra to give participants time to think about the question you asked."

4. **Ask questions to understand** first why the person might have done something that you felt was inappropriate.

   For example, you might say: "When you told the women to form groups, why did you tell each woman which group she was supposed to be in?"

Receiving Feedback:

1. **Listen to the entire comment/suggestion**. Try not to interrupt the one who is providing the feedback.

2. **Before responding, ask questions to make sure you understand clearly what the person is saying**. Try to restate in your own words, or paraphrase, what you have understood them to say.

3. **Try not to get defensive and justify your actions.** Consider the recommendation and thank the person who made it. At times you simply need time to consider what was said. (If the one providing the feedback asks why you did something – see point 4 under "Giving Feedback" – it is appropriate to respond.)

4. **Be thankful for the input.** Remember, when you are on your own in the field such input will not be available. Feedback is an opportunity to benefit from the experience of others.

5. **Help the one providing the input to be specific** (see point 1 under "Giving Feedback"). For example, you might say: "Could you give me an example of what you mean?"