



# OutcomeMapping

LEARNING COMMUNITY

## Ten years of Outcome Mapping adaptations and support

An analysis of how and where Outcome Mapping has been applied, how users have experienced OM and the support options available and required for its use.

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Through practical and complementary experiences in networking, leadership, management and field work over twenty years, each has learned about strengths and limitations of PME approaches in numerous international development contexts. Together they have been inspired to learn, adapt and apply approaches - including Outcome Mapping (OM) and the related evaluation approach Outcome Harvesting - that provide alternative or complementary tools and principles to linear / logical framework systems.

## Acknowledgements

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## Acronyms

IDRC	International Development Research Centre
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OM	Outcome Mapping
OMLC	Outcome Mapping Learning Community
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
RBM	Results Based Management
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

## Foreword by the OMLC Stewards

The Outcome Mapping (OM) methodology was introduced to the development community by the International Development Research Centre just over 10 years ago. In that time the use of OM has been growing exponentially, due in part to IDRC's open source policies but also the flexibility of the methodology and the support available through the OM Learning Community (OMLC). The OMLC Stewards, a voluntary group of members with responsibilities for governing the OMLC, commissioned this report in October 2011 to map the state-of-the-art of OM practice and find out where and how OM is being used. The research team has gone above and beyond what was asked of them and this rich report is the result of their dedicated work.

This report provides comprehensive evidence, gathered and analysed from numerous practitioners, about the usefulness of OM and past and current trends around its use. The data and the overall conclusion supports the countless online discussions in the community forums, face-to-face conversations and debates at trainings and events, and the ripples of conversation on other listserves and evaluation conferences: namely that OM has caught hold of a diverse range of development practitioners and their institutions, and is being supported by a wide variety of donors. The report reveals a collection of significant, reliable and useful OM applications that reminds us of the importance of applying OM in a way that is appropriate and useful to the particular situation in hand, rather than treating the three stages and twelve steps as a process that must be meticulously followed. It also demonstrates where the significant challenges lie in OM usage (especially getting off the ground and not overburdening ourselves with data collection and reporting) and where there is room for improvement (enabling on-going learning and mentoring for new users and sharing more examples of OM adaptation).

The information in the report is rich and useful for a number of different users, primarily the OMLC stewards and other members of the community. While the report in its entirety may not be pertinent for every single member or user of OM, there are important elements that practitioners can consider for their PME work. For example: which PME approaches have been used with OM and how OM adds value (e.g. LFA and impact assessment); when OM works best; the essential factors for OM use; and the most appreciated parts of OM.

The Stewards will certainly make use of the report to expand on and document the cases of OM adaptation, to consider promoting new or alternate modalities of training and support, including the consideration of e-learning, and to extract evidence of OM usefulness for advocating support from donors.

However, we recognize that the scope of the research was not universal and we could only commission a partial mapping of OM users and therefore there are many other OM practitioners who are using OM in many different ways that were not part of the data gathering for this report. As a result, the findings presented, while on the whole are extremely useful and enlightening, do not always support the experience of the Stewards. In particular there are two issues which we, as Stewards of the OM community and long-time OM users, wish to add our perspective to.

1. OM for planning, monitoring and evaluation: The report finds that OM application in the past 10 years has tended to focus on the use of the Intentional Design for planning. It is our opinion, based

on examples of application, that OM is not only useful for planning but is useful and is being used for monitoring and evaluation. We also see that in using OM for monitoring and evaluation, it can be useful to draw on the concepts and steps in the Intentional Design; that is to say, that the Intentional Design is NOT only a planning framework. As a group of Stewards and as a community, we need to start collecting, posting and analysing more M&E examples.

2. Added value of OM: The evidence in the report suggests two, perhaps contradictory, results: that the principles and features of OM are not unique but that they can be applicable to many participatory and learning-oriented M&E frameworks and methodologies; but at the same time that OM is perceived by some experienced users to act 'in a silo' in the PME world, keeping itself separated and closed off. OM is in fact part of a broader community of what some might call 'adaptive pluralists'; the openness of the OM community, the overlap with many other PME communities and the frequent citing of OM alongside a broader family of methods attest to this. The sheer number of users – both those committed to learning more and those that are just curious – show that there is something unique; an attractor about OM that draws more people in. While the OM concepts such as boundary partners, progress markers and spheres of influence may be found under different names in other PME approaches, OM brings them together into a practical, concrete framework with a unique language that emphasises the subtle differences. Facilitated or used well, this framework can stand alone as a PME system or its core concepts can be adapted to complement or blend with other PME systems. The many documented instances of fusing OM with LFA is one example of this as is the development of a 'Step-zero' to complement the existing steps in OM's Intentional Design.

We hope this report leads you to new ideas and useful discoveries, as well as an opportunity to reflect on your own practice. We very much welcome your response to this report and encourage you to post your comments or questions to the OMLC.

**The Outcome Mapping Learning Community Stewards:** Kaia Ambrose, Steff Deprez, Simon Hearn, Ziad Moussa, Julius Nyangaga, Heidi Schaeffer and Ricardo Wilson-Grau.

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## Executive summary

Outcome Mapping (OM) is an approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) that defines results in terms of the changes in behaviour of an intervention's direct partners. The 'OM manual', published by the International Development Research Centre in 2001, describes 12 OM steps organised into three stages corresponding to planning (design), monitoring and evaluation. Use of OM is supported by the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC), an informal group of over three thousand members. In 2011, ten years on from the publication of the OM manual, the stewards of the OMLC commissioned this study to:

1. Extend the data available on OM applications and trainers / consultants and provide a stimulus for the development of updated tools to assist with information requests to OMLC.
2. Contribute to a fuller understanding of how OM can be used, further developed and promoted through analysis of OM adaptations and user experiences.
3. Inform the development of training and other support for OM use by identifying gaps in the current support available for OM.

**Methods and limitations.** We created two Excel databases to capture, organise and analyse data on OM applications and practitioners. Data on 123 case studies was captured from OMLC (61 cases) and other (62 cases) sources. For a sub-set of 18 case studies we conducted detailed interviews with people who had used OM to gather more information on OM applications and to learn about the personal experiences and views of OM users. We also conducted interviews with 6 consultants to learn of their experiences in providing training / other support to various users. **We conclude the interviews together with the summary data collected on applications and practitioners represent a significant advance on the data previously held by OMLC.** This study is not, however, a comprehensive assessment of the status quo of OM. Rather, the data is indicative of OM applications, user experiences and support available and required.

**Scope of OM use.** Our data suggest that **the majority of OM applications have been in Africa, Latin America & Caribbean and Asia.** Considering OM was developed and has largely been promoted as a PME approach for international development interventions, this distribution of applications is unsurprising. It is notable, however, that there are a number of multi-regional and global uses of OM and that there are examples of OM use in more economically developed regions. We conclude that **OM may well be useful in situations other than international development cooperation**, including in more economically developed countries.

We identified 22 sectors in which OM has been applied. **The diversity of sectors in which OM has been used – including not only policy, agriculture and health but also trade, tourism and finance - is striking.**

**Using OM: Benefits, issues, solutions.** Interviewees reported a high level of satisfaction with OM. OM is widely held to have contributed to a paradigm shift in PME that enables interventions to be better focused, more realistic, more participatory and more sustainable. Many interviewees alluded to an "Ah ha!" moment when a person or a group grasped the power of OM.

We found highly appreciative users of each OM stage but above all our data suggest **it is the intentional design (planning) stage of OM that has been used most often and has been most appreciated**. Users have valued it for being dynamic and motivational; actor-oriented; promoting a shared vision, ownership and an understanding of the contribution of various actors to the vision; the focus on desired results (outcomes), not, as is common, activities and outputs; and for bringing clarity and realistic thinking to roles and responsibilities by focussing on changing only those institutions or people that can be influenced directly.

OM monitoring is also widely used and in cases where OM was applied as a participatory learning process, **users have seen monitoring as part of a valuable learning process**.

Our findings suggest OM has been used less for evaluation than for planning or monitoring and that the evaluation planning stage of the OM manual would benefit from further development. Still, **OM has inspired innovative evaluation approaches**, including those such as Outcome Harvesting that can be used to assess behavioural change outcomes of interventions that had not used OM at the planning and monitoring stages.

As can be expected whenever a new PME approach is first used, the use of OM has not been without issues. **A common issue faced is the potential for planning and monitoring to be impractical or 'heavy' when all the steps and tools described in the OM manual are used. Users who are most satisfied with OM are usually those who adapt / simplify their use of OM from the ideal scenario presented in the OM manual.** For example, following the OM manual, the direct partners an intervention seeks to influence should be actively involved in planning and monitoring. Users have found this is not always possible, either for lack of motivation of the partner or because their involvement was not sought as they would be hostile to change, as with the targets of advocacy or lobbying interventions. Although not practicing OM 'by the book', users in such situations have successfully adapted OM to their situation. In contrast, some of those who have not adapted OM to their situation have become frustrated. Adaptation has taken four non-exclusive forms: 1. Use of some but not all of the 3 stages / 12 steps; 2. Use of one or more of the key concepts – such as outcomes defined as behavioural change - with or without any of the 12 steps; 3. Starting not with stage 1 (intentional design) but with monitoring or evaluation; 4. Using OM with other PME approaches, including the LFA and Most Significant Change.

**When OM works best. We observed eight OM enabling factors** - three essential and five optional – the presence or absence of which can, we suggest, help to determine if OM is appropriate and likely to be sustainable for a particular intervention (or part thereof). Understanding which enabling factors are present will allow potential users of OM to determine where their intervention (or part of it) and PME capacity is located along our proposed “OM receptivity continuum”. **Use of the proposed OM receptivity continuum can minimise the risk of OM implementation that is inappropriately complex and costly.** Where only essential factors are present, simple applications of OM would be optimal; if more factors are present, a more extensive use of OM steps and concepts may be optimal. **The essential enabling factors are:**

1. **The existence of complexity in an intervention / a significant part of an intervention**, i.e. uncertainty about results and / or the processes by which they are to be achieved. In situations such as the provision of services in which results are more predictable, OM is



unnecessary. However, many development interventions are likely to have components that could potentially benefit from some use of OM.

2. **Recognition of and willingness to act upon complexity and an understanding of the rationale for OM application.** Awareness of complexity is insufficient: implementers must be willing to move beyond the familiarity of linear cause-effect logic and understand the rationale for using OM, otherwise its use may be mechanistic and of limited value.
3. **The commitment of one or more champions and the availability of appropriate technical support.** Support for novel approaches such as OM takes time to build and without champions it is unlikely to be sustained.

Optional enabling factors are the support from an intervention's funder; support from the executive of the implementing organisation; the promotion of an organisational learning culture; appreciation of the value of a results and learning-oriented PME system at multiple levels in the organisation; and availability of the resources required for the type of OM implementation.

**Training offered versus training needed – is there a mismatch?** OM users we interviewed were generally appreciative of the training they have received and the current OMLC resources but we were able to identify a number of gaps in support and information resources.

**We found that many users lack the confidence needed to adapt OM to their situation without external support and conclude that more needs to be done by trainers to equip potential OM users to adapt the methodology.** We suggest introductory training could build confidence in adapting OM if it included a “step-0” component comprising of: 1) an exploration of situations where OM is / is not likely to be useful; 2) an introduction to both OM and other PME concepts and their relationships. In addition, many users indicated they would like / benefit from more context specific support in addition to a general introduction to OM. In this way OM may be understood less as a rigid and general method and more as a fluid and context-specific approach, as intended by the authors of the OM manual. Situation-specific training / coaching while using OM should encourage learning by doing as part of the action learning cycle of planning, action, reflection and learning.

**Our findings suggest a need for more trainers and consultants experienced in using OM in a range of sectors and of trainers and learning tools in the multiple languages and locations in the economic south.** Trainers with sector / culture / language specific experience are likely to be better able to help users move beyond general OM knowledge and develop custom OM solutions. More efficient use of the still limited pool of experienced trainers can also better meet support needs. **We therefore suggest remote mentoring using email, Skype etc is promoted by the OMLC as a cost effective approach to provide situation specific support,** particularly to those who are champions of OM in their organisation.

The OMLC website has grown into a very rich repository of experience, questions and debate with contributions from many members. To maximise its potential as a learning resource **we suggest the OMLC website should be rebuilt to provide an integrated, structured entry point into the OM manual, the extensive existing OMLC resources and some new resources.** Suggested functions of the new OMLC e-learning resource include: promotion of OM adaptation / non-linear use of the OM stages and steps, positioning of OM in the context of other PME approaches and publishing of “blueprints” that describe OM adaptation / use scenarios.

**Donor attitudes and LFA.** Despite a strong preference particularly among public donors for LFA-based approaches to PME, **dissatisfaction with the LFA in some situations has motivated many to use OM for design and monitoring either in a fusion or in parallel with the LFA.** Interviewees described various benefits of using OM instead of or as well as the LFA. For instance, in a major hospital building project in which the LFA specified only the larger results, progress was slow until OM was introduced and the real scope of the wide-ranging behaviour change outcomes required before the hospital could be physically constructed became clear.

**We counted a total of 36 funders of interventions that used OM. However, the great majority of donors are probably often unaware when OM has been used** in interventions they have supported because of the strategies often used by OM practitioners. Some use OM “by stealth”, drawing on OM concepts and tools while avoiding OM terminology and making no explicit references to OM in their reporting to donors. More common among those we interviewed is the use of OM internally for planning and monitoring and of LFA for donor reporting. Both strategies suggest most donors are not willing for OM to be used explicitly for design and monitoring. Some have, however, been willing to use OM for evaluations: we identified examples of funders commissioning evaluations that use OM-inspired approaches.

We conclude that, ten years after the introduction of OM, there is a wealth of experience that can be used to (a) share examples of OM-LFA adaptations and (b) influence the behaviour of donors towards making a more receptive environment for OM. **We suggest the OMLC / champions of OM consider a multi-faceted outreach strategy to donors.**

## 1 Introduction

Outcome Mapping (OM) is an approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) that helps its users to learn from and report realistically on their achievements by tracking the connections between what they do and what happens. Results are measured in terms of the changes in behaviour, actions or relationships that can be influenced by the intervention or intervention team.

Adapted from the ‘outcome engineering’ approach (Kibel, 1999), OM, was created through collaborative work led by the IDRC (International Development Research Centre) Evaluation Unit. While it was originally promoted as an approach for development research interventions, OM may be useful in a wide range of situations including in the economically developed world and private sector.

### 1.1 The rationale for and objectives of this study

OM has been used in many sectors throughout the world since Earl, Carden & Smutylo (2001) described the methodology in *Outcome Mapping: building learning and reflection into development programs*, a publication now widely referred to as the “OM manual”. Use of OM is supported by the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC), an informal group of over three thousand members from around the world that acts as a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences relating to OM. Ten years on from the publication of the OM manual, the stewards of the OMLC commissioned this study to address the following issues:

- i. The majority of information requests submitted to the OMLC are either (a) requests for OM expertise, training or consultants available in a particular region or sector; or (b) requests for examples of OM application in a particular region or sector. *The information on applications and trainers/consultants collected and organised through this study are intended to extend the data held by OMLC and provide a stimulus for the development of updated tools to assist with these information requests.*
- ii. OM is rarely applied ‘by the book’ with parts of OM or one or more of its central concepts often being used with other approaches. The stewards recognise that the resulting ambiguity about what is and what is not OM has made it increasingly difficult to make the case for OM. *The examples of OM applications collected by this study and the analyses of user experiences with OM are intended to contribute to a fuller understanding of the various ways in which OM has been applied and hence how it may best be further promoted.*
- iii. The stewards recognise that in many cases the support available through basic training, the OMLC platform for exchange and the OMLC resource library is not sufficient for potential users who seek to become effective OM practitioners. This issue is compounded by the variable level of OM expertise in different regions of the world. *Through the collection and assessment of the support received by users and analysis of their perceived needs, this study is intended to help identify gaps in available support.*

In seeking to address these issues, we explored the following research questions:

1. Where is/has OM being applied (in terms of which organisations, individuals, projects, sectors, geographic regions)? *Findings are presented in the “OM applications” database and sections 3.1.1 & 3.1.2.*
2. How is/has OM being applied (for example: complete, in parts, just concepts...)? *Findings are presented in the “OM applications” database and sections 3.1.5, 3.1.6, 3.2 & 0.*
3. Who is currently training or providing operational support for OM (where are they based, where do they work, within which sectors do they work, what types of support are offered, in which languages is support offered...)? *Findings are presented in the “OM practitioners” database and section 3.4.*
4. What are the capacity needs of those applying or wanting to apply OM? (How) are they met? *Findings are described in the “OM applications” database and section 3.4.*

## 1.2 Intended users and uses

The primary intended users and uses of this study are:

**OMLC members**, who we anticipate will use the study findings and conclusions

1. To add to their knowledge about (a) where, how and why OM has been used and (b) training and support offered and required
2. To reflect on when OM is / is not useful and learn about how it has / can be adapted
3. As a stimulus to further (a) adaptations of OM including using it with other approaches, (b) development and definition of OM as a method and (c) develop OM-related training and support approaches and tools
4. To inform their reflection and decisions on further use and promotion of OM within their personal spheres of control and influence (within organisations, as consultants, in interactions with donors, etc.)

**OMLC stewards**, who we anticipate will use the study findings and conclusions as other OMLC members and in addition:

1. To inform their decisions about the future scope and purpose of the OMLC, including the development of updated tools on requests for information on (a) trainers / support and (b) applications of OM
2. To inform their reflection and decisions on any revised definition of OM / its relationship to other PME approaches
3. To inform their reflection and decisions on further outreach and promotion of OM to funders and others
4. To inform their reflection and decisions on the training and support that should be developed and promoted

**Donors and funders**, who we anticipate will use the study findings and conclusions to add to their understanding of the value of OM as a PME approach that complements or offers an alternative to the logical framework and is relevant to measuring results that contribute to impact.

**Other interested individuals** who are involved in international development (programme managers, consultants, PME trainers, etc.), who we anticipate will use the study findings and conclusions to add to their understanding of what OM is, when it is / is not useful and how it has been / could be adapted and used with other PME approaches.

## 1.3 Outcome Mapping

### 1.3.1 Key OM Concepts

OM is based on the following key concepts (derived from Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001):

- i. Focus on outcomes rather than impact: OM recognises that impact is the ultimate goal towards which a development intervention works. However, the complexity and long-term nature of the development process often makes it extremely difficult to link impacts to a specific intervention. In addition, a focus on impact may not provide the kind of information and feedback in the right time and place that an intervention requires to improve its effectiveness during implementation. For these reasons, OM focuses on outcomes that enhance the possibility of development impacts.
- ii. Development is accomplished by, and for, people: OM represents a shift from assessing the impact of a programme – “significant and lasting changes in the well-being of large numbers of intended beneficiaries” - toward changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organisations with whom an intervention interacts with directly.
- iii. Outcomes as behavioural change: Development results (or outcomes) are measured as "changes in behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups and organizations with whom a program works with directly." This definition of “outcome” puts people at the heart of the development process.
- iv. Boundary Partners and spheres of control, influence and concern: Most development interventions are working to help to improve the economic, social, political, or environmental well-being of beneficiaries e.g. individuals or groups of farmers, communities and women.

### A note on terminology

PME, M&E or PM&E: OM has been developed as a participatory PME (planning, monitoring and evaluation) approach. Throughout the document we refer to PME with the P standing for planning not participatory.

Projects, programmes, networks, interventions and organisations: OM has been applied at the project, programme, network and organisational level. For simplicity we refer to all of these as interventions and those leading the interventions as the intervention team.

When is OM, OM? In the defining text on OM, Earl, Carden & Smutylo (2001) emphasise the need to adapt OM to different contexts. This very flexibility makes it difficult to state categorically when a PME approach can be labelled as OM and when it cannot. For the purposes of this study we have labelled approaches as OM when one or more of the OM steps have been explicitly used.

We refer to other PME approaches that cite OM concepts but do not explicitly use OM steps as “OM-inspired”.

These people constitute the intervention's "sphere of concern". However, the intervention generally works directly with "intermediaries" – local community organisations (non-governmental organisations, community leaders etc.), universities, government agencies, private companies etc. who in turn work directly with beneficiaries. These intermediaries constitute the intervention's "Boundary Partners", defined as those individuals, groups, and organisations with whom the intervention interacts directly and anticipates opportunities for influence, i.e. a social actor within the intervention's "sphere of influence". It is this group of actors that OM focussed on in terms of planning and monitoring.

- v. Focus on contribution rather than attribution: OM acknowledges that multiple actors and factors are essential to achieving sustainable, large-scale improvements in human and ecological well-being i.e. impacts. Therefore instead of focusing on cause and effect attribution OM focuses on the contribution of an intervention towards developmental results (outcomes as defined above). OM assumes that interventions, as external agents, can only influence and contribute to outcomes and eventually impact; they do not control whether an outcome occurs or impact is realised.

This is not an exhaustive list of all concepts proposed by OMLC members and others as key to OM and, apart from the term Boundary Partners, none of them is unique to OM. However, OM has popularised the above-mentioned key concepts by embedding them in a clear and detailed methodology.

### 1.3.2 OM methodology

The OM manual describes the three stages and twelve steps as follows:

**Stage 1.** The intentional design or planning stage helps to define the large scale changes towards which the intervention seeks to contribute, the Boundary Partners that the intervention seeks to influence and the incremental changes in these Boundary Partners that will help to build sustained social change.

1. Vision – the large scale social change (development goal) to which the intervention seeks to contribute.
2. Mission – how the intervention can contribute to the stated development goal.
3. Boundary Partners – the identification of the social actors that the intervention will directly target and work with to influence positive transformation of their actions and relationships.
4. Outcome Challenges – description of the ideal changes in the behaviour, relationship, activities, and/or actions of a Boundary Partner.
5. Progress Markers - a set of graduated indicators of the behavioural change
6. Strategy Maps - A matrix of strategy types that an intervention employs to influence a Boundary Partner.
7. Organisational Practices – practices to ensure that the intervention remains relevant, innovative, sustainable, or connected to its environment.

**Stage 2:** Outcome and performance monitoring: This provides a framework for monitoring actions and Boundary Partners' progress towards outcomes.

8. Monitoring Priorities – identification of the type of information to be regularly collected.
9. Outcome Journals - monitor Boundary Partner actions and relationships (progress markers)
10. Strategy Journals - monitor intervention strategies and activities (strategy maps)
11. Performance Journals - monitor the organisational practices

**Stage 3:** Evaluation planning:

12. Evaluation plan - Outlines the main elements of the evaluations to be conducted.

**Figure 1** *The three stages and twelve steps of Outcome Mapping (from Earl, Carden & Smutylo 2001).*



The authors of the OM manual intended that the method be applied in a flexible, iterative and situationally responsive manner: “In Outcome Mapping, planning, monitoring, and evaluation are not discrete events but are designed to be cyclical, with one feeding into the other. It is impossible to plan for all eventualities, therefore a successful program is one that assesses and adapts to changing situations in an intelligent way, based on thoughtful reflection. Planning is done based on the best knowledge available, and the program uses monitoring and evaluation as reflective tools to assess change and choose appropriate actions.” (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001: 11).

OM was not conceived as a ‘one-size fits all approach’: “With some adaptations, its various elements and tools can be used separately or in conjunction with other processes (for example, a SWOT, a situational analysis, or an LFA)” (Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001: 11). The decision on whether or how to use OM needs to be based on its utility to the PME system’s users.

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Data and data sources

From September – December 2011, details of OM applications and practitioners were sourced from the OMLC applications database, the OMLC Resource library<sup>1</sup>: Examples of Use, the IDRC data bases<sup>2</sup>, OMLC newsletters, the making OM work publications – Jones (2007) and Hearn, Schaeffer and Ongevalle (2009; summaries of OMLC forum postings for 2006 and 2007); OMLC forum postings from 2008 and 2009, Internet searches, email requests, and suggestions from key contacts including Simon Hearn (OMLC facilitator) and the OMLC stewards. We captured information on 123 OM applications and 76 OM practitioners in two Excel databases. The design of these databases and options for their further use is described in Appendix 2.

*The number of applications for which we collected additional data represents a significant advance from data previously held by OMLC (*

**Table 1).** However, we consider the data to be indicative of OM experiences to date rather than a comprehensive assessment. Neither the sample size nor study design was intended to generate a comprehensive source of data on OM use and support. Inevitably our sample was also skewed in favour of those who have had a positive experience of OM use as such individuals are more likely to have posted details of their OM experience on the web and to have responded to our email requests for information.

Our experience working with the current OMLC applications and member databases and extending them for the purpose of this study provided us with an opportunity to reflect on how the OMLC databases might be further developed and maintained to support learning and the application of OM (Appendix 3).

**Table 1. Sources of data on OM applications (a full list can be found in Appendix 1)**

OMLC (database, map, resource library: examples of use, discussion forum, newsletter)	56
IDRC website	16
IDRC / OMLC	5
Other (personal communications, publications, internet)	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/index.php>

<sup>2</sup> [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-27705-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-27705-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)



## **2.2 Interviews with selected OM users and trainers**

### **2.2.1 Selection of interviewees**

In December 2011 we selected interviewees from the cases captured in the data bases and others suggested by the OM stewards. General selection criteria included responsiveness to earlier mails and recent or ongoing use of OM (as proxy indicators of likely motivation to participate in interview), competence in English, gender balance and a balance of those well that are well known and those that are new to the OMLC. For the interviews about OM applications we selected interviewees we considered to be a representative range of cases that covered different sectors and regions and varying levels to which OM has been applied from 'by the book' to applications alongside other approaches to the application of OM concepts only. We sought out cases that appeared to exemplify positive OM experiences as well as those that illustrated challenges in the application of OM. For the OM consultants / practitioners we sought out individuals with extensive cross-sectoral OM utilisation and training experience across a range of regions and a knowledge of the donor perspective on OM and PME in general. The interviewees included three OMLC Stewards.

### **2.2.2 The interview process**

We sent an email summarising the aims of the study and requesting a telephone or Skype interview to the 38 shortlisted interviewees. We followed this up by sending guiding questions to the 25 individuals who responded positively to our request. One set of questions was sent to interviewees with whom we wanted primarily to discuss specific OM case studies (19 individuals); and another set of guiding questions was sent to interviewees with whom we wanted primarily to discuss their general experience as OM trainers and consultants (6 individuals).

We carried out 24 interviews (25 interviewees, one joint interview) during December 2011 and January 2012. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to two and half hours with most lasting approximately one hour.

### **2.2.3 Capturing and analysing interview data**

Information from our interview notes was captured in the relevant database fields. These drafts, together with clarification questions were sent these to the interviewees for review. The drafts were further revised until the interviewees confirmed that they accurately reflected what had been said during the interview. All but two interviewees completed this verification process. The information in the Excel databases was organised in a mind map using the Freeplane<sup>3</sup> mind mapping software. This allowed us to flexibly group information from the database.

## **2.3 Consultation with the OMLC stewards**

OMLC stewards have been consulted at all stages of this study – for feedback on the study design, the structure of the database used to capture information, the selection criteria for interviewees and for interviewee recommendations. They have reviewed a draft of study report. Based on this they have provided a set of concluding remarks and action points.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.freeplane.sourceforge.net](http://www.freeplane.sourceforge.net)

### 3 Findings

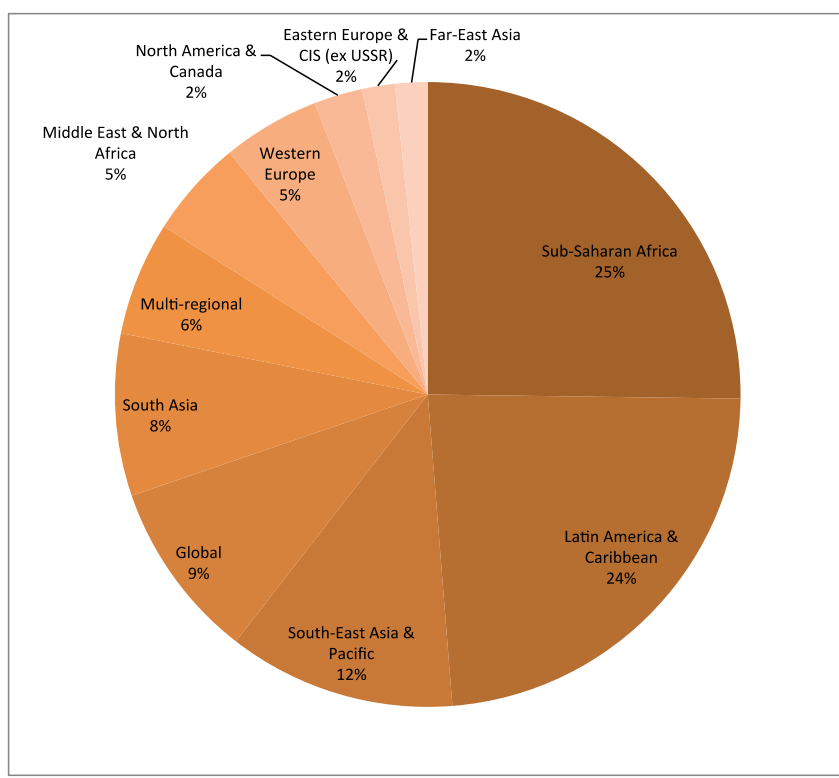
Sections 3.1 are based on data collected on the 123 case studies. Sections 3.2 – 0 also use this data but rely largely on records of interviews with 24 informants.

#### 3.1 Scope of use

##### 3.1.1 OM use by region

Our data suggest that the majority of OM applications have been in three regions: Africa, Latin America & Caribbean and Asia (**Figure 2**). Considering OM was developed and has largely been promoted as a PME approach for international development cooperation projects and programmes, this distribution of applications is unsurprising. It is notable, however, that there are a number of multi-regional and global uses of OM and that there are examples of OM use in more economically developed regions.

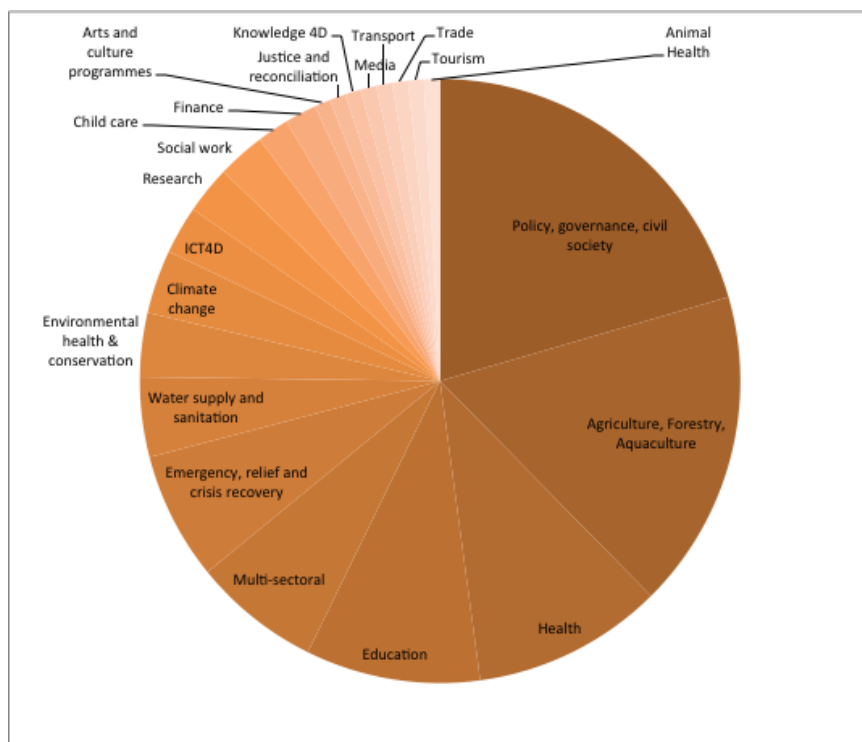
Figure 2. OM use by region



##### 3.1.2 OM use by sector

We identified twenty-two sectors in which OM has been applied. Sectors for which there are most examples of OM applications are ‘Policy, governance and civil society’ and ‘Agriculture, forestry and aquaculture’ (**Figure 3**). Also with numerous examples of OM use are ‘Health’, ‘Education and ‘Emergency relief and crisis recovery’. The diversity of sectors is notable, with examples of use being found for instance in trade, tourism and finance.

**Figure 3. OM use by sector**



### 3.1.3 Funder support for OM

Where possible, we sought to identify the sources of financial support for applications of OM. We have not included the names of sources in the report in case some remain confidential.

The total number of funders we counted is 36 (32 government / public bodies, 4 foundations). This total is probably an underestimate: back donors of organisations identified as sponsors were not systematically identified, some funding sources were cited as ‘various’ and other categories cited were vague e.g. “communities” and “local government”. In a limited number of cases (e.g. A43 and A89) it was clear that funding was explicitly granted for using OM but in most cases it appeared that the funder was unaware of or ambivalent to the PME methodology.

### 3.1.4 Available trainers / support

The types of support received and the perceived needs of users are described and discussed in **section 3.4** using data from interviewees. Information gathered from our online searches alone was found to be insufficient to explore who is providing support, in which sectors, regions, languages etc.

### 3.1.5 Use of OM stages and steps

It was not possible to determine which stages and steps of OM had been used in all 123 case studies because of the limitations of available information. Nonetheless, for over half the cases the purpose of OM use was either clearly stated or could be surmised. Of these 83 cases, 68 used OM in planning, 56 in monitoring and 55 in evaluation. 39 cases used OM for planning, monitoring and

evaluation. The possible preference for using OM in planning over M&E is further supported by the data from the 43 cases in which there is explicit reference to use or adaptation of OM steps. The most frequently used steps were the first 5 steps of the 7-step intentional design (planning) stage. All the monitoring and evaluation steps were used considerably less frequently. While these data provide some signals about the uses of OM to date they need to be treated with some caution because planning, monitoring and evaluation are highly inter-related. Use of OM for planning, for instance, will have a great influence on what should in principle at least be monitored.

**Table 2. Frequency of use of individual OM steps from the 43 cases in which OM steps could be clearly identified**

Vision	37	86%
Mission	37	86%
Boundary Partners	39	91%
Outcome Challenges	38	88%
Progress Markers	38	88%
Strategy Maps	30	70%
Organisational Practices	21	49%
Monitoring Priorities	17	40%
Outcome Journal	23	53%
Strategy Journal	19	44%
Performance Journal	16	37%
Evaluation Plan	18	42%
<u>Total cases</u>	<u>43</u>	

Information from our interviews on the use of OM in planning, monitoring and evaluation (**section 3.2.3**) supports the impression gained from the data that OM has been used more in planning than in M&E.

### **3.1.6 Use of OM with other approaches to planning, monitoring and evaluation**

As stated in the introduction (**section 1.3.1**), OM was not conceived as a ‘one-size fits all approach’. It is clear from the case studies we examined that OM is nearly always used alongside other PME approaches. The most commonly used approaches that we identified are summarised in **Table 3** along with brief statements about how each approach has been used with OM. Approaches most commonly used with OM include Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and Most Significant Change (MSC).

**Table 3. Common PME approaches used with OM**

Approach	Brief overview of approach	Ways in which the approach has been used with OM
Action Learning Cycle	A structured method to facilitate experiential learning. The action learning cycle comprises of a cycle of planning, action, reflection and learning	Helps to ensure that M&E becomes a dynamic activity where results of actions are learned from and this learning feeds into planning (for the continuous monitoring cycle and the longer evaluation cycle)
Activity planning & budgeting	Activity planning and budgeting is conventionally used in project planning and is often mandated by donors	Some interventions have chosen not to use and instead opt for more familiar activity planning and budgeting
Appreciative enquiry (AI)	Appreciative Inquiry works on the premise that what you focus on expands. If there is a focus on problems (e.g. problem trees) it is hypothesised that project teams will tend to see a situation as inherently problematic. AI encourages a focus on positive experiences - great moments, great experiences, and what people are passionate about. In this way it seeks to build upon what works to maximise positive change.	A participatory approach that helps the project team ask questions that empower and engage Boundary Partners
The client's framework	A variety of prevailing PME systems at the project, programme or organisational level <sup>4</sup> : or evaluations,	Incorporating OM concepts and possibly OM stages and steps into a pre-existing PME system
The Integrated Organisation Model (IOM)	The Integrated Organisation Model (IOM) is a model to describe and analyse organisations. IOM consists of 5 external components: mission, output, input, general environment and specific environment and 6 internal components: structure, strategy, systems, management style, staff and culture.	Provides an alternative tool for addressing organisational practices
Logical Framework Approach – LFA (see <b>Section 0</b> )	A PME methodology that conceptualises an intervention in terms of a hierarchy of objectives that are linked in a cause-effect relationship: Activities result in outputs which result in outcomes that cause impact. At the core of the LFA is the 16-square logical framework matrix that summarises the hierarchy of objectives (column 1), indicators (column 2) which show whether your objectives have been achieved, means of verification (column 3) – the sources of evidence from which you can ascertain the status of your indicators. And risks and assumptions (column 4) those factors beyond the control of the project which influence its success.	Translation of OM into the LFA format
		OM used at the implementation level and LFA for reporting to donors
		LFA and OM fusion models
		OM at the programmatic level and LFA at the project level

Most Significant Change (MSC)	A participatory M&E technique involving a structured process for the systematic collection and development of significant change stories from the community level.	Used for collecting Boundary Partner's change stories
		Used as an evaluation methodology that complements and outcome-harvesting type of approach
		MSC can be used for capturing the influence on indirect partners for which no outcome challenges were developed.
		Training – used alongside OM concepts and steps to illustrate the need for a PME approach that encourages learning
Political Economy Analysis	PEA analyses relationships in terms of structural bottlenecks that exist in factors like values, culture, broader political context, distribution of resources, decision making, etc. It makes explicit the fact that behaviour change needs to be understood in the context that has shaped that behaviour.	Used in planning to help understand context. This helps to sharpen the intentional design through an improved understanding of the processes behind the behaviour exhibited.
PRA	A wide suite of participatory PME tools that seek to incorporate grassroots knowledge, values and experience into development interventions. PRA tools avoid use of writing wherever possible.	Used to help implement OM at all stages e.g. in planning, interviewing, surveying and reflection
Quantitative Assessment Tools	A variety of quantitative assessment techniques (no specific approaches were specified)	Used as M&E tools
RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA)	Based on OM, ROMA includes additional steps to help influence policymakers – for situation analysis, the identification of key influential stakeholders, the identification of desired changes, the development of an engagement strategy and the identification of internal capacity to affect change.	Used as an OM-based PME framework for interventions that seek to influence policymakers
Results Oriented Project Management (ROMA)	ROMA comprises of 4 steps that can be used before the 3 OM stages:  1. 'Agreement': elaborate the ideas, goals, visions of the various team members on the programme / project / organisation and find an agreement on what should be achieved.  2. 'Strengths and Weaknesses': elaborate knowhow, resources, connections, etc. of team members in order to focus efforts.	Used as a situation analysis stage preceding the 3 OM stages.

	<p>3. Human resources: clarify which roles the various team members will have.</p> <p>4. Project environment analysis: have a closer look at factors that may influence the project.</p>	
Survey techniques	Various methods such as baseline and follow up surveys, including household surveys and focus group discussions	Used to gather M&E information
Theory of Change (ToC)	Theory of change provides a model of what an intervention needs to do to achieve the desired outcomes. Unlike a simple cause and effect model it articulates the mechanism by which action contributes to an outcome thus making assumptions explicit. The model of how an intervention is supposed to work can be monitored and evaluated to establish if the rhetoric matches up to reality.	Helps to ensure that the project team articulates, understands, manages and monitors the change process which are assumed to connect the desired outcomes and the work done to influence these outcomes

## 3.2 Using OM: benefits, issues and solutions

### 3.2.1 Satisfaction with OM

There was a high level of satisfaction among our interviewees with the contribution that OM had made to meeting their planning, monitoring, evaluation and other needs with an average score of 4 out of 5 (n=19) – “generally satisfied but with some exceptions”. Some interviewees gave separate scores for their satisfaction levels: planning (mean of 4.7, n=3), monitoring (mean of 3, n=3) and evaluation (mean of 2.5, n=2).

### 3.2.2 Appreciation for OM concepts: the ‘Ah ha!’ moments

OM as a participatory PME approach and the central interlinked concepts that lie behind it (section 1.3.1) are widely considered as contributors to a powerful paradigm shift in PME that enables interventions to be better focused, more realistic and participatory and have sustainable results:

*“OM helped to introduce a paradigm shift which helped communities and entrepreneurs realise that to achieve results we need to change attitudes, to look at things we are doing and what we need to change to do things right. Clean water was available and within their reach but only once attitudes were changed” (A49).*

Many alluded to that “Ah ha!” moment when a person or a group grasped the power of the method, one of its components, or the underlying concepts as a means of making sense of their project’s place in the wider landscape:

*Outcome orientation: “OM forces people to use an outcomes-oriented planning approach. Most projects / programmes are not planned from back to front (i.e. results-oriented) but from the front (activity-oriented). It is possible to do results-oriented planning using a LFA, but most people don’t use LFA in this way” (A105).*

*Outcomes as behavioural change: “The genius of the method is in the concept of outcomes that it uses. Focusing on change in social actors that you only influence is a breakthrough I have heard described as a revelation, an epiphany and revolutionary.” (P7)*

*Boundary Partners and spheres of control, influence and concern: “OM focuses people. Stop trying to change the world; focus on your sphere of influence. Tell me about 3-4 Boundary Partners, not 90 stakeholders” (P4).*

*Attribution/contribution: “I came to appreciate OM as an attempt to be intellectually honest about RBM. LFA expects a direct link to results. In OM, it is explicitly recognised that results will not be solely attributable to the project / intervention. Rather the project will contribute to results.” (P76)*

### 3.2.3 The use of OM in planning, monitoring and evaluation

#### 3.2.3.1 Planning / intentional design

Many interviewees highlighted the benefits of using OM, particularly the intentional design stage, which was widely regarded as an actor-centred planning approach that helps to: encourage



collaboration; create a sense of ownership among actors; clarify roles and responsibilities; and manage expectations of what a project can and cannot achieve.

*"Planning - there is nothing more useful than OM" (P4).*

*"We use OM concepts mostly for project / programme planning, where we find the biggest deficits in our partners' capacity. Well planned is half monitored! When Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers are well worked out" (A105).*

*"Intentional design is very effective, very motivating. Boundary Partner, Outcome Challenge and Progress Marker are very useful as they fill a black box in our chain intervention framework: if we are aiming to contribute to changing the livelihood of farmers, what specifically does this mean: who is involved, what practices need to change, what is our role?" (P16).*

People were particularly enthusiastic when Boundary Partners were involved in planning:

*"The participation of Boundary Partners from the Intentional Design phase helped greatly in creating a culture of evaluative thinking and practice" (A47).*

*"Boundary Partner meetings are unique opportunities for these disparate groups to discuss the project, review progress and take decisions. OM provided a platform for capturing capabilities of Boundary Partners in a structured way and building a shared understanding. Without their participation as Boundary Partners, they would most probably have remained unaware of issues and unresponsive" (A78).*

However, it is not always possible to involve Boundary Partners in an intervention's PME. For instance, the targets of advocacy or lobbying interventions may not agree at the outset to participate in the design and monitoring of an intervention designed to influence them:

*"This is something that we often encounter in governance work; while the OM manual implies that your Boundary Partners are already on your side when you are at the intentional design stage. (A106).*

The **Vision and Mission** steps as outlined in the OM manual were greatly appreciated in situations where vision and mission statements had not been formalised prior to OM implementation:

*"Motivating factors for understanding Outcome Mapping included the development of a shared vision" (A47).*

*"The vision of change really stretches peoples' understanding of where you want the world to be and your contribution to this vision" (A106).*

However, in many instances interventions had vision and mission statements that predated OM application and these were not reformulated as part of the Intentional Design stage:

*"Least use was made of vision and mission because most of the organisations we work with are already fairly strong and well organised and have these already" (A97).*

When vision statements were developed the process was found to be particularly challenging when planning involved large groups with diverse perspectives:

*"Particularly in larger groups it may be difficult to elaborate a shared vision from the various ideas in people's heads" (A105)*

*"Vision: works well for simple projects, but what if there is a group of people that have never worked together before and have to identify the main issue on which they want to focus? How can one choose the most important one?" (P70).*

In such instances "the vision can be developed in subgroups and then harmonised in plenum or by a further subgroup" (p70).

**Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers** were widely considered to be dynamic, motivational planning tools that facilitated the identification of opportunities and constraints to project implementation. Again this was particularly so where Boundary Partners were involved in the PME process:

*"Motivating factors for understanding Outcome Mapping included the development of Outcome Challenges and progress markers by the Boundary Partners themselves" (A47).*

*"Projects have something to report progressively, even if they are 'only' early behavioural changes. They do not just have to wait to that ultimate ..." (A106).*

*"Progress Markers were very useful for guiding the project. Example: as we assess Progress Markers we learnt about the training and support needs of technicians' and technologists in the partner universities, we added training for these groups to the project. Because universities were a Boundary Partner, they participated in setting and assessing the Progress Markers hence accepted the need for additional training and supported it" (A78).*

Some felt that PMs were relatively easily grasped "mini-outcome challenges" (P7) and as such help empower and inform project implementation teams at all levels:

*"Progress Markers can be quite intuitive so untrained community members can monitor them, as opposed to with conventional indicators which require understanding of definitions, percentages and so on. This results in a huge shift in the balance of power as there is no need for programme officers in the field with expert knowledge. On the other hand PMs also support programme officers by giving them a very clear steer on what to look for and what to report on in their 'back to office' reports. [This] helps them get away from long narratives which don't actually capture the important programming results" (A97).*

*"OM has helped the process of aggregation [of material for annual reports] since working with Outcome Challenges has made the information more coherent" (A45).*

*"The use of the common PMs allows data to be aggregated and compared." (P16)*

However, this perspective was not universally shared with others contrasting the ideal with the situation they observed on the ground:

*"In theory, Boundary Partners should be deeply involved and be enthusiastic about defining Outcome Challenges, Progress Markers and in monitoring progress. In reality, people in major institutions (Boundary Partners) don't have time for quarterly reporting and object to be asked to participate in something so time consuming. In practice, M&E*

*coordinators complete the reports as best they can and try to verify them with Boundary Partners. In contrast, some small organisations that depend on us for funding are proactive with their participation in the OM processes" (A108).*

*"PMs can be interpreted differently by different groups and session leaders" (A78).*

Some people's difficulties in applying Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers relate to the ongoing tension between LFA-based approaches and Outcome Mapping (**section 0**):

*"...people are often more comfortable thinking in terms of outputs than outcomes which makes it difficult to derive sensible outcome challenges and progress markers" (A25).*

*"Some staff want Progress Markers to be turned into traditional indicators. This is probably because some staff lack a background in social change and are more used to service delivery" (A111).*

It appears that people's contrasting experiences with Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers reflects the degree to which their project environment was receptive to OM implementation. This issue is explored in **section 3.3**.

Our study indicates that **Strategy Maps** are used less frequently than the Vision, Mission, Boundary Partner and Outcome Challenge steps but the step is nonetheless valued in particular as a means of stimulating thinking and collaboration:

*"Strategy Maps work well: they are hard to understand but they make people think outside the box!" (P70).*

*"Strategy Maps provide a good combination of supporting 3 types of strategies for both your Boundary Partners (individuals) and your environment. They work well for development cooperations" (P68).*

*"We use the Strategy Map more like a frame of reference. It is not used to plan activities in all parts of the six boxes." (A89)*

*"The concept of Strategy Maps promotes a rich discussion" (P16).*

Adapting the Strategy Map concept to "to include yourself [the project implementer] as a 'supporter' in planning and monitoring" was advocated by one interviewee; as "it shows your partners you are seeking to adapt and learn as well" (P16).

Strategy Maps were not always viewed favourably as a planning tool for a variety of reasons including the following: The possibility of them being used in a mechanistic "box ticking" manner; the danger of Strategy Maps contributing to a very heavy and impractical PME system: "The original intentional design was felt to be too heavy and unpractical because of the large number of Boundary Partners and long lists of Progress Markers and overlapping support strategies" (A41) and of over-planning in highly complex and uncertain situations "where you don't know relationships of cause and effect when you set out" (P7).

Our study suggests that **Organisational Practices** has been the least used of the Intentional Design step. However it has helped to "inspire the assessment of [our] internal organisational processes"

(A45) and to highlight the principle of “putting us on the table as well as partners” was appreciated (P16) but the process advocated in the OM manual was not always “appropriate in the [given] organisational context” (A43). Some felt that the OP step only outlined “broad principles” (A89) and that “the 8 areas in the OM OP seem random” (P68) and they preferred to use other tools such as the 'Integrated organisational model' (P68). One project (A45) creatively adapted other OM steps to assess organisational practices: “Seeing the country offices as Boundary Partners of the management and support services of the head office resulted in an outcome challenge (+ progress markers) for the country office for the management and support services of the head office (e.g. finance, HR, communications) which will be used as the basis for an intra-organisational planning, learning & accountability system.”

### **3.2.3.2 Monitoring**

The steps of the **Outcome and Performance Monitoring** stage are not discussed individually as most of our findings concern the stage as a whole.

The outcome and performance monitoring stage of OM helps to promote a learning culture. The emphasis on the continuous cycles of planning, implementing, monitoring, re-planning, implementing and monitoring and the longer cycles of strategic planning, implementation and evaluation encourages a culture of evaluative thinking - *reflective practice that uses systematically collected data to inform action*. In cases where OM was applied as a participatory learning process, partners would see monitoring as part of a valuable learning process rather than a tedious obligation.

*“With OM you are always monitoring your strategy; if it is not working, you change something. It provides evidence to base decision making on: quarterly planning meetings are based on evidence, not the views of the most assertive participant” (A97).*

*“OM is great for organisational learning. It is the only PME method that tries to bridge across programmes and organisations, offering approaches for both in a combination” (P68).*

*“OM has promoted clear thinking.” (A111)*

*“OM provides a link to learning.” (A97)*

However, Outcome and Performance Monitoring appears to be much less commonly used than Intentional Design. We suggest one reason for this is that the data collection tools provided in the OM manual are less developed than the rest of the methodology. Perhaps as a result, the burden of monitoring is perceived to be too great:

*“OM design / planning often works well but monitoring often does not. Trying to 'do it by the book', using all the journals described in the OM manual is impractical / too demanding / generates too much data to be useful. It is necessary to be realistic when using PMs and to avoid using them as a check list. It is important to be careful where to use PM data: the detail can obscure the bigger picture. Using journals risks an overload of data and a fall back into a report mode.” (P16).*

*“Journals as outlined in OM manual could be a significant burden” (A101).*

*"There is a lot of paperwork – demanding that Outcome Journals need to be filled in is a challenge" (A41).*

For some, the use of OM journals can become a box-filling exercise that ends up accumulating a mass of data that can obscure the bigger picture: "Trying to 'do it by the book', using all the journals described in the OM manual is impractical / too demanding / generates too much data to be useful" (P16). In practice very few projects monitored "by the book"; i.e. as described in the OM manual and instead adapted the methodology as appropriate: "When adapted to fit one's purpose, OM is most useful compared to what else is out there" (P70). Suggested adaptations include the exclusion of certain steps, the adaptation of OM terminology and the use of complementary methods e.g. MSC (Most Significant Change) to build upon outcome descriptions and political economy analysis to help formulate Outcome Challenges:

*"We use MSC & OM synergistically – as a bit of a buffet of both methodologies. We have not looked at either from a purist perspective" (A98).*

*"Political Economy Analysis analyses relationships in terms of structural bottlenecks that exist in factors like values, culture, broader political context, distribution of resources, decision making, etc. This approach is valuable combined with OM so that when you formulate Outcome Challenges you can work backwards for strategies to work with these actors. If you understand the process behind the behaviour exhibited you can sharpen your strategies" (A106).*

The perceived feasibility of monitoring may be related to the prevailing M&E culture in an organisation / project team. In one situation where monitoring was already routine the "burden" of OM reporting did not seem to be onerous: "Monitoring [was] not a problem as partners are used to having to comply with monitoring requirements" (A111).

In some cases Outcome Journals appeared to work well but strategy journals less so:

*"Outcome Journals, the latter adapted but true to the OM manual are very, very useful" (P4).*

*"Outcome journals are used but strategy journals are less popular perhaps because the content appears to be a little less tangible" (A25).*

The above can be considered to be responses to the issue of monitoring overload. Another response has been to "fold the 3 journals into one" (P7) while others "don't work with large journals", rather they "emphasise face to face meetings of the project team and Boundary Partners" (P16).

### **3.2.3.3 Evaluation**

Our interviewees generally reflected little on the evaluation planning stage of OM. Those who expressed an opinion felt that this step was too brief and needed further development:

*The evaluation planning step is very brief. In response I am working on a more comprehensive approach and tools for evaluation planning and reporting" (P2).*

*"Evaluation is not well elaborated [in the OM manual]." (P16)*

*"Adapting the principles of OM to evaluation is the dimension of OM that is least developed" (P7).*

*“OM is currently more useful for planning and monitoring, less so for evaluation purposes” (P68).*

However, OM concepts are being used to inspire innovative evaluation approaches, notably “Outcome Harvesting”:

*“The OM concept of outcomes helps people to think about evaluation differently. It does not handcuff workshop participants to our theory of change and tests some of our operating hypotheses. “People respond well to a focus on stories and not semantics”” (A98).*

*“Outcome harvesting suggests capturing what others can already see. But the evaluation actually produced outcome statements that were unexpected as they had not been captured by the monitoring we had been doing. We are surprised and impressed by the contributions our programme had made” (A113).*

OM-inspired evaluation approaches that capture behavioural change outcomes to which an intervention contributes can be used alongside other techniques such as Most Significant Change. Such hybrid approaches hold great promise as formative, summative and developmental evaluation techniques for projects, programmes, organisations and networks working in complexity, whether their work has been planned using OM or not.

### **3.2.4 Terminology**

OM terms such as Boundary Partner or Progress Marker are potentially beneficial because their use can help clarify important OM concepts. However, although we did not explicitly ask each interviewee about terminology, we did ask about issues in general and those who raised the topic of terminology did so to indicate that they have found it to be problematic. One interviewee even suggested OM terminology made the approach appear to be “sect-like” (A108) even though its creators intended it to be used with other approaches when appropriate (section 1.3.2).

While Vision and Mission are relatively familiar PME terms, the term Boundary Partner is seen by some as part of a “new and often jargon-filled methodology” (A47):

*“The term Boundary Partner can get confused with other social actors who are termed partners” (A115).*

Terminology of OM can also be a barrier to monitoring:

*“The idea of a “journal” creates problems. People ask “Do we have to keep a daily journal? People are thinking of the work needed in keeping a journal (negative) rather than its value [light, easy, frequent real-time monitoring]”. (P7)*

One of the many ways in which practitioners have adapted the methodology is by using analogous, culturally appropriate, local terms / concepts where possible or changing the terminology to e.g. using the term Boundary Actor instead of Boundary Partner (P7).

### **3.2.5 Summary**

- OM is highly appreciated by users.
- OM concepts have helped to facilitate a PME paradigm shift towards development that is for and by people.

- Intentional design (planning) is probably the most widely used and highly appreciated OM stage but it is usually customised/streamlined/used alongside other approaches.
- OM monitoring is also widely used and helps to promote a learning culture and evaluative thinking. Again, in practically all cases it is necessary to adapt monitoring as outlined in the OM manual to maximise its utility.
- Our findings suggest OM has been used less for evaluation than for planning or monitoring but it has inspired innovative evaluation approaches, including for interventions that had not used OM at the planning and monitoring stages.

### 3.3 When OM works best

OM has been applied with varying degrees of success or satisfaction. In some organisations the achievements of individual projects has led to an increasing use of OM (e.g. P16), while in others the use of OM is being reduced in favour of logframe-based approaches (e.g. P76). Potential users of OM need to understand the extent to which their intervention (or a part of it) and their PME capacity is appropriate for OM. A failure to recognise the extent to which a situation is appropriate for OM may result in “OM over-reach” where the methodology is applied to an extent that is inappropriate for the prevailing project environment / capacities. Several interviewees felt that the OM approach adopted had been too complicated for the prevailing situation resulting in monitoring overload and a failure to learn:

*"The original intentional design was felt to be too heavy and unpractical because of the large number of Boundary Partners and long lists of progress markers and overlapping support strategies" (A41).*

*"One of the original aims was to apply OM across the board and I thought that it would be sufficient to just do intentional design. However, I now see that the critical thing is that learning takes place but if there is not a conducive environment for learning to take place then you miss an opportunity" (A89).*

*"When integrating data from 14 organisations, 13 regions, numerous countries, a secretariat with three units and a technical committee, the resulting report is so detailed and complex that it is difficult to read / use and of limited or no value to informing management decisions" (P76).*

From our interviews, we conclude intervention situations can be characterised as those in which OM use is:

- (a) Inappropriate.
- (b) Appropriate for **‘simple’ use of OM** i.e. the use of one or more of the OM concepts (but none of the 12 steps) as an aid to conceptualisation of an intervention.
- (c) Appropriate for **‘extensive’ use of OM** i.e. the use or adaptation of one more stages or steps in addition to OM concepts.

#### 3.3.1 Enabling factors

We were able to derive the following **eight enabling factors** the presence or absence of which can, we propose, be used to determine if OM is appropriate for a situation and, if it is, whether a simple or more extensive use of OM is likely to be optimal. We classified factors 1-3 as ‘essential’ and 4-8 as ‘optional’. Most are relevant to participatory learning-oriented PME approaches in general and some

are listed in Roduner & Hartmann's (2009) Module on Step-0: How to prepare for OM Intentional Design.

### **3.3.1.1 Essential enabling factors**

1. Existence of complexity in the intervention environment. It is widely recognised that OM is particularly relevant and useful where results, or the processes by which they are achieved, are uncertain; for example in capacity development where success can look different from different perspectives and will ultimately depend on the behaviour of actors out of your control; or as in a network where objectives are agreed through member interactions and in reaction to opportunities.

Complexity is not limited to partnerships or networks: it characterises aspects of many if not most sustainable development interventions. Even projects ostensibly concerned with service delivery often require behaviour change outcomes if service delivery is to be effective. For example, OM was chosen as the main PME method for an intervention supplying scientific equipment to African research and education institutions because it was recognised that providing access to well-functioning scientific equipment at scientific institutions in low income countries requires behavioural change from a number of social actors e.g. equipment suppliers who needed to establish a local presence in order to understand customer needs and supply chain issues; and research institutions who needed to commit staff and support the training needed to maintain equipment.

In situations in which results or means to achieving results are more predictable, users may benefit more from a lighter adaptation of the tools and concepts.

2. Recognition of and willingness to act upon complexity in the project environment and an understanding of the rationale for OM application. The complexity factor appeared to apply to all the case studies we reviewed. However, this complexity was: 1) not always explicitly recognised by the project implementers, many of whom have implicitly maintained a cause-effect focus which has hindered OM implementation; or 2) not acted upon, perhaps because reporting on activities and outputs ("business as usual") is familiar / easier. Awareness of complexity is insufficient: implementers must be willing to move beyond the familiarity of linear cause-effect logic and understand the rationale for using OM, otherwise its use may be mechanistic and of limited value. Recognising and acting upon the difference between simple and complex situations is one aspect of the need to understand the rationale for the use of OM:

*"People have difficulties in understanding OM principles." (P70).*

*"people are often more comfortable thinking in terms of outputs than outcomes which makes it difficult to define sensible outcome challenges and progress markers" (A25).*

*"People want to manage activities and are not yet used to managing results and are scared if they can't use indicators / impact" (P70).*

In some situations, only a part of a project / organisation / intervention model may be affected by complexity and thus potentially benefit from OM. Recognising complexity and where and when to apply OM is an issue that can be addressed by training / mentoring (**section 3.4.3**) but it is a challenge for people to re-orient their understanding and this takes time and hands-on experience:



*"Much time is needed to explain the principles, as people don't feel they are taken on board if you only explain the methodology." (P70).*

*"The emphasis has been on learning by doing. As the programme is planned the team look at the elements of OM and then look at the guidelines and get exposure through practice." (A41).*

*"I think you learn the concepts or the method only by applying them" (P7).*

**3. Champions and the availability of appropriate technical support.** Support for novel approaches such as OM takes time to build and without champions it is unlikely to be sustained. Use of OM requires motivated people to promote an approach that has yet to penetrate the mainstream. The existence of champions inside or outside the organisation who can support and motivate project teams to apply OM is seen as vital to the successful use of OM:

*"For introducing OM it is important ... to be able to identify someone at the field / implementation level who is passionate about learning and applying it" (A101).*

*"It will take motivated individuals pushing through with their OM research interests combined with practical applications; this will make the change" (P66).*

Motivation alone is not sufficient and the OM champions need the confidence and competence to adapt OM as necessary. In many of the reviewed cases there was nobody in the organisation who had these attributes. However, if the individual has the necessary aptitudes the competence can be taught by individualised training and the confidence cultivated by continued support / mentoring. In cases where the champion is a self-starter with prior PME knowledge and experience it is possible for them to learn about OM through available resources such as the OM manual and other materials available from websites particularly those of the OMLC and the IDRC:

*"I had significant prior experience with participatory research, strategic planning, etc. and felt able to learn and start using OM after consulting the OM manual and ODI slides" (A97).*

The OMLC forum also represents a significant learning resource for those seeking to champion OM:

*"I had no formal OM training but I was aware of OM because through my ODI colleague and complemented this awareness with reading of the OM manual and articles on the OMLC" (A106).*

### **3.3.1.2 Optional enabling factors**

**4. Funder support** for OM applications is discussed in **sections 3.1.3 and 0**. Although it is beneficial, the lack of explicit support from a funder for the use of OM does not have to be an insurmountable barrier as OM can be implemented "by stealth" e.g. by applying OM at the operational level but reporting using LFA or using OM concepts without explicitly referring to OM or using OM terminology.

**5. Support for and understanding of OM at the executive level** is valuable for several reasons including the following: ensuring a commitment to secure the necessary resources for developing

the situation-specific application of OM, ensuring that the system adopted is a good fit with institution-wide practices -and securing the space for learning and adaptive management. Initial executive support for OM with only superficial understanding may mean that support wavers in the light of the inevitable challenges, such as staff turnover, that are thrown up during implementation.

A deeper initial engagement and/or targeted training or mentoring could address this issue:

*"[With the benefit of hindsight] I would have worked more with the Board & Executive Director and got them more involved – they delegated this work without fully understanding what it meant." (P7)*

*"A short course in OM for those at senior levels within national organisations would be very useful so that they could have an overview of the [OM-based PME] system and the philosophy behind it." (A41)*

6. The promotion of an organisational learning culture. The promotion of an organisational learning culture is an enabling factor for the implementation of any participatory learning-based PME approach. As highlighted in **section 3.2.3.2** many OM practitioners emphasised the method's value in encouraging learning and thinking. Interviewees who reported successful OM implementation were often accustomed to promoting a culture of reflection and learning:

*"The team is a very flexible team and almost everybody comes into the M&E section for reflection as there is a culture of participation and learning." (A41)*

*"PME is addressed in biannual boundary partnership meetings. During these meetings issues are sorted out between the Boundary Partners and the strategic plans are updated to capture lessons learnt and Boundary Partner capabilities" (A78).*

*"With OM you are always monitoring your strategy; if it is not working, you change something." (A97)*

OM application is much more challenging in more traditionally structured organisations or project implementation arrangements:

*"[There is a] lack of experience or willingness of some partners to devote time to planning and taking ownership of a project / to learning about planning using OM. Some are used to being given projects, not having to work iteratively, at length, on the planning" (A111).*

With support from the executive level, organisational development can address such issues but such a process is unlikely to be fast:

*"The investment in organisational development needed to adopt and adapt OM needs to be recognised" (A97).*

7. An appreciation of the value of a results and learning-oriented PME system at multiple levels in the organisation. PME is given low priority in many organisations and in such cases PME systems are typically the responsibility of a restricted number of individuals. In such environments the focus is often on compliance and simple activity reporting rather than ownership, learning and a results-focus as promoted by OM and other participatory learning-oriented PME approaches. Where OM is supported in an organisation this issue can be addressed by promoting the need for managing for results versus managing for activities and the integration of OM concepts into existing PME systems. These concepts can be very difficult to promote in situations where the project using OM occupies a

relatively small percentage of an individual's time, as is frequently the case for networks and for multi-country projects supported by international organisations:

*"Trainees do not always practice OM following training ... some forget. Those who do not forget in most cases are the Regional Coordinators who work full time for the network. Others do not use OM in their work on a daily basis. It is difficult for them to enhance their understanding of the approach. This is a common issue for networks as opposed to more traditionally structured organisations."* (A112)

*"Perhaps 2-3 people from each participating country are present at these meetings [regular project meetings when M&E is discussed] and about 5-19 people are implementing the project at the national level. You cannot be certain how much or how well information is communicated to those who do not attend the meetings."* (A25)

8. Availability of sufficient resources for the implementation of OM. The interviewees gave widely varying responses when questioned about resource needs for OM implementation. Some stated that considerable additional resources were needed to move from PME "business as usual" to establishing and maintaining an OM-based system:

*"The OM approach we used is much more costly than business as usual"* (A89).

Indeed, it is likely that any change from the "business as usual" approach to PME is likely to incur additional costs in most cases.

Others identified the need for additional resources for initial training and some mentoring but other requirements were already budgeted under existing activities while one interviewee stated that no additional resources were needed:

*"Using OM instead of any other PME methodology did not require any additional resources. At the beginning we needed to set up an M&E section which would have been needed whatever PME methodology was chosen"* (A41).

Those that did not consider resources to be a limiting factor were describing cases in which PME was mainstreamed into project / institutional activities. Those who described projects operating in a less supportive environment felt that they would need significant additional resources to adopt an OM-based PME system.

### **3.3.2 The "OM receptivity continuum"**

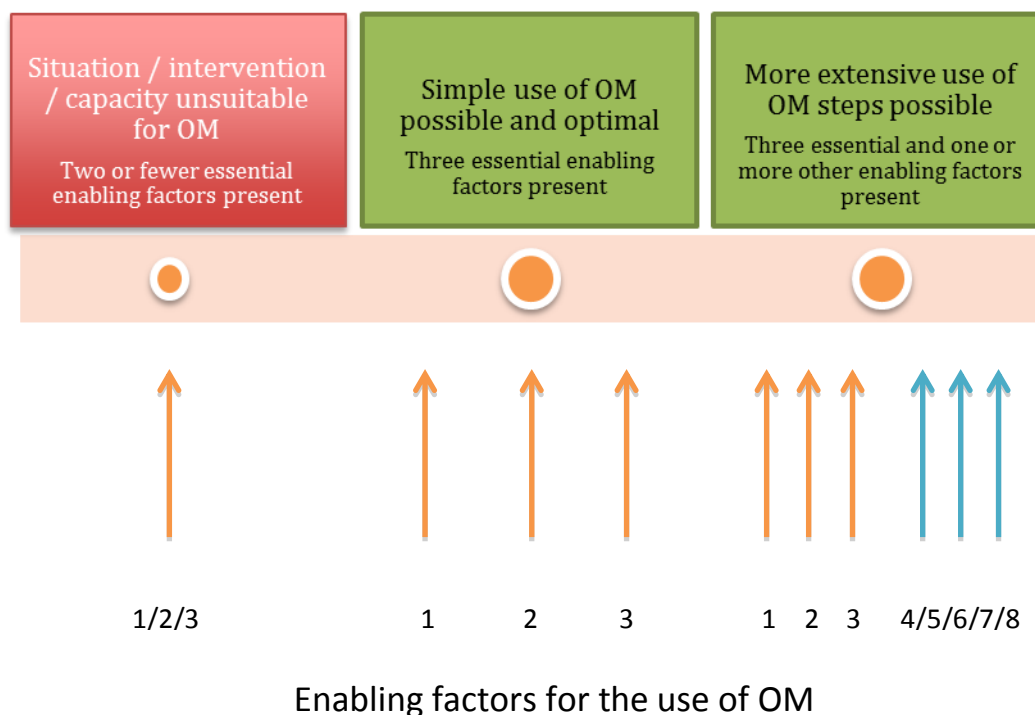
To assist potential users of OM in determining the suitability of an intervention and their PME capacities for OM, we propose an imaginary "OM receptivity continuum" (**Figure 4**). Situations in which two or fewer essential enabling factors are present are not appropriate for OM. In situations suitable for OM, optimal use may be 'simple' or 'extensive'. A 'simple' application of OM may use one or more OM concepts as in the use of behaviour change in the following example:

*"Even in areas where country directors might still be building their confidence in using OM (now or in the future), we can still be sure they will be asking: who do you want to influence and why?"* (A111).

More 'extensive' use of OM is optimal where, in addition to the essential enabling factors 1-3, we find one or more of the optional enabling factors 4-8 described above.

**Figure 4. The Outcome Mapping receptivity continuum**

Enabling factors required for the use of OM



### 3.3.3 Adaptation of OM along the OM receptivity continuum

It is unlikely that a situation will be characterised by all enabling factors. None of the interview case studies appeared to do so, for example. Therefore those introducing OM follow various strategies such as:

- Use of OM in pilot interventions as a basis for learning and examining its possible future role: *“It is important to start small and scale up. The results informed our plan which has been piloted over 3 years at six institutions. We are now ready to scale up”* (A78).
- Implementation of a comprehensive OM approach at the programme level with project partners as Boundary Partners: *“[comprehensive application of] OM is good at our level (international programme management). We can characterise partners as Boundary Partners and agree with partners on PMs and define intended outcomes”* (A89).
- Incremental integration of OM into the PME system, broadening its scope as the project environment becomes more receptive: *“The emphasis needs to be on starting with the project and trainees’ experiences and gradually introducing the appropriate OM concepts rather than start with all the concepts and get project trainees to apply them”* (A106).

Prior to the use of OM, it is unlikely to be completely clear to the project implementer where the project sits along the ‘OM receptivity continuum’:

*“The main issue was time. Even though reports from partners are required only every 6 months, requirements / the work involved in really using OM was not fully appreciated by partners until the first report was due. The investment in organisational development needed to adopt and adapt OM needs to be recognised”* (A97).

Equally, it is essential to reflect regularly upon practical experience of using OM, as with any PME tool, as part of the process of adapting the PME system to best meet the uses of its intended users.

### 3.3.4 Summary

- OM is potentially useful whenever an intervention / part of an intervention is characterised by complexity. Complexity can be present even in projects ostensibly concerned with service delivery.
- Failure to recognise the extent to which a situation is appropriate for OM may result in “OM over-reach”.
- Optimal use of OM may be ‘simple’ (one or more OM concepts) or ‘extensive’ (various OM steps and concepts).
- We identified eight **enabling factors** for the use of OM: three are essential and five are optional.
- Where only essential factors are present, simple applications of OM would be optimal; if more factors are present, a more extensive use of OM steps and concepts may be optimal.
- Understanding which enabling factors are present will allow users or potential users of OM to determine where their intervention is located along the “OM receptivity continuum”, thereby allowing users to apply OM in a way that is appropriate to their situation.
- The risk of resource needs being a constraint to OM implementation can be minimised if OM use is appropriate for the position of the project on the “receptivity continuum”.
- Initial training / support may be valuable to help users determine receptivity of the intervention to OM and to specify appropriate OM tools and processes (**Section 3.4.3**).
- The receptivity of the situation to OM is unlikely to be completely clear from the outset and is likely to change over time. It is essential to reflect regularly upon practical experience of using OM, as with any PME tool, as part of the process of adapting the PME system to best meet the uses of its intended users

## 3.4 Training offered versus training needed – is there a mismatch?

In this section we present findings from our investigation of training needs in which we asked users of OM about the OM training or support they had received and what training or support they would ideally like to have had. Our intention is to highlight, citing evidence from the interviews, ways in which current training and support could be further developed, extended or supplemented to meet expressed needs.

### 3.4.1 General OM training, follow-up support and learning by doing

Many of our interviewees had received general training in OM and some went on to implement OM in their projects based solely on this initial training. However, many individuals felt that training should go beyond the “seagull approach - land, xxx and leave!” (A112):

*“We need follow up / support / ongoing mentoring” (A101).*

*“I would like to be able to allocate more of her time to providing practical follow up support” (A111).*

*"Support is needed for implementing partners to get the reflection / learning cycle moving. Just planning and design and even monitoring does not automatically lead to learning and adaptive planning" (A89).*

*"From our experience, a one off training in the beginning of the project and the OM manual does not suffice. There needs to be follow-up, continuous support, mentoring of the PME process and building of local capacity" (A105).*

Our experience reinforces these findings. Neither our case studies nor interviews provided data on the proportion of people who have been given an introductory training that have not gone on to use OM. However, we do have some information on this subject. As part of this study, we contacted the alumni of the ODI (Overseas Development Institute) introduction to OM conducted in London in August 2010 (in which the three of us participated) to find out if they had been using OM. Of the 17 individuals contacted only one responded. Of course there are many reasons why people do not respond to email requests so the responses cannot be said to indicate that those who did not respond are not using OM. But our impression that a relatively small proportion of those who receive general training go on to use OM and that the absence of further support is likely to be an important factor is shared by an interviewee:

*"A large number of those trained in OM never implement OM in their work. Reasons for this include fear about how much they know so they do not feel able to help implement a system and/or train others and institutional resistance. That is why it would be very useful to continue to support those who have been trained as they begin to implement OM" (P2).*

In our case, the three of us had further mentoring support after the initial training from an experienced OM practitioner, in addition to executive-level support for using OM in PM & E. The 2010 ODI trainee from 2010 who responded to our survey indicating they are using OM also had executive-level support to pilot OM in a project he is coordinating. See **section 3.3** for more on these "enabling factors".

Training / follow-up support that goes hand in hand with implementation encourages learning by doing as part of the action learning cycle of planning, action, reflection and learning:

*"Take the hand of local partners and go through things with them. Ask sensible questions: What do outcomes mean? Why are they important? How do your activities contribute to outcomes? And really practical questions: How often do you need to monitor? Who does what - the whole team or certain individuals? In this way OM becomes more concrete and not a standard methodology" (A89).*

*"The emphasis has been on learning by doing. As the programme is planned the team look at the elements of OM and then look at the guidelines and gets exposure through practice" (A41).*

### **3.4.2 Training based on user needs**

Many of the interviewees felt that context-specific training was more effective than a general training. In this way OM moves from being rigid and general to fluid and context-specific.

*"I would start from a case study and then develop the questions around how current M&E is operated by the organisations" (A89).*

*"We used to provide cross-agency training providing detailed background on the OM philosophy, but recently switched to organisation specific workshops, presenting 5-10 slides on the principles of OM, the key concepts, followed by practical sessions where the OM methodology is being introduced by 'learning by doing'. The assumption is that participants will pick up the approach more easily by practicing the methodology and developing the vision, mission, etc. for their own project." (A105).*

*"We need support from people who understands what we are talking of: trainers who can work with bilaterals, understand the potential of OM in the bilateral context. More could be achieved more quickly if introductory training can be given for those in similar situations rather than to mixed groups." (A101)*

### **3.4.3 Integrating OM into general PME training**

Our review of OMLC postings suggests it is a popular forum for discussing not only OM but participatory PME approaches in general. That said, one very experienced OM trainer stated to us that there is potential to better position OM in the evaluation landscape, specifically that OM needs to:

*"...break from its cocoon. It is not a closed club. OM needs to be part of an adaptive, pluralist discourse on making evaluation more qualitative and participatory." (P4).*

Another experienced PME trainer reported limited demand for stand-alone OM courses:

*"OM is an interesting and useful methodology, but does not generate as much demand as we originally thought. In fact, the demand seems to be decreasing. People seem less interested in OM as a course on its own, for this they would need prior information on OM. If offered within another subject / course, there is better success in attracting participants and getting these interested in discussing OM" (P68).*

Further examination of the experiences of trainers as well as trainees would help to understand how common these perspectives are. The importance of training that contextualises OM in the landscape of PME approaches is examined further in the next section.

### **3.4.4 Training in step-0**

A criticism of some of the general training experienced was that it does not adequately prepare trainees to adapt OM for use in their situation. Without this fundamental understanding people may apply OM in a very mechanistic manner with varying success.

*"People have difficulties in understanding OM principles and formulating outcomes (results vs. activities), the concept of what we can influence (sphere of influence / BP), and that change doesn't happen overnight. Much time is needed to explain the principles, as people don't feel taken on board if you only explain the methodology." (P70)*

In many cases insufficient initial understanding was ascribed to time constraints, particularly for people with very little PME background.

*"A very good understanding is important. 2-3 day training can sensitise, but it is not enough for people to have the understanding needed to use and be able to adapt OM. People translate training differently according to their understanding and context." (P16)*

*"The 1.5 day training in reporting and the 3 day training in intentional design are perhaps insufficient alone." (A112)*

*"initial understanding of OM was slow and it took a series of trainings to bring all the stakeholders on board with the new idea, and to build in local ownership of the approach." (A49)*

Roduner and Hartmann (2009) described the important, initial step when preparing for using OM as "step-0", "the step that occurs before the actual intentional design of OM starts. It includes all processes and actions that take place from the conception of a project idea to the preparations for intentional design." The OM manual lacks a section on step-0. We propose a "step-0" training component should include the following: 1) the identification of simple, complicated and complex situations to determine when OM is / is not relevant; 2) OM and other PME concepts and their relationships; 3) enabling factors and the OM receptivity continuum (**section 3.3.2**) with examples of OM use on this continuum. Trainees should be able to position their intervention on the OM receptivity continuum and develop an understanding of the actions needed to prepare for their situation-specific OM implementation.

### **3.4.5 Encouraging open-mindedness – "unlearning"**

Familiarity with other concepts and approaches implies a degree of PME awareness and understanding that can provide a solid point of departure for the OM trainee. However, it can also root the trainee in their comfort zone, making them unreceptive to an approach that appears to be imprecise and fluid. In contrast LFA-based approaches may look better structured and more concrete. A certain amount of "unlearning" is needed to encourage open-mindedness:

*"It is easier when people let go of their LFA history" (A105).*

*"Outcome Mapping was seen as a new, often jargon-filled methodology by many including those who were used to more traditional PME approaches such as LFA" (A47).*

This is generally not an issue for those who have become interested in OM because of a concern with the appropriateness of prevailing PME methodologies to their situation. However, in many cases trainees are sent to OM courses by their organisations. If the contrasts between the LFA model and the OM approach are not made clear to trainees it is possible that some may turn away from OM on day one.

### **3.4.6 Trainers and training resources – the need for experienced, situationally responsive trainers, trainers based in the economic south and multi-lingual resources**

Some trainers seem to appear to be happier to introduce OM as a recipe book to be implemented rigidly rather than a toolbox to be used and adapted as appropriate. Many trainers are inexperienced and do not feel confident to depart from the OM manual:

*"Often trainers have no experience in really applying OM so they may be too theoretical (and too positive) in their approach. It helps if the trainer has made his or her hands dirty already and really applied it" (P16).*

The more experienced trainers with OM implementation experience are generally more confident in developing bespoke approaches:



*"Initially I used the first 11 steps but the first groups trained were confused about monitoring priorities and the journals so these were left out. With experience I have adapted the monitoring priority step and the journals and now use these adaptations as the basis for teaching" (P2).*

Unfortunately these experienced individuals appear to be in short supply:

*"There is a need for more OM trainers, but these are difficult to find. I have been in contact with about 100 PM&E trainers, but only few are familiar with OM principles" (P70). "There is still little mentoring, consultants are not confident in the methodology, people don't know OM sufficiently ...there will be more demand if there is more training capacity. More trainers for OM would be needed" (P68).*

The "seagull approach" to training is difficult to overcome when the trainer is based far away from the project. The need for more trainers in the economic south, especially those with local language skills but also a shortage of non-English speaking trainers, was identified as a critical capacity need by several interviewees:

*"It seems hard to find experienced local OM trainers" (A105)*

*"In general, more people are needed to do in-country training in local languages" (A111).*

*"There is a market for French speaking trainers willing to work in the field in Africa" (A101).*

In some cases these trainers will be located close to the project so a priori may be able to provide more regular hands-on support and would be likely to have some insight into the local context. A related issue is a shortage of local language resources:

*"Presentations, etc. are needed in local languages" (A111).*

To maximise the use of highly experienced international trainers several projects have used an approach that involves the intensive training of a single individual who is then responsible for the implementation of OM within a project or organisation. This 'OM champion' is then mentored in situ and/or remotely by the international trainer. Mentoring, when carried out remotely can be very cost effective:

*"I do it virtually so it is not much effort. Hours or days but not weeks." (P7).*

This and other training-of-trainers approaches have the potential to maximise the effective utilisation of the limited OM training capacity that currently exists.

### **3.4.7 Mainstreaming OM**

Staff turnover is always an issue in development work. New recruits are unlikely to be familiar with OM and in-depth training is often not available. Organisations or projects in which PME is mainstreamed may cope better in such a situation than those in which PME expertise is concentrated in a small number of hands and/or hands that are not involved in implementation:

*"The partners appreciate the fact that the [PME] team is often present in the colleges to go through the processes with them; Learning together, and asking questions so not*

*they are not just doing it for us but helping them to talk about methods that are useful in their own colleges.” (A41).*

*“Implementation using OM can work best in the absence of an M&E manager as there is a tendency for OM knowledge to be concentrated in M&E staff. It is much better when programme managers integrate OM in their work.” (P16).*

### **3.4.8 Summary**

There is general appreciation for training received and available OMLC resources but the following gaps and issues in training and resources were evident:

- A general training in OM is the norm, but many also need situation-specific training / coaching while they use OM;
- Potential users of OM (or any PME approach) may benefit from “step-0” training to help them understand the central concepts of OM and PME in general;
- OM training and support may be best presented within the wider participatory PME landscape, not as alternative stand-alone approach;
- There is a lack of trainers and resources in multiple languages and locations in the economic south;
- Training needs to address rigid thinking, as this is a barrier to OM use. Those familiar with LFA-based approaches may not be receptive to OM and those looking for instructions may apply OM in a mechanistic way that simply replaces one form of box ticking with another;
- Remote mentoring appears to be uncommon but it is a very cost-effective and potentially effective way of ensuring that training goes hand in hand with implementation. It is one way of maximising the effective use of the limited pool of experienced OM trainers.

## 4 Donor attitudes, impact and LFA: issues and solutions

The strong preference of many donors for logical framework approach (LFA) and other so called results-based management (RBM)<sup>4</sup> PME frameworks that focus on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact, means the donor environment is, in general, far from welcoming to OM, even though OM is also a results-based management approach, albeit one with a particular definition of results (outcomes). Coupled to this, there is a general lack of statutory donor support for using PME not only for accountability but also for learning. Unsurprisingly, some OM practitioners see donor attitudes as a major issue that needs to be addressed:

*"Unless donors change their thinking and approach, OM will never succeed." (P70)*

*"[OM is] inconsistent with the way donors work." (P76)*

*"Many funders want quick results...In general, this doesn't work for human rights." (A111)*

Since the introduction of OM, the position of LFA in particular among statutory donors has, if anything, strengthened further as publically-funded agencies have increasingly sought to demonstrate rapid impact and value for money:

*"Donors are becoming much more demanding about the need to demonstrate impact and use of numerical indices (how many people benefit, cost/benefit...)" (P76).*

Some have rejected OM as a PME methodology because:

*"the demand for impact, which is not satisfied by OM" (A90).*

OM does not ignore impact but assumes results cannot readily be attributed to a single intervention because they are generally achieved through the contributions of multiple actors over the long term (**section 1.3.1**):

*"I came to appreciate OM as an attempt to be intellectually honest about RBM. LFA expects a direct link to results. In OM, it is explicitly recognised that results will not be solely attributable to the project / intervention. Rather the project will contribute to results." (P76).*

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<sup>4</sup> Results-based management (RBM) is often taken to mean a PME approach that is based on LFA. This is consistent with the OECD/DAC (2002) definition of RBM as "A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact". But a more recent CIDA developed definition (CIDA 2008) is rather more consistent with OM: "RBM is a life-cycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes, and measurements to improve decision making, transparency, and accountability ... The approach focuses on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning, and adapting, as well as reporting performance." In view of the inconsistencies in the definition of RBM, we decided to use the term LFA in this report to characterise PME systems that involve "identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions and risks that may influence success and failure" (OECD/DAC 2002).

To date, the ‘intellectually honest’ OM approach has made little headway with impact evaluations but experimentation is under way in using OM concepts to assess progress towards achieving impacts (P7).

There is a school of thought that sees OM and LFA approaches as fundamentally incompatible: “two different approaches that cannot be married” (P7). This was a minority view among those we interviewed and the particular interviewee did state that he could see some scope for using LFA alongside if the OM definition of outcomes is used.

In spite of a donor environment that generally ranges between hostile and unsupportive to at best benign, many have been motivated to use OM. Dissatisfaction with LFA is the most common motivator; one practitioner reporting that field staff “find they cannot describe what they do adequately using LFA” (A101).

The determination to use OM has resulted in its use for planning and monitoring in organisations, networks, programmes and projects funded by numerous statutory and foundation funders (**section 3.1.3**). We also identified four funders that have commissioned external evaluations using OM-inspired approaches, found evidence that some US foundations are satisfied with the reporting of progress towards achieving OM-defined outcomes (A111) and an example where multiple donors appreciate an improvement in reporting after the introduction of OM-based planning and monitoring (P76). However, we did not detect a trend of any donor increasingly choosing to use OM for evaluations or to mandate its use in planning and monitoring. Our evidence suggests that donors rarely make a conscious choice to use or encourage the use of OM. One exception we encountered was a major US foundation that proposed OM for planning and monitoring to better understand capacity and institutional development (A108).

In one case we examined, OM is being explicitly used alongside LFA: “...what we submit to [donor name deleted] is an LFA for each country and an OM matrix side by side and we explain how they relate to each other.” (A106). Apparently this explicit use of OM satisfied [donor name deleted] because the project is demonstrating results that [donor name deleted] is interested in: “...at the purpose level of the log-frame and contributing to impacts at the goal level.” (A106).

Others use “OM by stealth”, drawing on OM concepts and tools while avoiding OM terminology and making no explicit references to OM in their reporting to donors (Jones 2007). This may involve defining the outcomes in the project logical framework as ‘behavioural changes’ i.e. outcomes as defined in OM.

More common among those we interviewed is a situation in which an implementing agency, organisation, project or programme uses OM internally for planning and monitoring but then reports using the donor’s LFA framework. Intuitively, one would assume that there is likely to be significant additional work in using two PME systems in parallel. This anticipated additional PME burden was a major concern for one interviewee who was considering this approach (P76). Therefore it is perhaps surprising that there was a high level of satisfaction among all practitioners we spoke to who have experience with such combined approaches.

In each case where we discussed the use of LFA with OM, a custom PME system was developed that met specific project and donor needs in a practical way:

*"...each organisation needs to make its own [OM/LFA] fusion." (A97).*

In one case, OM concepts and tools were used to design and monitor the organisation's intervention model. The results from regional programmes are synthesised annually and reported to donors. This system was reported to be practical and no more burdensome than reporting using LFA only (P16).

The value of introducing OM thinking in projects defined (out of choice or donor / institutional requirement) by LFA was illustrated by an example of a long-term, very large-scale project to build a hospital and other health services (A101). Initially, the project struggled to engage the necessary national authorities because the deliverables were not due for many years and local partners did not want to be associated with a project that did not deliver impressive results to the government each year. Adopting an OM-based approach captured the real scope of the wide-ranging behaviour change outcomes required before the hospital could be physically constructed. Where LFA's are often used to focus on the larger results, OM helps in thinking of, planning and monitoring the steps on the way.

One programme that has experimented extensively with OM with LFA initially found working with both frameworks together to be difficult / time consuming but still worthwhile (P16). Building on the work of Ambrose & Roduner (2009), they have now streamlined their approach using OM concepts and tools to plan and monitor their intervention model and linking this to an LFA for annual reporting to donors. Particularly successful has been the introduction of 'intermediate goals' (Roduner, 2007), a layer monitored using numerical indicators "...between outcomes and vision to describe the tangible changes in the value chain they want to see." This approach has been useful to the organisation and its partners as it make it clear what changes are expected. OM complements the numerical indicators as progress marker data allows the contribution of the organisation and its partners to be explained, as well as showing "...what changes / capacities need to change to achieve the intermediate goals...", helping the projects adapt as they go.

Adaptation / customisation is the norm in each case where OM and LFA have been used simultaneously (in parallel or as a fusion). One interviewee (A97) described their experimentation with OM to address the following challenge: "how do you know if you have a change in a policy that is reviewed only once every 15 years?" In an unplanned adaptation of OM (drawing on the rubrics approach<sup>5</sup>), anecdotal examples of changes in behaviour of policy makers are being examined together to see if evidence of attitude and behaviour changes are convincing to the (LFA using) donor.

In another example where OM thinking was introduced to a policy project planned using LFA, positive, unexpected results were achieved. A development agency employee embedded at a high

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<sup>5</sup> <http://kinnect.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/AES-2011-Rubric-Revolution-Davidson-Wehipeihana-McKegg-xx.pdf> (accessed 22.03.12)

level in a ministry of a developing country used an OM framework to plan and communicate their work within the ministry and to other interested donors:

*"There was significant internal interest and the framework proved to be valuable for negotiating / discussion how we could contribute to their sector plan and what we would expect from them. Other donors became interested in the mechanisms described and provided funding for the processes described. The new donors probably did not realise that the mechanisms they were supporting were based on OM." (A101)*

Our findings indicate that donors are often and perhaps generally unaware that OM / OM-inspired approaches are being used in work they are supporting. The growing body of positive practitioner experiences of using OM suggests we may now be at a point where it is possible to implement a strategy of sensitising donors to the value of OM (P7). The examples of OM use with LFA may be particularly valuable for sensitising donors to the value of OM. One practitioner suggested that individuals should be encouraged to champion their use of OM concepts to their superiors and donors:

*"[OM users] need to demonstrate better how OM can add value to the LFA. We need to do more in this respect e.g. by sharing the results of studies and projects to show that it works." (A106).*

An element of a donor-related strategy could be to offer training / support customised for donors:

*"We need support from people who understand what we are talking of: trainers who can work with bilaterals, understand the potential of OM in the bilateral context." (A101).*

#### **4.1.1 Summary**

- The attitude of many, particularly statutory, funders to OM and other participatory PME approaches ranges from unsupportive at best to hostile at worst because many require the logical framework approach to be used and interventions to define and report on the impacts they will have.
- Some donors have used OM for external evaluations but the extent to which these decisions were choices of experts (who happened to employ OM in their evaluations) or conscious choices to use OM is unclear.
- Despite the prevailing donor environment, the determination to use OM has resulted in its adaptation for use with LFA (in parallel or as a fusion) in planning and monitoring in organisations, networks, programmes and projects funded by numerous statutory and foundation funders.
- Strategies for using OM when donors require LFA for reporting include:
  - Using OM by stealth e.g. avoiding the terminology and defining logical framework outcomes as behavioural changes.
  - Using OM internally for planning and monitoring but not for donor reporting.
- Because of the strategies often used by OM practitioners, donors are probably generally unaware when OM has been used in interventions they have supported.

## 5 Conclusions and suggestions

### Never cook by the book

For many, the OM manual is a hugely appreciated reference. It has been an invaluable teaching / learning resource, providing instructions and inspiration.

Very few users of OM have applied all 12 steps as presented in the OM manual. Many have used only one or two of the three stages. Rather than starting with planning, some have started with monitoring, moved to evaluation and then used what they have learned to inform planning. Using OM with other PME approaches, ranging from LFA to MSC, is the norm. Some uses of OM are limited to guiding planning with one of the concepts; others embrace most of the steps and all the concepts. In short, adaptation of OM from the comprehensive approach presented in the OM manual has been the norm. Where users have faced issues and not adapted, they have tended to become frustrated and lose interest.

### When OM works best

OM use is likely to be most effective and sustainable when:

- its tools and concepts are used flexibly and creatively and not necessarily in the sequence presented in the OM manual
- it is undertaken as part of an action learning cycle: planning, action, reflection and learning.

We suggest:

- There are eight enabling factors that support OM use, three of which are essential and five optional
- The type and number of factors present in any situation determines an intervention's position on the "OM receptivity continuum"
- Applications of OM are likely to be most successful and sustainable when users adapt their OM approach depending on the position of their intervention along the receptivity continuum.

### Importance of a participatory learning culture

Some of the principal barriers to the effective use of OM, notably an inadequate organisational learning culture and low levels of appreciation of the value of a results and learning oriented PME system, are common to all participatory learning-based PME approaches. This serves to remind us that although OM represents a unique package, it shares its underlying people-centred learning focus with a number of other PME approaches, each one of which emphasises particular aspects of the same development process.

For example, MSC emphasises change stories gathered from the community level, Theory of Change emphasises the mechanisms by which people's actions contribute to an outcome and AI emphasises

positive human experiences. Even though the underlying concepts of LFA contrast with those of OM, LFA can be implemented in a people-centred learning-focused manner for example by defining outcomes as behavioural changes and developing a monitoring system that is based upon the action learning cycle.

### **Training and support**

For many trainees, a general introduction to OM – probably the most common form of training provided to date - is not sufficient to give them confidence to use OM. We suggest further research is needed to determine if / how trainees PME practice is influenced by general OM training. Based on our research, we have the following suggestions:

1. General training should where possible incorporate “step-0 training” that encourages learning that allows trainees to position their intervention on the OM receptivity continuum and develop an understanding of the actions needed to prepare for situation-specific OM implementation. A “step-0” training component could include the following: 1) the identification of simple, complicated and complex situations to determine where OM is / is not relevant; 2) OM and other PME concepts and their relationships; 3) enabling factors and the OM receptivity continuum with examples of OM use on this continuum.
2. Building on experiences of OMLC members to date, we suggest remote mentoring is promoted as an approach to provide situation specific support, particularly to who are champions of OM their organisation. This would be an effective way of utilising the limited pool of training expertise that exists and of facilitating the creation of sustained capacity at the implementation level.
3. Building on good practice, general OM introduction courses should include the opportunity for case-study work where a trainer, sometimes with the group, can explore the potential use of OM in situations presented by participants.
4. Rather than promoting OM as a stand-alone PME approach (e.g. through OM training that does not address other approaches), OM should be communicated as a powerful and flexible results and learning oriented PME system that can be used together with or alongside other approaches. This could help trainees apply OM in their situation that for most is likely to be defined in part at least by LFA. It is also likely to encourage those new to OM to learn from the adaptations of the many who have used OM with other approaches.

### **Learning resources**

We conclude that an e-learning resource would serve proactive self-learners and help reinforce and expand the learning of those who have been formally trained. The OMLC website should be rebuilt as such an e-learning resource that provides an integrated, structured entry point into the OM manual, the extensive existing OMLC resources and some new resources. It should:

- Promote adaptation / non-linear use of OM stages and steps
- Place OM in the context of other PME approaches that have been used with OM
- Provide a framework through which to explore the large volume of very useful resource materials in the OMLC



- Include an introduction to Step-0 and a detailed facilitator’s guide to training in Step-0, including an in-depth focus on OM concepts
- Include “blueprints” that describe the use and adaptation process of OM in various scenarios as a resource to reduce the risk of those applying OM in new situations / for the first time
- Include case studies of examples of use (as currently in the OMLC) that include issues, solutions and benefits of using OM (as the case studies developed through interviews for this study)
- Explore the use of OM concepts in evaluation with links to relevant resources
- Provide a means of match-making between those seeking trainers / evaluators and those providing these services

We also suggest the FAQ on OM currently presented on the OMLC website are reviewed in light of this study’s findings.

### **Donors**

Ten years after its introduction, there is a wealth of experience that can be used to (a) share examples of OM-LFA adaptations and (b) influence the behaviour of donors towards making a more receptive environment for OM. Outreach to donors may include:

- Offer donor-specific training / ongoing support in participatory PME for learning (using OM and other concepts)
- A differentiated outreach approach for foundations / statutory funders: foundations are often more innovative and flexible and hence potentially receptive to OM
- Promote OM to donors as a toolbox to encourage them / their grantees to draw on concepts within their PME
- Describe contexts where OM is most / least useful
- Publicise examples of how OM adds value in LFA context
- Position OM role in assessing impact / attribution; articulate how OM outcomes help understand progress / obstacles to achieving impacts
- Seek champions within donors and facilitate the sharing of experiences among donors / individuals within donors
- Engage with individuals with OM experience in donor organisations to help develop a more detailed understanding of donor perspectives and the potential to influence donors to support OM.

The above steps could form part of a strategy to engage the mainstream so that OM is clearly positioned in the PME landscape as a complementary approach and not a stand-alone alternative to the LFA. Such an effort will help OM to break free from what some see as its silo so that its concepts and tools are accessible to all those who seek to develop situationally appropriate people-focused PME systems.

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## 7 Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix 1 – List of OM application case studies analysed in this report

N.B. Entries marked with an asterisk indicate titles that were inferred by the authors from the written material accessed.

Title of programme / project where OM is applied	Region where OM work is implemented	Country/ies where OM work is implemented
Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos): Art and Culture Programme in Central America (2007-2008)	Central America	
DrumNet	East Africa	Kenya
Community development programme with Roma and non-Roma communities	Eastern Europe & CIS (ex USSR)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Support programme for civil society organisations in Bosnia & Herzegovina*	Eastern Europe & CIS (ex USSR)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
A Study of the Potential for the Application of Open Educational Resources (OER) as a Transformative Strategy for the Mongolian Educational System	Far-East Asia	Mongolia
Sloping Land Management; Increase food security in North Korea	Far-East Asia	North Korea
Water and sanitation for the urban poor (WSUP)	Global	Mozambique (Maputo) and Madagascar (Antananarivo)
BioNET-INTERNATIONAL - the global network for taxonomy	Global	Multi-national
CGIAR ICT-KM Program; WorldFish-lead KSinR Pilot Project	Global	Multi-national
Free the Slaves	Global	Nationally in Brazil, DRC, Ghana, Haiti, India, Nepal and at head office. N.B. OM has not been fully introduced and implemented with partners in Brazil and DRC
Global Water Partnership	Global	Countries in 13 regions globally
Oxfam Novib Global Programme (2009-2010) Evaluation	Global	
Oxfam Novib Global Programme (2005-2008) Evaluation	Global	
Science Journalism Cooperative - Building a reporters' network	Global	Multi-national
The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)	Global	Multi-national
The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD)	Global	Multi-national
VSO Programme	Global	34 countries in Africa, Asia Pacific and LAC
Woord en Daad (Word and Action)	Global	Multi-national
"Cuando las redes encuentran jerarquías: interfases estado-sociedad civil en municipios altamente conflictivos (México, Nicaragua y Venezuela)"	Latin America & Caribbean	Mexico
ACDI Honduras	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Alternative Conflict Management project	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Ceja Andina project	Latin America & Caribbean	Ecuador

Title of programme / project where OM is applied	Region where OM work is implemented	Country/ies where OM work is implemented
Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Meso América (CIRMA)  ("Show me your impact: Evaluating historic memory & racism in Guatemala")	Latin America & Caribbean	Guatemala
Civil society organisation FIPAH	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Civil society organisation FIPAH> Part II	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
COASTAL AREA MONITORING PROJECT AND LABORATORY (CAMP-LAB III)	Latin America & Caribbean	Nicaragua
Ecological Agriculture Research at CURLA	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Ecoplata New phase 2005 – 2008	Latin America & Caribbean	Uruguay
Establish and test criteria for 'sustainable' coffee production	Latin America & Caribbean	Mexico
Fundacion Simiente, Honduras	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Increasing Capacity to Achieve Millennium Development Goal # 6 in Honduras: Combating Infectious Diseases	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
La Fundacion Fruto Social de la Palma, & Fondactió para es desarrollo de Puerto Wilches (FUNDEWILCHES,) proyecto CM3	Latin America & Caribbean	
Land tenure project in Bolivia*	Latin America & Caribbean	Bolivia
Municipalities of the Honduran North Coast	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Participatory Farmer Research for the Promotion of the Ecological Agriculture	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Project CARISNET 2	Latin America & Caribbean	
Public Health Outreach Project: National Honduran University	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Rights in the Water Law, Bolivia: Construyendo la regulación de derechos para la futura ley de aguas (Comisión para la Gestión Integral del Agua en Bolivia - CGIAB).	Latin America & Caribbean	Bolivia
San Juan Watershed Participative Research Project	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Several CENET projects	Latin America & Caribbean	Honduras
Social Trade Organisation (STRO)*	Latin America & Caribbean	Multi-national
The Arracacha project	Latin America & Caribbean	Multi-national (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador)
The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Change Management Process (CMP)	Latin America & Caribbean	
The Latin American Trade Network, LATN III	Latin America & Caribbean	Multi-national
The strategic planning of participatory management of natural resources at different levels in the high basin of the Mira river in Ecuador	Latin America & Caribbean	Ecuador
Women against violence programme in Colombia	Latin America & Caribbean	Colombia
Agricultural resources Management project phase two (ARMP- II)	Middle East & North Africa	Jordan
Good Governance Project in South Wollo District, Ethiopia	Middle East & North Africa	Ethiopia
KariaNet	Middle East & North Africa	Egypt
Municipal Development Project South Lebanon	Middle East & North Africa	Lebanon
Municipal Development Support in Tyre District, South Lebanon	Middle East & North Africa	Lebanon
Social Fund for Development, Yemen	Middle East & North Africa	Yemen
Community-based Fish Culture in Seasonal Floodplains and Irrigation Systems (CBFC) project	Multi-regional	Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Mali and Vietnam
Harambee: Reinforcing African Voices through Collaborative Processes	Multi-regional	Multi-national
International Model Forest Network Secretariat (IMFNS)	Multi-regional	Multi-national
Research On International Tobacco Control Secretariat (RITC)	Multi-regional	Multi-national
The Engendering Change Program (Oxfam)	Multi-regional	Multi-national (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador,

Title of programme / project where OM is applied	Region where OM work is implemented	Country/ies where OM work is implemented
		Guatemala, Pakistan
Various projects / programmes of the Belgian Development Cooperation Agency (BTC)	Multi-regional	Various
Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. (AGEH) (Association for Development Cooperation) Programm Ziviler Friedensdienst (Civil Peace Service Program)	Multi-regional (Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia)	Currently c. 70 collaborative projects in 12 countries: Focus countries are Columbia, Uganda, Sudan, Timor-Leste; Other countries include: Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, Burundi, DRC, Israel, occupied Palestinian territories.
Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN)	North America & Canada	Canada
Quality of Change CHALLENGE, BC	North America & Canada	Canada
Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program (RISG)	North America & Canada	USA
The Swayamsiddha project	South Asia	India
Balwadi Programme	South Asia	India
Centering Women in Reconstruction and Governance Project (CWRG) in Sri Lanka	South Asia	Sri Lanka
Faculty of liberal arts and science, Nakhon Phanom University, Thailand	South Asia	Thailand
Livelihood Improvement Program Takhar - LIPT	South Asia	Afghanistan
Micro-hydro power generation program	South Asia	Nepal
Nagaland Environmental and Economic Development Program (NEPED)	South Asia	India
Pan Localization Project	South Asia	Multi-national Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal Pakistan
Young People's Reproductive and Sexual Health Network, Rajasthan	South Asia	India
ACCESS Phase II	South-East Asia & Pacific	Indonesia
BioNET-ASEANET - Planning	South-East Asia & Pacific	Multi-national
Child protection project - Indonesia	South-East Asia & Pacific	Indonesia
HARVEST Project	South-East Asia & Pacific	Cambodia
Inclusive Education pilot in Kampot province, Cambodia	South-East Asia & Pacific	Cambodia
iREACH (Informatics for Rural Empowerment and Cambodian Healthy Communities)	South-East Asia & Pacific	Cambodia
Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia-Pacific (ENRAP)	South-East Asia & Pacific	
LWHE (Literacy for Women Health and Empowerment)	South-East Asia & Pacific	Cambodia
Medical Committee Netherlands-Vietnam (MCNV)	South-East Asia & Pacific	Vietnam
Rural Development Project in Cambodia	South-East Asia & Pacific	Cambodia
Sustainable Agriculture Chain Development in Eastern Indonesia	South-East Asia & Pacific	Indonesia
Thai Health Promotion Foundation	South-East Asia & Pacific	Thailand
The Eastern Indonesian Information Exchange (BaKTI)	South-East Asia & Pacific	Indonesia
Treatment response study for problematic use of ecstasy, ketamine and gamma-hydroxybutyrate in Australia	South-East Asia & Pacific	Australia
The West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Multi-national
AcT Accountability in Tanzania programme	Sub-Saharan Africa	Tanzania
ActionAid International (Africa) monitoring of outcomes Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania
ActionAid International (Africa) monitoring of outcomes Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania
Assessing the Utility of Radio for Communication Agri-biotechnology in Kenya and Burkina Faso	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya
CADRE - Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation	Sub-Saharan Africa	South Africa
Climate Variability, Uganda - "Adaptation to the Impact of Climate Variability on Food and Health Security in	Sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda

Title of programme / project where OM is applied	Region where OM work is implemented	Country/ies where OM work is implemented
the Cattle Corridor of Uganda"		
Community-Based Adaptation in Africa (CBAA)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa
ECAPAPA (a regional programme of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA))	Sub-Saharan Africa	
Education and Community Services	Sub-Saharan Africa	Togo
ILRI Pro Poor Livestock Project (RAPID project)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya
Integrating Vocational Education into Local Economic Development processes	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mali
Napier grass smut and stunt resistance project, East Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya
New Seed Initiative for Maize in South Africa (NSIMA)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Angola, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Partnership for Cross-sectoral Engagement	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia, North and South Sudan, Somaliland
Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Zimbabwe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Zimbabwe
Plan Youth Livelihoods Project - Malawi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Malawi
Procurement, installation, service, maintenance and use of scientific equipment (PRISM)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Multi-national (Nigeria, Madagascar)
RAPID - Mwananchi Programme	Sub-Saharan Africa	Multi-national (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia)
Reduced risks with pesticide use in Western Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Burkina Faso, Bénin, Togo Cote d'Ivoire
Resource Center on Urban Agriculture and Forestry (RUAF) (IWMI Workshop in Ghana)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana
SAHA project, Madagascar (third-phase)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Madagascar
SchoolNet Namibia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Namibia
St2eep Project	Sub-Saharan Africa	Zimbabwe
Sustainable tourism project in Mozambique	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mozambique
the Mozambique Health Information Network (MHIN) project	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mozambique
The safe water kiosk project	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya
Uganda Health Information Network Project (UHIN)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda
VVOB Zimbabwe - Teacher Education and Child Vulnerability Programme 2008-2013	Sub-Saharan Africa	Zimbabwe
Zoonoese Project, Uganda - Risk Pathways and Vulnerabilities of Wildlife-Related Diseases using and Ecosystems Approach to Health in the Cattle Corridor of Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda
Developing a monitoring framework with Plan UK's Youth Advisory Panel (YAP)	Western Europe	UK
Evaluation of a working group on 'values'	Western Europe	Switzerland
Policy Coherence for Development in Austria	Western Europe	Austria
RAPID Strategy; Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme at ODI	Western Europe	United Kingdom
Understanding the outcomes of information management	Western Europe	UK
Vredeseilanden (VECO)	Western Europe	Belgium
Plan UK Governance Programme		
Small Reservoirs Project		

## 7.2 Appendix 2 – Database design and options for further use

Two Excel databases (OM applications and OM practitioners) were created for the purpose of this study.

The applications database, designed to capture information on interventions that have used OM, was built upon the OMLC online applications database<sup>6</sup> with data fields added to capture additional data and support analyses we undertook for this study (**Table A-1**). The practitioners database was designed to capture information on those individuals who have supported OM applications in recent years. The design was based upon the OMLC member profile database with data fields added for the purposes of the study (**Table A-2**).

We filled in as many of the data fields as we could from the case study information we accessed from online sources. This data was supplemented by information collected through interviews for a subset of cases.

Options for further use of the Excel OM applications and practitioner databases include:

- The data held in the Excel OM applications databases could be uploaded to the online OMLC applications database and the Excel database discarded or retained. N.B. Explicit permission of interviewees should be sought before making their interview records public.
- Practitioners in the Excel OM practitioner database who are not currently OMLC members could be invited to join.
- If retained, both Excel databases could be used for periodic analyses of data dumps from the online OMLC databases.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/projects/add.php>

**Table A-1. Data fields used in the Excel OM applications database and their purpose.**

N.B. Data fields that are obligatory in the current OMLC database are marked with an asterisk.

<b>Title of data field in Excel OM applications data base</b>	<b>Title of data field in current OMLC database</b>	<b>Purpose of field</b>
Title of programme / project where OM is applied	Title of OM application*	Essential name field for any data base
Website address of programme / project	Website address	Provide a link to further information
Start date	Start date	Provide information on when applications have been undertaken
End date	End date	
Region where OM work is implemented	Region*	Provide information on where OM has been applied
Country where OM work is implemented	Country*	
County / state where OM work is implemented	Area	
Nearest town / city	Nearest town / city	
Donor(s)	Donor(s)	Provide information on which organisation(s) have financed OM applications
Implementing organisation(s)	Implementing organisation(s)	Provide information on which organisation(s) have implemented OM
Contact within implementing organisation		Provide source(s) of further information
Supporting consultant(s)		Provide information on which consultants have supported OM applications
Implementing / supporting consultancy		Provide information on which consultancy companies have supported OM applications
Objectives of programme or project	Summary text*	Provide information on the objectives of interventions in which OM has been applied



Objectives of OM application	Summary text*	Provide information on the specific objectives of the OM component of an intervention
Sector where OM work is applied		Provide information on the sectors in which OM been applied
Use of OM, components used  (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, other)		Provide information on the relative frequency in which OM has been used in planning, monitoring and/or evaluation or for other purposes
Steps / principles of OM used 12 steps: V, M, BP, OC, PM, SM, OP, MP, OJ, SJ, PJ, EP, Principles		Provide information on the relative frequency of use of OM steps and principles
Pre-existing PME framework		Provide information on the relative frequency of different PME frameworks used before OM was applied
Other methods integrated with OM approach (which & how: Was OM integrated into a main framework? Or was OM the main framework and other tools brought in? What were the practicalities of integration?)		Provide information on the extent to which OM was used as a stand-alone PME approach or alongside other methods or approaches
Personal OM knowledge / experience before use in this application		Provide information on the prior knowledge and experience of those implementing of OM
OM training & support given as part of the programme		Provide information on the degree to which those responsible for the implementation of OM received OM training and other forms of support
Additional OM training & support that would have further strengthened the programme		Provide information on the training and support needs of those implementing OM
Issues / Lessons learned / solutions devised (capacity needs not met, methodological problems encountered, institutional issues, negative reactions & experiences with OM, etc.)		Provide information on the challenges to OM application and the solutions devised by those implementing OM
OM benefits and positive results		Provide information on the benefits of OM
Resources used for OM work (funding, human resources)		Provide information on the resources needed for OM application
Web links and documents		Provide links to further information

**Table A-2. Data fields used in the Excel OM practitioners database and their purpose.**

N.B. Data fields that are obligatory in the OMLC member database are marked with an asterisk.

<b>Title of data field in Excel OM practitioners data base</b>	<b>Title of data field in OMLC database</b>	<b>Purpose of field</b>
First name	Full name	Essential name field for any data base
Name		
OMLC member since	Member since	Provide an indication when the individual started to engage with the OM community
Location - Region	Region*	Provide information on where the individual is located
Location - Country	Country*	
Location - City	Nearest town/city	
	Area	
Job title	Job title	Provide information on the types of individuals that are interested in OM
Organisation	Organisation	Provide information on the types of organisations that are interested in OM
Website	Website address	Provide a link to further information
Email	Email address*	Provide contact information for further information / interaction
Link to CV	Download CV	Provide a link to further information
About	About you	Provide information on the background of those interested in OM
General skills	Skills	Provide information on the relevant skills of those interested in OM
Interest in OM	Interest in OM	Provide information on the reasons why people are interested in OM
Provision of external OM consultancies, training, mentoring (yes /no, since when, currently available?)		Provide information on the availability of external consultants
Sector where OM support is offered		Provide information on the sectors for OM support is available
Geographic regions where OM support is offered (more than one region allowed)		Provide information on the regions in which OM support is available
Language(s) in which OM support is offered		Provide information on the languages in which OM support is available
OM applications (projects / trainings delivered, organisations involved with, ...)	OM applications	Provide information on the OM applications that have been supported

Type of OM work delivered (Implementation, training/workshops, mentoring/supporting, external evaluation)	Skills	Provide information on the relative frequency in which OM support has provided for planning, monitoring and/or evaluation, training or for other purposes
OM components used: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation - or OM-inspired; which of the 12 steps: V, M, BP, OC, PM, SM, OP, MP, OJ, SJ, PJ, EP)		Provide information on the relative frequency in which support has been provided for the use of OM steps and principles
Other approaches integrated with OM (which? LFA, RBM, MSC, ...)		Provide information on the extent to which OM was used as a stand-alone PME approach or alongside other methods or approaches
Issues / problems with using OM and any suggested solutions		Provide information on the challenges to OM application and the solutions devised by those implementing OM
Benefits of using OM		Provide information on the benefits of OM
Training / support needs faced by those applying OM		Provide information on training / support needs of those implementing OM
Training / mentoring material used / recommended		Provide information on training / mentoring materials used and recommended to meet the needs of those implementing OM
"Satisfaction with OM  5 (fully) to  1 (not at all).		Provide information on the contribution OM has made to meeting planning, monitoring, evaluation and other needs
Observed trends in the usage of OM		Provide information on OM usage trends in terms of which organisations / sectors / regions are using OM and how it is being applied
Future OM interests		Provide information on what people would like to do next with OM

## 7.3 Appendix 3 - Options for maintenance and development of the databases

Currently, the OMLC databases are largely self-maintained. This works to some extent: we found much valuable data. But our study indicates that investment in developing the databases may significantly increase the number of entries and their quality and hence their utility. Ongoing maintenance is one option. Another is that the OMLC databases are updated on a periodic basis as part of a process of documenting the status of OM application and promoting learning (as with this study). Such updating may best be scheduled before each OM Lab in order to provide an updated baseline of experiences to share, discuss and learn from.

### 7.3.1 OMLC applications database

When thinking about options for the OMLC databases we considered the degree to which the information added value for the OMLC members and other users and potential users of OM and how easy it would be for community members to enter the information.

Our suggested changes to the current OMLC applications database are documented in the table below. Our principal suggestion concerns using clearer sub-categories in place of the summary text fields.

**Table 4. Suggested changes to the current OMLC applications database.**

Key: **Bold** – obligatory; black - optional fields; red - new fields; grey - fields to be removed. N.B. Data fields that are obligatory in the OMLC member database are marked with an asterisk.

Fields	Suggested actions, notes
<b>Title of intervention (programme, project, organisation, network) in which OM was used</b>	Modified from old title: 'Title of OM application'
Website address	Keep
<b>Start date</b>	Keep & make obligatory with but ensure that 'unknown' is included as an entry option
End date	Keep but ensure that 'unknown' is included as an entry option
<b>Region*</b>	Keep but ensure that 'global' is included as an entry option
<b>Country*</b>	Keep but ensure that 'multi-national' is included as an entry option
Area	Remove, can be ambiguous & adds little to the country and area fields
Nearest town / city	Remove, can be ambiguous & adds little to the country and area fields
Donor(s)	Keep
<b>Implementing organisation(s)</b>	Keep & make obligatory
<b>New field: Name of contact in implementing organisation</b>	Provides contact information for those interested in the application (make obligatory)
<b>New field: Email address of contact in implementing organisation</b>	Provides contact information for those interested in the application (make obligatory)

New field: Sector	Useful as long as a relatively short dropdown list can be agreed upon
Summary text*	A very generalised heading which makes it difficult to summarise. Sub-divide into new categories.
New field: Objectives of intervention	Information which is relatively easily available in project documentation that gives the user an overview of what the intervention seeks to achieve.
<b>New field: Objectives of OM application</b>	Gives readers an idea of the reasons why OM was used in the intervention. Suggest that this is obligatory as it is fundamental information for an OM applications database
New field: Parts of OM applied	Gives readers an idea of the extensiveness of OM application
New field: issues, solutions & benefits using OM	Gives readers an idea of user's experience with using OM
New field: Web links and documents	Gives the reader sources of further relevant information which may not be available on the project or programme website.

### 7.3.2 OMLC members database

Our suggested changes to the current OMLC members database are documented in the table below.

**Table 5. Suggested changes to the current OMLC members database**

Key: **Bold** – obligatory; black - optional fields; red - new fields; grey - fields to be removed. N.B. Data fields that are obligatory in the OMLC member database are marked with an asterisk.

Fields	Suggested actions, notes
<b>Full name*</b>	Make an obligatory field
Member since	Keep – automatically generated field
<b>Region where member is currently located*</b>	Keep – renamed from the current 'Region*' field. As it stands it is not clear if the region refers to the place where the member is based or where they work.
<b>Country where member is currently located*</b>	Keep – renamed from the current 'Country*' field. See above for rationale.
Nearest town/city	Remove, can be ambiguous & adds little to the country and area fields
Area	Remove, can be ambiguous & adds little to the country and area fields
Preferred language	Keep
Job title	Keep
Organisation	Keep
Website title	Replace with new field: website address; website titles are not always very informative
<b>Website address</b>	<b>New</b>
<b>Email address*</b>	Keep
About you	Keep
Recently uploaded resources	Keep – automatically generated field

OM applications	Keep – automatically generated field
Recent posts on the discussion forum	Keep – automatically generated field
Interest / experience in OM	Keep, renamed from 'Interest in OM'
Skills	Combine with About you?
Upload CV	Keep
Photo	Keep
Available as an OM trainer / consultant	New – a yes/no tick box where OM consultants and trainers can identify themselves as such
Languages in which OM support is offered	New – a box which opens when the trainer / consultancy box is ticked
Regions where OM support is offered	New – a box which opens when the trainer / consultancy box is ticked