OutcomeMapping
LEARNING COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER 2009 NO. 1

In this Issue…

Welcome!

Welcome to the third biannual OM newsletter, a roundup of recent learning by the OM community. The focus of this issue is on complimentary approaches and tools for OM. A number of community members have contributed their experiences to this very practical and I hope useful issue. But it doesn't end here; we hope this is just the beginning of a great set of practical resources on how to apply OM.

Also in this issue, one of our community stewards shares his experiences at the Impact Evaluation conference in Cairo last month and shares photos of the **community meet-up**.

We also share new resources and upcoming events - in particular the 2nd Outcome Mapping Users Conference in Uruguay later this year, organised by the Latin America Centre for Outcome Mapping (CLAMA).

We hope you enjoy this issue and we encourage you to contribute your OM stories for the next issue, due in September. **Simon Hearn, Community facilitator**

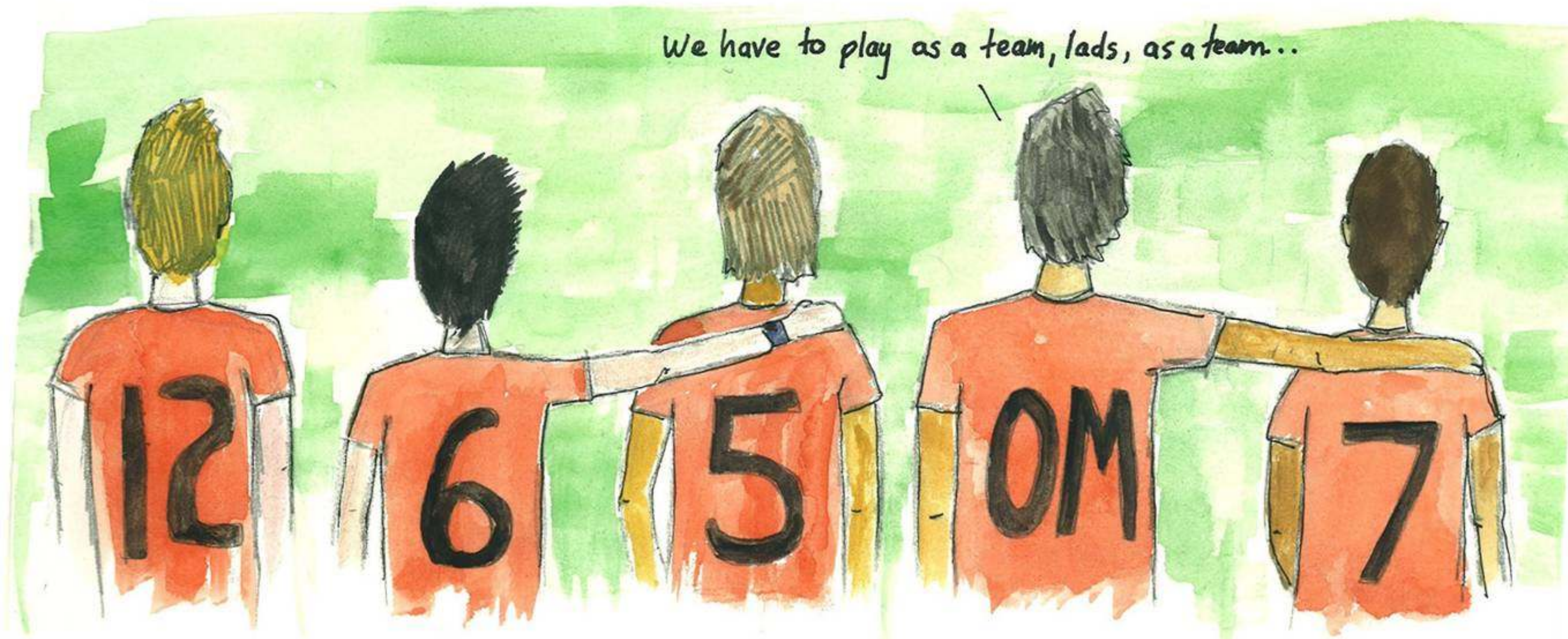
The Outcome Mapping Learning Community is a global group of over 1200 individuals dedicated to collective learning and sharing of knowledge around Outcome Mapping. It was formed in 2005 and has been steadily growing since then. It is supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and managed by the Overseas Development Institute in London.
www.outcomemapping.ca

OM Research Awards 2009

The OM community has been busy recently with this year's round of **Research Awards**. Seven strong proposals from members across the globe were put to the judges. After a review process centred around four criteria; contribution to the OM methodology, relevance to the OM community, engagement with OM community and research methodology; the judges agreed on three winning proposals. We are delighted to announce them here (in no particular order):

- **Development of Indonesian OM Resource Kit, Steff Deprez** (VECO Indonesia) and **Nina Shatifan** (ACCESS Phase II). Steff and Nina aim to translate and contextualise OM to the Indonesian Context. They will produce valuable lessons on the process of contextualisation as well as a locally relevant toolkit for applying OM.
- **Policy Coherence for Development in Austria: building a policy-advocacy evaluation tool, Bernhard Hack** (RE4D.net). Bernhard aims to develop a unique evaluation tool, based on OM and Social Network Analysis, for assessing government efforts towards policy coherence for development.
- **Progress markers can be developed using a Knowledge-Attitude-Practice model, Julius Nyangaga** (ILRI) and **Heidi Schaeffer** (Rhythm Communications). Julius and Heidi tackle the question of how to develop meaningful progress markers and will produce a guide on how to use the KAP model with OM.

We look forward to following these studies closely as a community and no doubt the researchers will remain in contact with us as they progress. Full details of the studies will be posted to the community shortly.

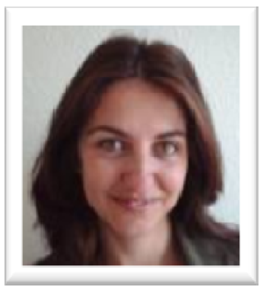


Complementary approaches to Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping is rarely used in isolation and was not designed as such. It is applied in a variety of institutional, cultural and sectoral contexts, each with their own built-in, pre-existing processes, methods and demands. One of the key strengths of Outcome Mapping is its flexibility and versatility, rather than offering a definitive methodology, it suggests a framework with which to construct a highly sensitive and contextual process for planning, monitoring and evaluation. In this vein, OM is applied in a slightly different way each time it is used, for example, some may only use particular parts of the methodology, others may integrate it into their existing system 'by stealth', still others may use it alongside other approaches and tools, either to strengthen existing methods or to customise OM to 'fit' their context.

The following articles demonstrate a number of such approaches and tools that have been tried and tested by members of the Outcome Mapping Learning Community. Natalia from Keystone Accountability presents their Impact Assessment and Learning (IPAL) method and suggests how it can compliment OM. Seán Ó Siochrú and colleagues working with the iREACH project in Cambodia present SPEAK, a software tool that aims to enable organisations to self-evaluate. They demonstrate how iREACH has been exploring the use of SPEAK as tool for managing an OM based M&E system. Steff Deprez from VECO Indonesia describes a simple tool for assessing the conditions for successful implementation of a learning-oriented M&E system, which has proved useful for bridging the gap between the Intentional Design stage of OM and the implementation of the M&E plan. Finally, Julius Nyangaga writes about his experiences using OM for planning and implementing support programmes for value chains. He describes a framework for integrating the two approaches.

Keystone's impact planning, assessment and learning approach as a complementary method to OM



By Natalia Kiryttopoulou, Keystone Accountability

Keystone has developed an impact planning, assessment and learning (IPAL) method for organizations seeking to improve the way that they can contribute to significant and lasting change.

What is Keystone's impact planning, assessment and learning method?

Keystone's IPAL helps social purpose organizations to plan, monitor, evaluate and communicate their work in a way that is deeply sensitive to the complexity of social systems and change processes. IPAL focuses on the contribution organizations make to achieving sustainable development outcomes in complex systems. It fosters accountable learning relationships among key constituents of change processes (funders, implementers and those most affected) in which each learns to contribute optimally to incremental and sustainable impact over time.

As part of the IPAL method, Keystone has produced a series of guides:

- **Developing a theory of change.** A guide to developing a theory of change as a framework for inclusive dialogue, learning and accountability for social impact. Enables organisations and their constituents to answer the questions: What is the change we are working for, and what needs to happen for the change to come about?
- **Learning with constituents.** A guide to identifying, documenting and analyzing evidence of impact (planned or unplanned), and learning from this in dialogue with constituents. Helps organisations and their constituents to apply a wide range of simple, inclusive learning dialogue methods that build confidence and trust and generate the creativity and cooperation needed to solve our most pressing problems
- **Reimagining reporting.** A guide to communicating your effectiveness and your learning through public, constituency-validated reports. Presents principles and options for public reporting that reflects the organisation's internal learning processes with its constituents, in an ecology of actors, for significant and lasting public benefit.
- **Capabilities profiler.** A guide to help organizations and their constituents assess and profile their potential to effectively bring about sustainable social change.

How does IPAL relate to Outcome Mapping?

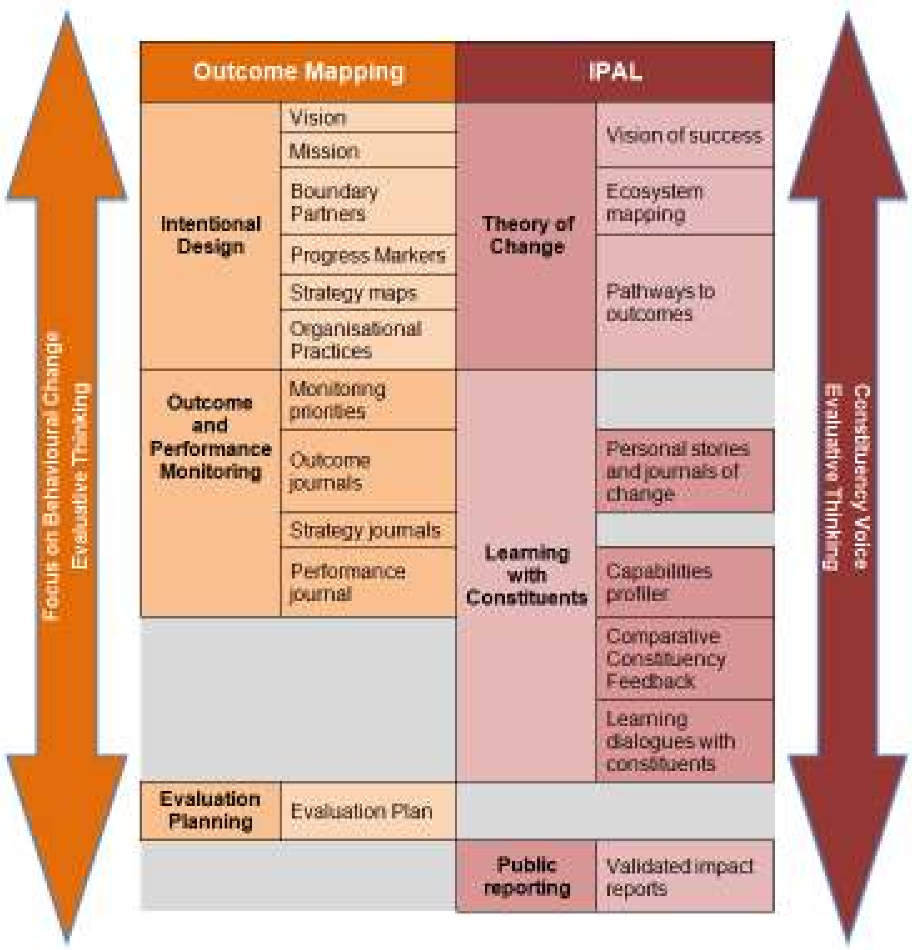
Keystone's IPAL and Outcome Mapping share a common view of how development comes about and also the set of values that should guide development interventions. Like OM, the Keystone IPAL method:

- **Is participatory**. Participation by the people most affected by development interventions is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of those interventions and as development goal in itself.

- **Sees development as a complex process**. Development is usually a long term, complex process involving many actors and interdependent processes. IPAL moves away from linear, 'cause and effect' thinking of development processes. It provides a guide for developing a theory of change that makes explicit our assumptions about how change happens and helps map pathways to the outcomes that we want to achieve that take into account the complexity of change and the different factors and actors influencing the outcomes of our efforts.

- **Adopts an ecosystem perspective**. A single organization working on its own can seldom achieve all the changes required by its theory of change. Keystone's approach to IPAL helps organizations think of themselves as working in an ecology of actors towards shared outcomes and plan and act collaboratively without losing their individual focus or identity.

- **Is a comprehensive framework for all stages of development intervention.** It integrates elements of monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting from the planning phase. It allows for readjustments and continuous improvement by creating a system for learning and for constantly testing our assumptions and revisiting our theory of change.



IPAL may complement OM in four ways:

1. By placing Constituency Voice at the centre of developmental interventions. An agency's primary constituents are the people who are meant to benefit from its work (e.g. intended beneficiaries, local partners). Constituency Voice refers to how effectively the views of these constituents are heard at all stages of work that affects them. This includes active involvement in defining success, planning activities, monitoring and evaluating them, and learning from results. Enabling Constituency Voice contributes to enhanced outcomes because:

- Primary constituents have massive insights into their contexts and priorities, and the impacts of development work.
- It builds confidence, and honest, respectful relationships between intended beneficiaries and development agencies, hence building shared commitment to project goals
- Constituency Voice empowers primary constituents, within projects, which is a developmental goal in itself.

2. By providing ways for learning with constituents. IPAL includes tools and techniques for getting feedback from constituents and using it for establishing mutually accountable dialogues among the constituents of developmental processes. A particular technique is Comparative Constituency Feedback (CCF). It has four components:

a. Joint negotiation of the different purposes of feedback and assessment, including all stakeholders.
b. Systematic survey of constituents' perceptions. Drawing on 'customer satisfaction' techniques, it interrogates constituents' experience of receiving services / assistance / funds
c. Surveys are designed to generate comparative data sets, to allow benchmarking. This facilitates interpretation and learning.
d. Senior managers commit to taking the feedback seriously, for instance by reporting back to constituents and using the data to drive learning conversations. By doing this, they also cultivate improvements in the quality of feedback, next time it is collected.

3. By adding public reporting as a key piece in the puzzle. IPAL adds a theoretically and practically sound approach to reporting that focuses on the organization's contribution to outcomes and honestly reflects its learning through the voices of its constituents. This kind of reporting is based on the Feedback Principle for Social Reporting:

Credible public reporting by any organization intending social outcomes includes not only the logic and evidence for the outcomes, but also (1) what the organization's primary constituents say about what it says it has achieved, and (2) how the organization proposes to respond to constituency feedback.

In the IPAL system, formal reports focus on the intervention's contribution to outcomes as reflected by the evidence gathered and the feedback received. This kind of constituency validated impact reporting demonstrates legitimacy and impact in a credible and authentic way. It also creates a powerful structural incentive for organizations to listen to their primary constituents, as now their opinions will be visible to everyone reading the organizations' public reports.

4. By extending the range of purposes that it serves. Keystone's Constituency Voice approach to IPAL serves six purposes:

a. **Improve projects**. It ensures that insights generated from evaluative activities are of direct relevance and use for primary constituents and managers in making improvements. Constituents are involved in defining success and setting indicators. Constituents are also asked – rigorously – to assess progress against indicators and to offer suggestions for improvement.

b. **Demonstrate impact**. PAL through Constituency Voice contributes to demonstrating impact directly and indirectly. When primary constituents are rigorously surveyed they can be asked questions that define impact (for example, providing evidence of changes in behaviour, status, income). Thus, it provides insights into the causal mechanism, especially by exploring how key actors understand how and why change is happening.

But indirectly, and perhaps more importantly, Keystone argues that the quality of relationships with primary constituents is the best available predictor of downstream impact for most if not all development interventions. The CCF technique tracks relationship quality and produces findings with high internal and external validity.

The CCF technique also provides a means to triangulate and validate impact data derived from other sources by asking constituents their views on other-source impact data.

c. **Inform strategy**. It enquires not only about the present project, but also about what else is seen as important to address, or what is happening in the external environment that is affecting the project.

d. **Sustain legitimacy**. Through Constituency Voice, IPAL directly and powerfully contributes to the legitimacy of projects and evaluations because it builds from the participation of constituents in planning, implementing, assessing and reporting.

e. **Build capacity**. The Constituency Voice approach empowers constituents by amplifying their voices. It strengthens their capacity for providing feedback and demanding that changes are made on the basis of the feedback provided. Feedback quality over time depends on what happens with the feedback. Creating spaces for primary constituent participation strengthens capacity for feedback. In this case, creating spaces for voice can make a contribution to the empowerment of disenfranchised communities by providing new means of access to decision-making, contributing to healthy, competent and self-determined communities.

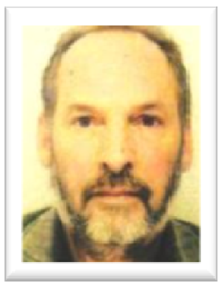
f. **Inform society**. The IPAL purposes we have discussed so far emphasize the relationships between distinct groups of stakeholders (organizational providers, beneficiaries and funders). In contrast, the societal learning perspective reminds us that the work of development programmes implicates a fourth stakeholder: the wider society within which the programme works. IPAL addresses the purpose of societal learning through its public reporting piece. It is important that knowledge created is shared with the general public as it can lead to changed attitudes, policy change, and more rapid diffusion of improved practices.

For more information see:

Method and tools: http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/tools
Service offering: http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/services

Or contact Keystone Advisor and Research Associate Natalia Kiryttopoulou at Natalia@KeystoneAccountability.org

Cambodia's iREACH integrates OM and SPEAK - can OM be enhanced through Software Support



By Seán Ó Siochrú, Hak Sokleap and Long Dimanche

An IDRC funded project in Cambodia called iREACH[1] (Informatics for Rural Empowerment and Cambodian Healthy Communities) has been experimenting with combining Outcome Mapping with another software-supported monitoring and evaluation system called SPEAK (Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Knowledge Systems). iREACH, launched in May 2006 and extended to May 2010, is piloting two e-communities in rural areas of Cambodia, with a view to influencing wider policy there towards the use of ICTs in rural development.

An initial iREACH/OM Workshop Phnom Penh in September 2006 led to discussions between Seán Ó Siochrú of NEXUS, chief advisor to iREACH and part of the NEXUS team that developed SPEAK[2], and

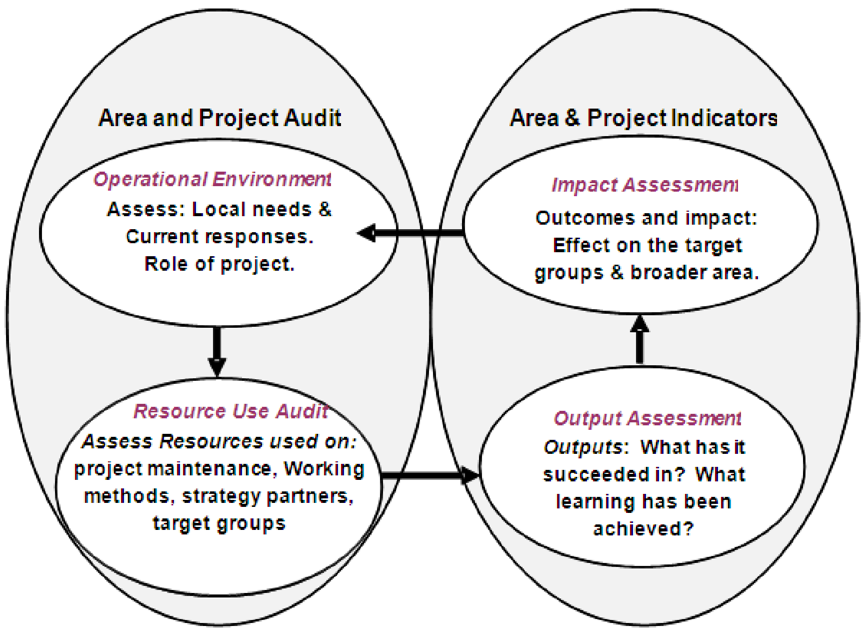
FRED Carden of IDRC. These concluded that the two systems were in principle compatible, both based on participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies, but also sufficiently different to warrant an effort at integration. A joint OM/SPEAK Workshop in February 2007 sealed the relationship, in effect integrating the principles and terminology of OM within the software-supported SPEAK system.

Each of the two iREACH Pilots began implementing the system as soon as they were up and running. By this summer they will be three years into the process.

SPEAK, like OM, places heavy emphasis on the participatory process of monitoring and evaluation, and on feeding back learning into the project. Roughly the same categories are deployed in both (SPEAK terms in brackets): Boundary Partners (separated into Strategy Partners and Target groups); Strategy Map (Working Methods); Progress Markers (Outputs); and Outcomes.

The conceptual framework (mimicked in the software interface), is straightforward.

SPEAK Framework



After iREACH defined its objectives, working methods, progress markers and so forth (using the OM approach), a tailored version of the SPEAK software was produced by NEXUS along with operating manuals and so forth. OM/SPEAK was then implemented in an annual cycle, through a series of workshops and individual 'audits' all of which are input into the software. The idea is to encourage systematic reflection, enable consensus or informed difference, and capture lessons at each point.

Thus the 'operational environment' (top-left above) comprises a joint workshop of Staff and pilot Management Committees (elected locally), collectively exploring, based on statistics and/or experience, the issues that face the target groups, ranking them in terms of seriousness; assessing what other strategic partners are doing, and the strength of relations with them. The SPEAK software facilitates the discussions, and is used to document the results.

The 'Resource Audit' is implemented individually by each staff member (or volunteer, if relevant) usually at the end of each year – or at intervals - to reflect on and, in broad terms, assess the amount of time spent on different tasks, with different target groups, on purely internal project activities, and so forth.

For the 'Output Assessment', all staff again come together to review the direct outputs (progress markers), the resources spent on each (aggregated by the software from the resource audit), and notes the factors that hindered and enabled them during the year, the software capturing the process.

Finally the 'Impact Assessment' is undertaken in a Workshop of the Committee and staff, and others as appropriate, considering what impact and outcomes have resulted for the community, in the light of the resources spent and the outputs generated. Again, additional research can inform this, but the goal is to enable a wide group of stakeholders to reflect collectively, based on full knowledge available, and note their feelings, agreements and disagreements.

The process then returns to the beginning, with a reflection by staff and others if needed on how the environment has changed within the community, and whether goals should be reviewed and refined.

A specific feature of SPEAK is that it also documents this in a report that can easily be generated. This proved especially attractive to the two Pilot Teams in Cambodia, where report writing capacities, even among university graduates (and especially in a foreign language), are limited.

Each of the pilots has about 20 staff, all but three or four from the local rural community. The experience of implementing OM/SPEAK has faced challenges but also brought some unexpected benefits. The fact that the software is in English, spoken by only a few, has meant that Pilot research officers have had to devote considerable time to it, to support every step and in particular the staff 'resource audits'. The system, although tailored to each project, also takes some getting used to and minor problems take time to iron out. And since it was essentially an experiment, the OM/SPEAK users did not have the usual levels of support (facilitation, telephone, e-mail and personal) that SPEAK users usually receive.

However, the efforts do reap rewards. Among the benefits associated directly with the OM/SPEAK process (as distinct from benefits of monitoring and evaluation more generally) were:

- Staff at the 'hubs' (of which there are ten in a Pilot, each with one community facilitator) began to see the links between the time they spend with different clients, and project outputs and outcomes. Instead of taken their job day by day, they began to see the larger picture and cumulative effect.
- Staff, through participation in OM/SPEAK activities, learned the basic principles of evaluation, its purpose and goals.
- Staff discussed between themselves issues that arose, how they resolved them, and developed a consensus around different approaches.

- The locally elected Management committee felt more involved in the project, including the process of resource allocation and the need to link outputs to outcomes (for most, the mere presence of the hubs was considered an outcome, rather than the link between the hubs and any improvements in local welfare or economy).

From a central iREACH management perspective, the system is also building an 'institutional memory', which is valuable in countries such as Cambodia with a tendency towards a high turnover among senior staff, especially in rural areas.

But because the experiment in iREACH is limited to two pilots, a key benefit of using SPEAK is missed out on i.e. the ability to aggregate, search and interrogate, and generate reports from the collective databases of numerous projects within a single programme. In Ireland, where SPEAK was developed, several programmes comprising up to 120 projects are using SPEAK, and programme management, as well as project level staff, can access all the information, to assess programme impact, to share experiences and lessons, to aggregated and present case studies to funders and lots of other uses.

Nevertheless, the experience in Cambodia has shown the OM/SPEAK can be combined to good effect at project level in a challenging development context.

For more information contact: Seán Ó Siochrú at Sean@nexus.ie

[1] See http://www.ireach.org.kh
[2] See www.nexus.ie and also www.SPEAK.ie

Creating the conditions for an OM-based M&E and learning practice

By Steff Deprez, VECO Indonesia

Outcome Mapping has the potential to build reflection and learning into development programmes. I use 'potential' because we know that the OM method alone will not to do the trick. Even with a well thought through intentional design and a carefully designed M&E system, there is often a large gap between the principles and design of an M&E process and the actual practice. In the end, people in the real world have to 'live' the M&E practice. So, in addition to the design of an OM-based M&E and learning system, it is recommended that the programme team reflects on how the necessary (organisational) conditions supporting a learning-oriented M&E system will be put in place.

Based on the concepts presented in Britton's publication on organisational learning in NGO's[1], a tool was developed (by VECO Indonesia) to assess such conditions. The tool is based on the idea that a programme can install a learning-oriented M&E practice if it creates the right motives, means and opportunities to do so. Each of these three elements encompasses specific (organisational) conditions adapted from Britton's model to fit the context for M&E processes as seen in the table below. The three elements are interlinked and generate a synergy which will not occur if attention is paid to only one of the elements alone.

A questionnaire (scoring sheet) was developed which can be used for individual or group assessment of the twelve (organisational) conditions by the programme actors. The results of this exercise can be presented in a bar or spider diagram and used as a 'trigger' for further reflection in a focus group guided by a set of probing questions related to each condition. Doing so, the group gains a better understanding of the conditions that are well-developed and those that need further attention. Furthermore, people can discuss and decide on actions to enhance the conditions. If a regular reflection (e.g. half-yearly or yearly) on the organisational conditions can be incorporated in the ongoing M&E process and planning process, it will be supportive to the further development of the M&E system and practice.
Because of its focus on (organisational) learning, this tool/process is of course relevant and useful for any learning-oriented M&E approach. Particularly for OM, it can be supportive to the ongoing development of its M&E part. A more in-depth description of this approach and its application in VECO Indonesia will be posted soon on the OMLC.

CREATING (ORGANISATIONAL) CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNING-ORIENTED M&E SYSTEM

CREATING MOTIVES

1. **Formulate guiding ideas & aspirations for the M&E system**
2. **Ensure support from management**
3. **Invest in creating a culture of learning**
4. **Put incentives in place for the people involved in the M&E process**

CREATING MEANS

1. **Develop human capacity to manage and participate in the M&E system**
2. **Install specialist support & champions for M&E and learning**
3. **Adopt or develop appropriate M&E concepts, methods & tools**
4. **Ensure sufficient financial resources for M&E**

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Integrate the M&E system into the planning & management process**
2. **Ensure clarity on the responsibilities of the actors involved**
3. **Develop a responsive Information Management infrastructure**
4. **Invest in developing relationships of trust**

[1]Britton, B. (2005) Organisational learning in NGOs: Creating the motive, means and opportunity (INTRAC Praxis Paper 3). Oxford: INTRAC.

OM for Value Chains

By Julius Nyangaga, ILRI, Kenya and Community Steward

Value chain relationships are increasingly being used as useful constructs by programs supporting rural agricultural efforts. The constructs serve many purposes. They help in describing the sectors – who is who in a particular industry and the roles they play. They help in identifying positions of various actors and especially the participation (or lack of) impoverished actors. Value chains are analysed to identify intervention points aimed at increasing benefits to actors or the total value generated and how it is distributed.

Actors' relationships in various chains vary, depending on the commodities, geographical set-ups and many other factors. However, the most crucial are actors' attitudes and behaviours that affect how a chain will form and function, how they relate to each other, with an implication on how efficiencies are enhanced or how higher value is generated and distributed.

It has been said that value chains are essentially behavioural interactions. A program or project that seeks to support the establishment of value chains and the effectiveness of their operations will gain from considering the culture and behaviour of individuals and institutions involved. This is where outcome mapping (OM) comes in; as a method used to plan for and support behavioural and institutional transformation (desired outcomes) in targeted partners (boundary partners). Value chain systems offer a great opportunity to use OM to plan and implement support programs, while using the framework to monitor progress and possible impacts.

However, the chains are actually constructs of business relationships and behaviour alone is never enough. Any positive outcomes should ideally be accompanied by economic quantitative indicators that demonstrate how they are achieving efficiency and value distribution. In addition, some of the actors of have information systems that easily provide data to link targeted outcomes with performance. Such quantitative indicators of progress have been referred to as growth impacts by the GTZ ValueLinks approach.

For a project supporting a value chain system, outcomes may be planned for (during the intentional design) by selecting the boundary partners to work with from the network of relationships. Arrangements should then be made to monitor their progress markers (PMs) in the usual way, e.g. the farmers' representatives come to the project meetings, sharing with and recruiting fellow farmers, seeking extra support (outside the project), lobbying for local political support, etc. Growth indicators must then be used to further demonstrate the outcomes sought. Using the examples of the farmers' representatives, related growth indicators may be numbers of farmers or farmer groups registering with the program, area being cultivated for the crop, volumes of inputs obtained and used, yields, losses and sales and, if possible, individual actor's financial performance analysis using gross margins, returns in investments, etc.

Bags of sunflower seed for drying and collection by processors

The question then that comes up is … does one set goals for growth indicators? Should they be set up as targets alongside progress markers (during the intentional design)? This will depend on the team and chain actors. Setting targets for growth indicators has the danger of being perceived as and (ab)used like number indicators of log-frames. What is important is to note that value chains are strongly results-oriented business arrangements involving actors with unambiguous business goals. A multinational company will only engage in a chain if the respective producers supply certain quantities and qualities of an export commodity. That is a target the project cannot ignore. This is an example where the M & E becomes utilization-focussed and fully agreed upon by all chain actors prior to its implementation.

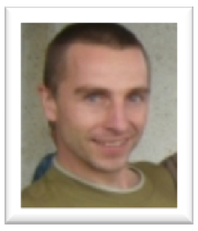
Thus in value chains behaviour and culture showing relationships between production, processing and marketing activities are not sufficient. There must be a demonstrable performance indices and monitoring showing how effective or off the targets a program's intervention is. For successful value chain support an M & E approach must firmly straddle both qualitative developments (outcome mapping) and related quantitative targets and consequences (business performance measures). There is no avoiding one for the other.

Please send any comments to the author: julesnyangaga@yahoo.co.uk.

Contribute to this growing resource!

Do you have similar experiences to share? Applying OM means adapting OM, so if you have been inspired by OM (or any part of the methodology) then we want to hear how you have applied it. Have you had to adapt it to your context? Have you had to integrate with an existing system? Have you found complimentary tools or approached which you have found beneficial? If so, please get in touch or send your experiences to the OM community forums.

Impact Evaluation Conference, Cairo and Community Meet-up



By Jan Van Ongevalle, VVOB Zimbabwe and Community Steward

Cairo was the bustling setting for the 2009 impact evaluation conference from 29 March to 2 April. Navigating the daily traffic jungle to get to the conference centre and back to the hotel was an adventure in itself. My colleague Robert Chipimbi commented as follows *´´Cars drive so perilously close you can always carry your heart in your mouth, and yet the drivers are so polite to each other. Always sounding their hooters every 10 seconds to warn each other for coming too close, but never shouting at each other´´.*

The conference itself and the pre-conference workshops were great fun! My top-two workshops included *´realist evaluation´* by Patricia Rogers, and *Most Significant Change* by Jess Dart. From these workshops I bring back the following lessons to our outcome mapping based M&E system in our Zimbabwe programme.

Firstly, the need for deeper analysis of our monitoring data. Deeper analysis of linkages between our strategy maps and observed changes in the boundary partners would help us to learn more about how the programme is contributing to changes in the boundary partners. As such M&E can support such social change processes.

Secondly, the need to get the voice of the ultimate beneficiaries heard in the monitoring and evaluation system. Without this voice, it is difficult to learn if the changes in the boundary partners are indeed contributing to something beneficial for the ultimate beneficiaries. We want to explore ´most significant change method´ to get the beneficiaries involved in the monitoring process.

My top-two conference sessions included *Participatory Methods To Assess Impact* by Robert Chambers and *Thinking Systemically About Impact Evaluation* by Robert Williams, Irene Guijt and Patricia Rogers. Robert Chambers reminded us that participatory methods for impact evaluation can be rigorous, are mainly developed in the South and are a great way of getting people´s voices heard. He demonstrated a good number of participatory methods that could be helpful to complement any outcome mapping based M&E systems. Of particular interest is the paper *´Who counts? The quiet revolution of participation and numbers´* that can be accessed on www.ntd.co.uk/idsbookshop/details.asp?id=1006. From Robert Williams and Irene Guijt´s session I learned that outcome mapping is actually a very useful systems thinking tool to deal with complex processes of social change. In a participatory way, together with the boundary partners, OM allows you to decide what falls within the system of the programme and what falls out (i.e. during the intentional design stage). During the M&E processes OM helps you to engage with the consequences of these decisions and if necessary to reconsider the system (i.e. adjust the intentional design).

A major highlight was of course the informal meeting of OM users over super at one of the local restaurants. It was a lively social gathering that provided a space for friends to meet and for people who only knew each other through email and the OMLC to meet face to face. The next Afrea conference will be held in 2011 in Madagascar. Maybe we need to make sure as the OMLC that we organise a pre-conference Outcome Mapping workshop during that event?

Pictures below from the community meet-up.

Community News

Outcome Mapping events

5-day Outcome Mapping Training and Workshop	
Date:	Mon 06 – Fri 10 July 2009
Location:	Maennedorf near Zurich, Switzerland
Summary:	Agridea International is organising a training and workshop on Outcome Mapping in English language in Europe. Interested people working in development cooperation in southern and eastern countries as well as staff working in development and donor agencies in the North are invited to register. Besides an intensive introduction in OM as a tool for Project Cycle Management, the course has the objective to practice OM tools on the basis of own cases brought by the participants.
Contact:	**carsten.schulz@agridea.ch**

2-day conference for Outcome Mapping users	
Date:	Thurs 01 – Fri 02 October 2009
Location:	Montevideo, Uruguay
Summary:	The Latin America Centre for Outcome Mapping are organising a conference for OM users in the region. This will be an opportunity for monitoring and evaluation specialists, development project teams, donor agencies and others passionate about social transformation to: **Meet other OM users** **Share monitoring and evaluation experiences** **Learn about new resources, including** ○ Regional Case Studies ○ OM Facilitator's Notebook ○ Multi-media Guide to sharing OM with Local Partners
Contact:	**conferencia@mapeodealcances.net**

2-day conference for Outcome Mapping users	
Date:	Tues 29 – Wed 30 September 2009
Location:	Montevideo, Uruguay
Summary:	A series of pre-conference workshops: ○ OM and the Essential Core of M&E: Natalia Ortiz - 2 day workshop ○ Migrating from conventional planning methods to Outcome Mapping: Javier Pacheco - 1 day workshop ○ Another logic is possible: Alberto Bracagioli - 1 day workshop ○ How to Evaluate Unplanned Outcomes: Ricardo Wilson Grau - 1/2 day workshop
Contact:	**conferencia@mapeodealcances.net**

New resources in the community library

The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organisations and Social Change

This is a free, downloadable, do-it-yourself guide for leaders and facilitators working with local organisations to function and develop in more healthy, human and effective ways.

The gold standard is not a 'silver bullet' for evaluation

ODI Opinion piece on Impact Evaluation. Key message is: 'A focus on the institutional capacity and incentives that foster the use of evaluations is overdue, and is the key to promoting learning and accountability'

Monitoring for impact in a programme's sphere of influence

Presentation on how OM and LFA form an integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation system in the VVOB Zimbabwe programme, ´Quality Education and Vulnerability'.

Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA): A practical method for project planning and evaluation

PPA is a complementary approach to OM, a practical planning, and monitoring and evaluation approach developed for use with complex projects in the water and food sectors. See: http://boru.pbwiki.com/

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