gisf

Session 4	Context Analysis	🕐 Duration: **60 mins**

Session Summary

This session provides a framework and tools to analyse and understand the wider operating environment, and examines different actors and relationships that influence staff security within a given context.

Session Objectives

- Highlight the importance of understanding the operating environment in managing risks to staff.
- Outline different methods and tools to analyse the context.
- Undertake a simple actor mapping exercise for the operating context.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Identify the different contextual factors that should be assessed and monitored to understand the overall security situation.

Supporting Material

- [GISF Security to go: a risk management toolkit for humanitarian aid agencies – Module 2.](#)
- [Disaster Ready/GISF Mobile Guides: Security Risk Management Toolkit](#).

Time	Suggested Activities	Resources
2 mins	**Introduction** Introduce the session and provide an overview of what this session will cover. Explain why analysing the operating environment, and being alert to changes and developments, is the first step in the process of managing risks to staff.	• S.4 Context Analysis Presentation – Slides 1 -2
10 mins	***ACTIVITY:*** **Visualising the Context** Ask each participant to write down on sticky notes at least two or three aspects of the context that may have an impact on the security situation. Ask participants to place their completed sticky notes on a flip chart or wall. Then ask participants to organise the sticky notes under different themes (you may need to assist participants in identifying possible themes, for example using PESTLE or other relevant themes that emerge during the session). Finally, summarise the key themes identified and emphasise the wide range of contextual factors that shape or influence the security situation.	
3 mins	**Context Analysis** Explain the aim of context analysis and draw attention to different types of analysis and tools – from a general overview to a detailed analysis of actors and levels of acceptance. Demonstrate how each level of analysis provides a greater level of detail and understanding to the situation in that location, which ultimately aids understanding of the threats and risks that staff face.	• Slides 3–5

	(i) Context analysis is a process to collect, store and arrange information in such a way that it can be analysed to identify significant factors that shape the environment in which the organisation operates. There are many types of analysis, each providing varying level of detail. For example, general PESTLE analysis, conflict and political violence analysis, criminal activity analysis.	
	Introduce the PESTLE analysis – a framework to help identify and analyse key factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) that may influence the context, and therefore the organisation. Provide examples of how each of the six factors can impact or enhance the overall security situation or specific risks for staff within that location. Adapt the list on the slide to reflect significant factors within that location.	
5 mins	**Situation Analysis** Explain how, for the purpose of security risk management, it is important to be more attentive to certain aspects of a situation and undertake a more detailed analysis to develop greater understanding of factors that are critical to the security of staff and programmes. Draw attention to aspects that should be assessed when working in areas affected by armed conflict or political violence. (i) It is vital to develop a detailed understanding of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of conflict and violence, to identify the potential risks to staff. Without a good understanding of the conflict, staff may be exposed to unnecessary risks, and programmes and activities may unintentionally help to fuel violent conflict or exacerbate existing tensions. In areas with significant criminal activity, highlight the importance of determining in more detail the types of crimes that exist in different locations, who is targeted and how they occur. Lastly, explain the important role that incident monitoring and reporting has in developing a detailed understanding of the context. (i) Monitoring internal and external incident reports helps to identify trends and gain a better understanding of the context, which ultimately improves operational decisions.	• Slides 6–8
3 mins	**Actor Mapping** Explain how mapping the different actors in the operating environment, and analysing their dynamic relationship with you and other stakeholders, is a key tool in understanding the context. Demonstrate how an actor mapping tool can be used to assess and map the influence different stakeholders have on your security. Draw attention to the various positions of different actors in relation to an NGO, and to each other, on the example provided in the slides. Highlight the different relationships between the actors, for example sources of	• Slides 9–10

	conflict or sources of support, and explain how you can visualise these different relationships on the actor map.	
30 mins	**ACTIVITY:** **Actor Mapping** Divide participants into small groups of three or four. Ask each group to develop an actor map that visualises the security influence of different actors in that that location. Explain the key steps: • Draw on a flip chart the two security axes of the map – influence and threat/support. • Write the names of different actors in the context on sticky notes. • Place each actor on the map according to their influence on the security situation, and whether they are a source of threat or support. • Use different colours and symbols to indicate the different linkages and relationships between actor groups. After 20 minutes, ask groups to hang their work on the wall. Ask each group to briefly explain their actor map and to highlight any significant actors or relationships. Once each group has provided feedback, highlight any issues missed by the participants. Draw attention to the need to capture indirect relationships, for example the NGO may not have direct links or influence with a specific armed actor, but the community may have some influence.	
2 mins	**Acceptance Analysis** Introduce an acceptance analysis and explain how this can provide an additional level of context knowledge to assist security risk management. ⓘ In many contexts in which NGOs operate, and especially given the dynamic nature and uncertainty of various relationships, acceptance of an organisation and its activities is not something that can be assumed; it must be assessed and constantly monitored. The acceptance analysis tool can be used to assess and monitor the levels of acceptance of an organisation and its activities among different stakeholders. Any acceptance analysis should include a wide range of stakeholders and actors, especially those with the capacity and/or motive to obstruct programme implementation or threaten staff.	• Slide 11
5 mins	**Information Sources** ❓ Ask participants: *Who are the key sources of security information within that location?* Capture those mentioned by participants on a flip chart and discuss the reliability of the different sources suggested. After listing the participants' suggestions, refer to the slide with examples of different information sources. Adapt the list to reflect information sources relevant to the context. Draw attention to the need to gather information from numerous and varied sources. Stress that information sources should be assessed in terms of reliability, and the validity of the information provided. Highlight that	• Slide 12

| | assessments should also be made as to the sensitivity of the information being gathered.

Gathering security information can be very sensitive and may place staff at risk. It is vital to ensure that staff are fully aware of the dangers involved in gathering security information and are informed how to handle any sensitive information. | |