Conversational Writing Exercises

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PRACTICE I: Sentence Variety

One way to avoid the hammer blows of Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) is to combine two SVO sentences into one, using one of the three methods just discussed:

1. Using an introductory word, phrase, or clause
2. Using a parenthetical
3. Using a sentence extender

Combine the following sentences into one.

1. A number of policies and practices related to malaria and treatment of sick children have improved in Kenya. These changes have come about partly because of international agencies working closely with officials from the Ministry of Health.

2. There are issues that cross borders and require global action. Women’s health issues and priorities have been established as such.

3. Also in the last decade, many countries have embarked on initiatives to expand and improve reproductive health care. These efforts gained momentum following the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo.

4. The best way to do this is through manual vacuum aspiration (MVA). It is safer, less costly, and as effective as the traditionally used dilation and curettage (D&C).

5. It is known that people will talk about this sensitive subject. Here again, though, follow-up has been poor.
6. The other often targeted group is health personnel. Health personnel ranged from specialized hospital workers to field workers.

7. It is now possible for Danida to work at macro, meso, and micro levels, and to create synergies between these levels. Such complementary approaches are implemented in Ghana.

8. Another area largely driven by Congress is the practice of tying aid exclusively to U.S. sources. This can reduce its effectiveness by limiting competition, increasing costs and undermining local ownership.

9. The Health Facility Mapping summary report found that only 16 percent of facilities had power. This proportion was considerably lower than that found in the HFS.

10. While Denmark’s flexibility and speedy response make it well-placed to work in fragile states, political considerations may hamper the ability to define a coherent entry and exit strategy. This is a challenge for all DAC countries.

11. Development co-operation is an opportunity to exert leadership in the world. It should be an integral part of foreign affairs and national strategy.
PRACTICE II: Writing With Agents

Rewrite these sentences using agents.

1. A plan for addressing any requirements will be reflected in final agreements with each subgrantee.

2. However, the government has not yet indicated when such a proposal will be submitted to the Council of Ministers and parliament.

3. To the extent practical, these tools will be implemented by the PVOs themselves in a participatory manner.

4. Climate change adaptation and mitigation were identified among the top priorities for work by members in a recent survey.

5. More flexible approaches and a stronger focus on risk management are encouraged by some donors.

6. There is also a perception in the field and at headquarters that these delays stem from the process of financial inspection in [the capital].
7. There is also a lack of awareness of the aid effectiveness principles amongst both IPAD staff and those from other ministries who are closely involved in development co-operation.

8. Talking with female rather than male professionals was strongly preferred by women.

9. Two important service delivery functions, training and supervision, were identified as needing improvement.

10. Myths are perpetuated by governments, the media, and others regarding trafficking.

11. If the above strategies are diligently implemented over a five-year period, it is our expectation that significant cumulative effects will be realized in terms of the objectives listed in the box above.

12. It is the responsibility of the auditor to document the actual performance of these tests.

13. The rules should be followed, and if doing so is perceived by the Lome office to seriously jeopardize program objectives, then authorization should be sought from DFAM to extend the liquidation period. (Three examples)
14. The active contribution of other development actors to a common vision is needed.

15. The office should not allow consultants to commence work before consultancy agreements are signed.

16. The end assessment statement was general. No reflections on the contractor’s demonstrated capacity and performance on each of the deliverables were presented.

17. There is clearly a need for the organisation to move faster with implementing this agenda.

18. There was a lack of clarity at field level on how the practical applications of monitoring, review, and evaluation are distinct from each other, although the conceptual distinctions are well defined in MOFA's guidelines. (Two examples)
PRACTICE III: Avoiding Nominalizations

Rewrite these sentences to eliminate the nominalization.

1. This market has a tendency to be very volatile.

2. The ability of the focus group leaders to involve the audience was lacking.

3. The team was unable to provide an accurate accounting of how they spent our money.

4. AID should provide timely corrections to these flaws before moving ahead with their implementation of the project. (Two noms.)

5. If the contractor makes modifications to its statement of work, we can accept the proposal.

6. The Mission should initiate action to acquire this contractor.

7. If we make the necessary clarifications concerning the new policy, everyone will understand it.

8. For inclusion in the list of PHCCs, the eligibility criteria were as follows.
9. The section includes an assessment of key inputs that are necessary for the provision of quality maternal and child health services. (Two noms.)

10. Natural resource managers recognized that their objectives in the conservation and management of natural resources could be undermined by high fertility rates in the areas they worked.

11. An important component of these strategies is the development of new diagnostic and treatment tools with strong promise.

12. Many countries have begun research projects to test integration of community-based PNC into national programs and protocols.

13. The 2013 HFS was a follow-up survey to the 2011 Rapid Health Facility Assessment (R-HFA) and used the same instrument and slightly modified sampling in order to provide an assessment of the current situation of the quality of maternal and child health services in first-line health facilities in South....

14. Decentralising financial authority further would also improve the timeliness and predictability of aid.
15. The strategies included the enlistment of men who hold power, such as community or religious leaders, to support FP.

16. The extension of HMIS to include hospitals, the harmonization of data collection tools to avoid duplication of reports and to include all programs in one database, and coordination among partners, are factors that need to be strengthened. (Fix as many as you can.)

17. The early years of the NEAP focused on the implementation of integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) associated with Madagascar’s national parks.

18. Our ultimate goals are expansion in the availability and use of family planning services and reduction of unmet need in selected countries.

19. The goal of the one-week workshop is to increase the use of research findings for the improvement of policies and programs.

20. The Population Reference Bureau and Futures Institute propose a minimal five-year program to support initiatives and to build capacity for the development and communication of strategic information for policy dialogue and implementation planning in selected high fertility countries.
21. New Zealand could increase the efficiency of its development co-operation system further.

22. The routine HMIS is currently operational in all states.

23. The involvement of the country technical partners in Immpact has improved national research capacities.

24. Because maternal and newborn health issues are indelibly linked, the provision of essential PNC in the community is the perfect opportunity to link maternal and newborn health interventions.
PRACTICE III (continued): Avoiding Nominalizations—The Adjective Form

Change the noun to an adjective in these sentences.

1. The effectiveness of the audit was never in question.

2. Pragmatism dominates New Zealand’s approach to development.

3. The donors expressed concerns about the affordability of the proposal.

4. The explanation was lacking in clarity.

5. The Ministry exhibited some reluctance about granting approval to the program.
   (Two noms.)

6. Technical experts questioned the sustainability of the project.

7. The viability of the program was never in doubt.
PRACTICE IV: Using Conversational Word Choice

SOME WORDS YOU WILL NEVER NEED AGAIN

Here are some words that are quite common in “development-ese” that you should never need to use. What word(s) can you use instead?

1. Utilize
2. Facilitate
3. Modality
4. Inception
5. Linkage
6. Optimize
7. Initiate
8. Conditionalities
9. Operationalize
10. Option
What’s the normal way of saying the following?

1. …will provide multiple *societal* benefits.

2. Various formats will be *utilized* to….

3. Develop *standardized* formats for….

4. We will carefully document conditions at the *inception* of project activities.

5. …at the *field* level.

6. *To facilitate access to this information*, it will be available both in hard cover form…

7. These are areas where IDG should bring greater policy *clarity*.

8. …raise public awareness of

9. …give more emphasis to

10. The *reduction* of partner countries from 84 to 57
11. …that slower growth and a more urbanized population will assist Ethiopia in making progress toward…

12. Providers recognized they needed to attract and retain clients if they wanted to keep their jobs, making them eager to learn and implement strategies to gauge and enhance client satisfaction.

13. Young women who delay the birth of their first child until after adolescence have greater opportunities to acquire the education and skills necessary for raising a family and competing successfully in the job market.

14. Limited research on the causal factors…

15. Closure of health facilities

16. The people may not be able to articulate this need or the need may be at a subconscious level, but when they realize their options, they recognize their own needs for change.

17. …and are in need of counselling and follow-up

18. Additionally, a patron database can be established that will aid in tracking individual information needs and ongoing project requests.