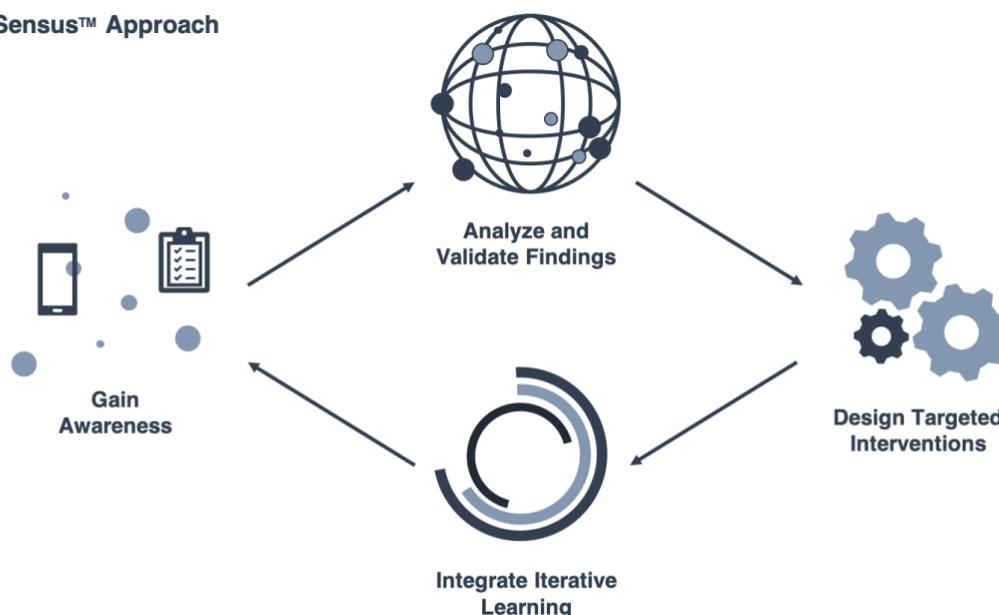# Sensus™

After ten years of operating in fragile and conflict-affected environments (FCAS), DT recognized the need to develop our own evidence-based, design-thinking approach to programming. Leveraging our experience working in these environments, DT developed a participatory and inclusive data-driven analytical framework – *Sensus* – to help our partners design hyper-local targeted interventions to mitigate the underlying causes of violence, instability, or community dysfunction.

Local perceptions are critical to understanding community-level dynamics. Seeing a problem from the community's perspective provides the context required for rigorous analysis and community-inspired collaborative program design. By working with local stakeholders during each step of the Sensus process, we are better positioned to prioritize community voices, challenge outsider assumptions, and ensure sensitivity to local dynamics.

Sensus is predicated on local participation at every step of the process. Establishing community partnerships ensures project ownership and sustainability from key stakeholders who provide greater contextual knowledge and insight. By closely working with local stakeholders through trainings and workshops, DT tailors survey instruments, applies our Sensus analytical filters, verifies and validates findings, co-designs activities, and applies lessons learned and best practices.

Sensus has application across a broad spectrum of programs. From stabilization and countering violent extremism (CVE) to countering gang violence and gender-based violence, DT adapts Sensus for each program type with context-specific analytical filters, developed and informed by conflict theory and best practices operating in FCAS, to address the underlying causes of community vulnerability.

The Sensus™ Approach

Gain Awareness → Analyze and Validate Findings → Design Targeted Interventions → Integrate Iterative Learning

Sensus is predicated on ensuring local participation at every step of the process. Local stakeholders have a major role in designing survey instruments, validating initial findings, designing hyper-local intervention strategies, and ultimately, implementing grants to address community vulnerabilities.

Gain Awareness

To better attain accurate and relevant information, DT co-creates conflict sensitive and context specific questionnaires with local partners, often designing proxy questions to address sensitive subjects like extremist ideologies. We vet and train our local researchers to collect primary source data through quantitative sample surveys and qualitative key informant interviews using technology-enabled mechanisms like smartphone-based and digital media collection tools. The data collection results and analytics can be viewed geospatially in real-time on DT's Knowledge Management System (KMS).

Analyze and Validate Findings

Once the data is collated in DT's KMS, our local research team and select community influencers analyze the findings to identify and prioritize community vulnerabilities underlying those perceptions. We use context-specific analytical filters to break large data sets into discrete categories. Discerning key drivers is critical to the Sensus process, as it prioritizes conflict drivers by their importance to the community. DT then validates these findings through participatory focus group discussions with community members.

Design Targeted Interventions

Once key drivers have been validated, DT facilitates dialogues with community stakeholders to co-design realistic and actionable activities to mitigate priority drivers of violence, instability, or community dysfunction. This co-design session evaluates the resources available at the community-level to implement activities and mitigate the risks associated with them. Along with activity design, local stakeholders generate specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timed (SMART) indicators to track proposed activities. Overall, Sensus measures activity outcomes and visualizes these metrics in meaningful ways in DT's KMS.

Integrate Iterative Learning

Sensus also incorporates iterative learning. Because perception data can be viewed in real-time, activities can be quickly adjusted to adapt to changing perceptions or dynamics on the ground. This means that local partners gain greater granular and structural understanding as they implement their activities, reallocating resources and efforts to maximize outputs and outcomes. When appropriate, DT reports our findings to local councils and host governments in order to seek greater collaboration and to link sub-national and national initiatives to ensure meaningful and sustainable impact. This continuous and expansive learning process not only allows interventions to remain agile and effective in addressing community vulnerabilities, but also builds on existing community resiliencies to establish sustainable linkages.

Sensus has successfully supported programming for a wide variety of partners across the globe.