

FACILITATION SHEET

COMMUNITY-BASED VALIDATION & PAIRWISE RANKING



Acknowledgements

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This document is part of a series of tools that can be used in conjunction with JIPS' [Joint Analysis Guide](#) and [Technical Brief on Joint Structured Analysis Techniques \(JSAT\)](#).

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Introduction

This document offers a step-by-step guide on **how to apply the techniques of validation and pairwise ranking**. These techniques can be used to involve communities in a collaborative data collection and analysis exercise, such as a collaborative profiling or a joint needs assessment. The application of these techniques can i. inform the validation of results and ensure they reflect communities’ realities, and ii. outline communities’ priorities based on the evidence.¹

The tool builds on JIPS’ experiences from the community sessions designed and conducted in Sudan as part of the durable solutions analysis implemented across eight localities in Darfur under the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Sudan in 2020-2021. Here, the validation and ranking activities showed how different displacement-affected communities prioritised their needs and challenges with regards to finding a durable solution to the situation. This helped identify common priorities that required comprehensive development interventions, but also specific displacement-related obstacles that needed to be tackled through tailored activities. The community-based validation and prioritisation thus fed directly into the subsequent development of action plans.

This facilitation sheet is published in continuation of JIPS’ **Joint Analysis Guide** and **Technical Brief on Joint Structured Analysis Techniques (JSAT)**, which highlight how a collaborative analysis process can be designed, what techniques can be applied to collectively analyse displacement data, and how to ensure shared ownership of the results and agreed-upon priorities for responses. Specifically, validation and pairwise ranking techniques can be used during the phases of **in-depth analysis and development of recommendations** (see Figure 1).

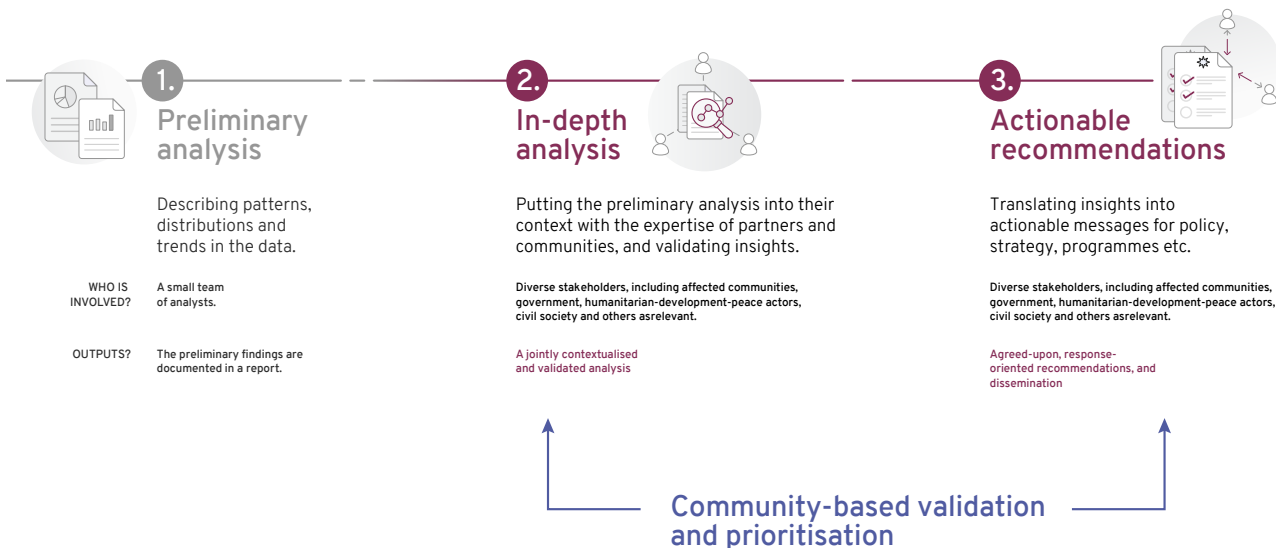


Figure 1. The three key steps of the joint analysis process

1 The tool builds on JIPS’ experiences from the community sessions designed and conducted in Sudan as part of the durable solutions analysis implemented across eight localities in Darfur under the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Sudan in 2020-2021.

Step-by-Step Guidance

PREPARATION

Structure: A community session applying the techniques of validation and pairwise ranking is organised around **two distinct and complementary activities:** i. the review and validation of key results from a given study; and ii. the prioritisation of challenges highlighted in the study results and validated in activity one.

Participants: Community sessions should ideally be organised separately for each target group (e.g. IDPs, returnees, non-displaced persons) and further be disaggregated by sex and age. This will allow to capture each group's perspective and draw out commonalities and differences. If resources do not allow for separate sessions, a joint workshop can be organized with breakout sessions for sub-groups.²

Facilitators: An experienced facilitator and note-taker are required. Both persons need to be highly familiar with the analysis results presented as well as the context. The facilitator needs to be trained in applying the above-mentioned activities neutrally and comprehensively, while the note-taker needs to be trained in capturing the discussion in writing, in pictures and potentially audio and video recording – and equipped accordingly with a phone/camera and notebook.



Figure 2. Agenda for a joint validation and prioritization session.

² In the case study from Darfur, the analysis was conducted for all displacement-affected populations (IDPs, IDP returnees, non-displaced, nomads) and therefore separate community sessions were held with each group, disaggregated by sex. In other studies, target groups might be defined based on their geographic location rather than their displacement situation, in which case that same distinction needs to be followed for the community sessions.

OPENING THE SESSION

- Aim** | Introduce facilitators and participants;
| Explain the purpose of the session and agenda

The session can be introduced to participants as follows:

“Thank you for taking the time to attend this session, it is very much appreciated. The purpose is to discuss with you the findings of a study undertaken in (region) that aims to better understand the situation of (target groups), to support (overall objective of the project). The findings are based on data collected in (region).

We would like to hear from you if the findings represent the reality of your group/community, and if there are any more details that are missing and important to reflect.

The results of this study and this session will help (actors) in developing (add output).”

Before starting the group work, it is critical to ask participants for their **permission to record and take pictures** of the activities. However, even with their consent, the documentation and reporting should ensure the anonymity of participants to avoid putting their safety at risk in often sensitive displacement contexts.

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW & VALIDATE FINDINGS

- Aim** | Share the main results with the population groups included in the study;
| Identify the extent to which results reflect the realities of the community groups and contextualise as well as nuance results accordingly.

How to prepare the validation? The most important consideration when preparing the presentation of the key results to the communities is to ensure that the language used and the visual representations are best suited to the (data) literacy of the participants and the context. Enough time should be set aside to identify which findings to share, formulate these in clear and short sentences, and use visual methods to depict the results. It is not necessary to include data on the visualisations, as long as the key message is clear (see examples from the use case below). It is critical, though, to review the visuals with relevant local experts to ensure the cards speak to the communities and effectively convey key insights from the analysis (e.g. dwelling structures, clothes, landscape, etc.).

To create the visual representations of the findings, think about:

- Which key trends can you extract from your analysis?
- What are the results that you would like specific validation on?
- Where do you need additional context or information?

Place the question at the bottom of the visuals, next to a statement summarising the finding (in the language spoken by the relevant community). If possible, develop a drawing/sketch that illustrates the finding, for instance using PowerPoint slides or a design software.

Use case: Community-based validation in Sudan

In the case of the durable solutions analysis implemented under the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in 2020-2021 in Darfur, Sudan, we **used illustration cards to convey the analysis and validate it against specific probing questions**. Each key finding was explained through a simple sentence and accompanied by a drawing, which was carefully adapted to the context to ensure participants could identify with it. The cards were tailored to each target population group (IDPs, IDP returnees, nomads and non-displaced people), and printed out on paper so that they could be easily displayed to participants within each sub-group (women and men). This approach helped ignite genuine and open discussion among the participants.



How to structure and facilitate the validation?

1. Stand in front of the participants and show each card: explain the result/statement depicted and then ask the probing question(s) to kickstart the validation discussion for each result.
2. Allow for as many contributions as possible. If you are facilitating a mixed group, begin with posing the question to the women and then the men, while ensuring that enough time is allocated for all to have a chance to provide feedback. If the visual has more than one question, make sure to capture as comprehensive of an answer as possible on the first question before moving on.
3. The note-taker must ensure that key contextual information is captured by finding and by key question, and properly attributed to the sub-group providing the input.
4. After the discussion of each card, ask if there are more comments on this finding to ensure that all have been heard, and ask if all participants agree with this finding and the discussion around it. **If disagreements arise at this point of the discussion, please make sure to record them.**

ACTIVITY 2: RANK RESULTS

Aim

Prioritise the most important challenges based on the previous validation activity, which can inform follow-up action such as local-level development planning, broader policy and advocacy, or other types of responses;

If the study is on durable solutions to displacement, relate the challenges to key barriers to reaching them.

The ranking activity allows us to understand if the key challenges identified in the preliminary analysis align with the ones identified by communities themselves, which ones are the most important to address, and if there are any additional elements to consider. If several population groups were included in the assessment/profiling, understanding their priorities and how these potentially differ or align is key to inform an area-level response that takes into account all groups' perspectives.

How to prepare the ranking? For this activity you need:

1. The **pairwise ranking matrix** (see Figure 3), printed on a large-size poster (e.g. A1) that is visible to all participants and in as many copies as there are sub-groups in a given session, and
2. A **second set of the visuals** used in the validation activity, but now focused on the main challenges/problems identified in the analysis.

While the visual representations used for the validation activity may have included challenges as well as other key results (i.e. that are not 'challenges' but require validation or further exploration with the communities), in the ranking activity, the visuals should focus on identified challenges only. Make sure the challenge is formulated in a concise and clear sentence (with no additional questions, as on the 'validation cards'). If you are using cards, limit the total number to no more than 10 in order to manage the length of the activity.

How to structure and facilitate the ranking? If the group of participants is mixed, or if it is large in size, it is important that sub-groups are organised (e.g. by sex or age) so that the ranking can be done separately. Each sub-group should select one representative to record their choices in the ranking matrix, visible to all participants in the sub-group. Alternatively, the facilitator can take on this task

1. The facilitator shows two 'problem visuals' at a time and asks the participants: "*Which of the two problems is more important for your group to overcome?*" Make sure the two visuals are visible to everyone, for instance as print-outs on paper shown to participants.
2. The facilitator gives the group (or the sub-groups) 1 minute to agree which of the two visuals represents the more important problem.
3. The note-taker records the choice in the ranking matrix (see figure 3).

This comparative ranking is repeated until all possible pairs have been discussed. Use the matrix for guidance (see Figure 3).

	Lack of land rights	Not accessing the land	Inactive youth	Vulnerable female-headed households	HH w/no or few working members	Water challenges	Ineffective conflict resolution	Insecurity and threats
Lack of land rights								
Not accessing the land								
Inactive youth								
Vulnerable female-headed households								
HH w/no or few working members								
Water challenges								
Ineffective conflict resolution								
Insecurity and threats								



Which problem is more important to overcome - insecurity or lack of opportunities for youth?

Figure 3. Sample of a pairwise ranking matrix template and how to fill it using the illustration cards.

	Lack of land rights	Not accessing the land	Inactive youth	Vulnerable female-headed households	HH w/no or few working members	Water challenges	Ineffective conflict resolution	Insecurity and threats
Lack of land rights		LAND RIGHTS	LAND RIGHTS	LAND RIGHTS	LAND RIGHTS	WATER	LAND RIGHTS	LAND RIGHTS
Not accessing the land			LAND ACCESS	FEMALE HHS	LAND ACCESS	WATER	LAND ACCESS	INSECURITY
Inactive youth				YOUTH	NO WORKING MEMBERS	WATER	YOUTH	INSECURITY
Vulnerable female-headed households					FEMALE HHS	FEMALE HHS	CONFLICT	FEMALE HHS
HH w/no or few working members						WATER	CONFLICT	INSECURITY
Water challenges							WATER	INSECURITY
Ineffective conflict resolution								CONFLICT
Insecurity and threats								

Problem	No. of times preferred	Rank
Land rights	6	1
Water	5	2
Female HHS	4	3/4
Insecurity	4	3/4
Conflict	3	5/6
Land access	3	5/6
Youth	2	7
No working members	1	8

Figure 4. Sample of a filled-in ranking matrix for one participant sub-group, and probing questions to consolidate and agree on the ranking.

- Once all possible pairs have been compared, the facilitator counts the number of times that a challenge “won” over another, and assigns the highest ranking (#1) to the challenge with most “wins”, and so on (see Figure 4).
- The note-taker takes pictures of the filled-out matrices, and records any additional reflections provided by the (sub-)group during the ranking.
- The facilitator presents the results back to the plenary for validation. If disagreements emerge at this point, **do not change the ranking, but make sure to document** what the disagreements were. If participants were previously split into sub-groups, ensure to note the points raised by each of them.

CLOSING THE SESSION

Conclude the discussion by revisiting the top three problems that were highlighted as the most important to address. Thank the participants for their valuable contributions and support to both the validation of the analysis and the ranking of key challenges. Explain the next steps of the study and how the outcomes of the validation and ranking session will be used to inform them. Ideally, also inform the workshop participants how they will be able to engage on those follow-up activities, individually or through their community representatives.

Moving From Communities' Priorities to Response

The benefits of a community-based validation and prioritisation are manifold: it helps ground-truth findings with communities themselves, to ensure the results adequately reflect their lived realities; it establishes critical shared ownership and supports communities' capacity to drive solutions through their meaningful participation; and it enables local authorities, humanitarian and development actors to design both cross-cutting and tailored programmes that are anchored in shared evidence, the local context and communities' priorities.

It must be noted, however, that the activities and techniques described here are most effective when used in a collaborative process that engages communities alongside other stakeholders throughout and beyond the data collection exercise as such. For solutions to be effective, displaced and displacement-affected communities must be meaningfully engaged not only in the decisions that inform responses, but also in the analysis that underpins it.