STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY IN TANZANIA

IS OUTCOME MAPPING HELPING THE ACT PROGRAMME AND ITS PARTNERS INFLUENCE CHANGE?

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Contents

1   INTRODUCTION

The Accountability in Tanzania Programme (AcT) is funded by UKAid from the Department for International Development (DFID) to support Tanzanians to strengthen governance and accountability in Tanzania through a strengthened civil society. Conceived as a 5 year programme, it will run for 6 years from 2009 to 2015, and now also includes ring-fenced finance for governance and accountability issues linked to environment and climate change.

AcT provides support to prospective and existing partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to strengthen practices and capacities of strategic planning, management of implementation, monitoring and documentation of results and learning. AcT provides this support to CSO Partners on the premise that it will add value to their work and enhance their ability to influence change. This also helps to link AcT's logframe outputs and indicators to those of CSO Partners and assists the Programme to ensure CSO Partners have (a) realistic and achievable change outcomes based on well thought out theories of change which they (b) make steady progress toward and (c) this progress is able to be measured.

One of the key tools that the AcT uses for this purpose is Outcome Mapping (OM). The approach that Act is using has been adapted from ODI's RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA) since September 2009, when it was introduce to AcT. The tool has been developed further by the programme and its partners and an AcT Resource Guide on OM has been produced. A total of 16 partners have been trained in Outcome Mapping as of April 2012.

This report explores the question of whether OM is an effective tool in helping AcT strengthen its partners' capacity to influence change towards greater accountability and strengthened governance. It does this by highlighting the experiences of four AcT partners in terms of how they have been introduced to Outcome Mapping, how they have applied it, how it has been informing their strategic planning, what difference it is making for them and, importantly, asking for their feedback on the process. The CSOs participating in this study include: Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG)/MJUMITA, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Research on Poverty Reduction (REPOA) and Oxfam GB.

This is a follow-up to an initial study conducted in March 2011. The previous study also looked at four partner CSOs and their experience of the outcome mapping methodology, but mostly focussing on the pre-grant period and in the early months of implementation. At that stage, the CSOs were still very new to OM and so the study was unable to make any substantive conclusions about its suitability and usefulness for the programme. This present study complements the first by revisiting two of the CSOs, TFCG/MJUMITA and Oxfam GB, to explore the progress they have made with Outcome Mapping after 12 months of implementation. The other two CSOs included in this study, NCA and REPOA, are earlier on in the Outcome Mapping process but are representative of the current cohort and are intended to demonstrate how the programme has evolved its introduction of OM.

This report has six sections following this introduction. Section two introduces the theory of change of the AcT programme and the intended use of OM. Section three describes how the four studied CSOs have applied OM. Sections four and five present more detailed case studies of how two of the CSOs have used

OM. This is followed by the conclusion which summarises our findings, attempts to answer the question in the title and reflects on progress since the previous study in 2011. The final section provides a number of recommendations for the AcT programme.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to examine the experience of AcT's partnerships with CSOs and the support provided by AcT to improve the CSO's organisational capacity, strategic approaches and effectiveness with regards to influencing change in policy, power and practice. In particular the study will examine the introduction and use of the Outcome Mapping approach introduced to the CSOs by AcT.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This study was based around semi-structured interviews with CSO staff and the AcT team – these were mostly in-person, held by both researchers. CSO staff members were interviewed individually, and in confidence (hence why no list of interviewees is provided). 10 interviews were held with CSO staff, and 3 with the AcT team. Various CSO-specific and general AcT documents were reviewed in order to provide supplementary information and background. Interview transcripts were analysed with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software.

The research team included a researcher from ODI and a member of staff from one of AcTs partner CSOs. The intention was to enable a second layer of learning by involving a member of the programme directly in the study.

1.3 STUDIED ORGANISATIONS

TFCG and MJUMITA are working in partnership on an AcT funded project called Forest Justice in Tanzania. The Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG) is a well-established NGO that works to conserve and restore the biodiversity of globally important forests in Tanzania through capacity building, advocacy, research, community development and protected area management. The Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania (MJUMITA) is a relatively new network of community groups involved in participatory forest management in Tanzania, founded by TFCG in 2000 and made an independent NGO in 2007. The Forest Justice in Tanzania project is working to bring about change in forest governance in Tanzania.

REPOA (Research on Poverty Alleviation) began operating in early 1995 and is now one of the leading independent research institutions in Tanzania specialising in policy research on socio-economic and development issues. The key role is to provide key stakeholders with relevant information and build their skills to analyse and articulate information. They currently conducting research in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, with some research projects covering every district, but with the support from Act they are making sure citizen's access to information is improved and are monitoring services delivery and good management of public resources.

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) uses Public Expenditure Tracking Systems (PETS) which track whether funds allocated for vital public services, such as water and sanitation, education, and health, are actually spent as planned and on behalf of the intended beneficiaries. With Act programme in Tanzania they are

promoting social justice, human rights and economic justice for poor communities, in this NCA aims to support faith based organizations and religious leaders and provide high profiles of leadership on issues of integrity and accountability.

Oxfam GB works with more than 200 smallholder farmers and vulnerable groups in the regions of Arusha particularly in district of Ngorongoro, Tanga, Geita, Simiyu and Shinyanga across three programmes: education, agriculture and pastoralism. With AcT support they are integrating governance approaches into these programmes and forming a new programme; Chukua Hatua which is seeking to increase citizen engagement in monitoring public service and resource management. They employed a series of pilot projects to test their theories of change, of which the successful ones have been rolled out at a larger scale.

2   A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN TANZANIA

2.1   THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN TANZANIA

On the way to visiting one of the CSOs for this study, the mobile phone of the taxi driver rang with a very odd ringtone – the resignation speech of the former Prime Minister, Edward Lowassa, who was forced to resign in 2008 following a corruption scandal. Governance is an everyday issue for ordinary Tanzanians, in a country which is undergoing an important time of political change; elections are on the way, opposition to the dominant CCM party is increasing and the current Prime Minister recently narrowly avoided being ousted through a vote of no confidence. The engagement of citizens is paramount to ensure these changes are for the greater good.

Civil Society Organisations play an important role in demanding access to information, providing services and advocating rights for citizens in Tanzania. Through this process they are becoming powerful actors demanding to improve standards of service delivery and adherence to principles of good governance in many different areas. Among the broad range of CSOs in Tanzania there is a great degree of variability in the influence they have on the political agenda. It is most prominent in the case of national urban CSOs, with several landmark decisions by the parliament in which CSOs and NGOs did a lot of lobbying, for example the Land act of 1999 and the NGO Act of 2002 (REPOA, 2005). Other CSOs, for example Oxfam, play an important role in making sure that citizens have access to written policy so they are able to demand better services from national and local authorities. Oxfam has been engaged in publication and simplification of water policies with other CSOs in Geita, Simiyu, Shinyanga and Ngorongoro regions, and mobilise villagers to demand for water services from the authority.

The current Chief Auditor General's (CAG) report (2010/2011) highlights fraud and public fund mismanagement in almost all sectors of the government. This has raised serious concerns from CSOs with demands for more legal actions for all ministers and government officials mentioned in the report. The role of CSOs in Tanzania is critical to holding government to account in light of evidence such as the CAG's report. They work behind the scenes, bringing ordinary citizens together to demand action and they also work publically and sometimes in consultation with political parties and parliament to bring about change from within. But the effectiveness of many of these CSOs in their work to achieve greater accountability of government is of concern to some people (Sundet, 2010, Dyer, 2011).

The significant increase in size and importance of civil society in Tanzania has, by some, been put down to increasing interest of and funding from bilateral donors to non-state actors over recent years (Sundet, 2010). But rather than stimulating a grass-roots driven civil society that is responsive to the needs of the ordinary citizens, the donor funding has tended to stimulate organisations that are driven by external objectives, tied to projectised timeframes and often just supplying a service. This has led to a situation where very few civil society organisations think strategically about how to influence change, think beyond the delivery of outputs, and operate with sensitivity to the political realities on the ground (Dyer, 2011).

2.2 AcT's theory of change

The Accountability in Tanzania programme (AcT), funded by UKAid from the Department for International Development (DFID), supports civil society organisations through strategic grants. But rather than a traditional grant making programme, AcT have positioned themselves as an accountability learning programme that uses grants as a mechanism for supporting change at multiple levels but ultimately at the level of government accountability and responsiveness. AcTs theory of how this change will come about is based on an understanding that in order for government to be accountable and responsive, there is a need for a strong and vibrant civil society able to stimulate demand from ordinary citizens and influence elected and appointed officials. Over the past 12 months, under the leadership of the new programme director, the theory of change has been refined through much discussion and reflection on the practice of the partners involved. The latest version is described in more detail in the logic model below (Figure 1), and represents a significant enhancement on previous versions due to the clarity it brings to describing the different levels of results the programme is aiming to bring about. The recent developments also clarify the purpose and limits of Outcome Mapping in a far more useful way compared with versions observed during the 2011 study.

Figure 1: Revised logic model for AcT programme
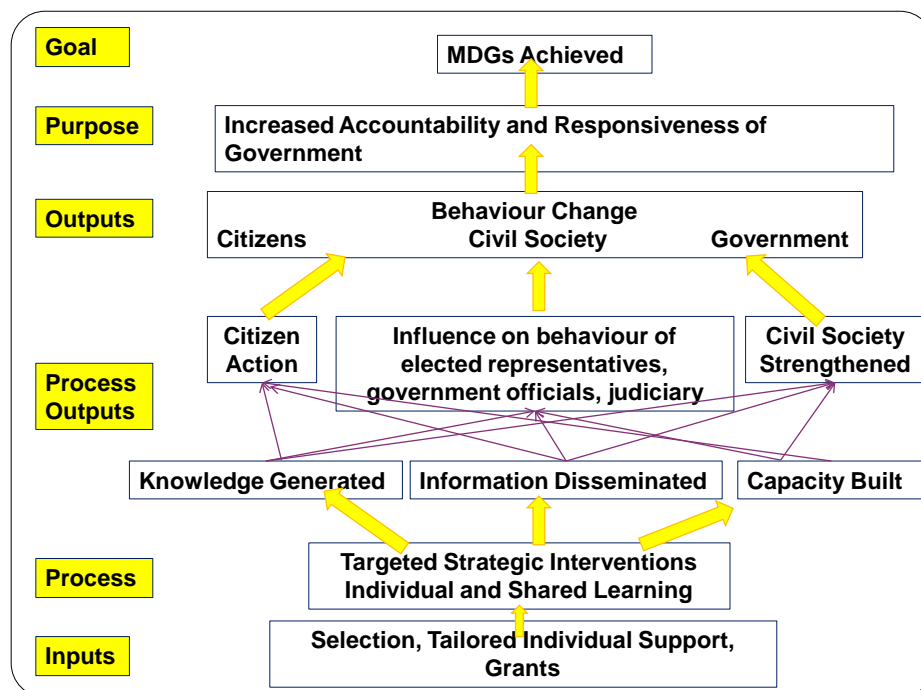
Source: Dyer, 2012

AcT has a very clear idea about what a strong and vibrant civil society looks like, and hence what kind of transformational change is required among civil society organisations. Firstly, civil society organisations need to move away from implementing the same approaches and methodologies based on out-dated or

generalised thinking (for example, Public Expenditure Tracking systems, which have been the primary intervention mechanism for some parts of civil society in Tanzania for some time), and instead take a fresh approach to influencing change based on their own nuanced understanding of the particular political economic context in which they are working. Secondly, civil society organisations should seek to avoid the trap of focusing too much on 'getting things done' without regular reflection on the relevance and effectiveness of what they are doing and instead engage in systematic learning of their own work as well as the work of others in their field. Finally, civil society organisations need to have the internal operational capacity to manage their initiatives efficiently and effectively and with a focus on delivering outcomes.

In order to support these kinds of transformative changes in civil society organisations, AcT has a three-fold strategy in place: a selection process to seek out the most appropriate partners, strategic grants, and tailored support for individual organisations. A major part of the support package made available to partners is the Outcome Mapping (OM) methodology, offered as a compliment to the results-based management approaches most commonly adopted by civil society organisations.

OM is a participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation approach developed in the early 2000's by the Canadian agency, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It is a set of tools and principles that guide project or programme teams through an iterative process to identify their desired change and plan a way to track progress. It was specifically designed for use in interventions seeking sustained social change where the process of change is equally as important (if not more important) as the destination. OM helps project teams better understand the results of such interventions by helping them build theories of how their influence is leveraged in order to contribute to ultimate success. Unlike other methods these theories focus strongly on behaviour change of the actors (individuals, organisations or groups of organisations) that the intervention influences directly (Earl et al, 2001).

By focussing on the behaviour change of these intermediary actors, OM allows realistic tracking of intermediate results; results that go beyond the delivery of services and production of outputs showing what difference those outputs are making. At the same time the level of results that OM focusses on is not so far downstream that there can be no easy way to trace the intervention's contribution. In this way, OM facilitates project teams to think carefully about how their interventions contribute to systemic change, pushing them to seek transformative changes while keeping them realistic as to what contribution their interventions can have and where to look for outcomes.

2.3   AcT's approach to Outcome Mapping

OM doesn't cover the whole picture; as its name suggests it focusses predominantly at the level of outcomes; and for OM, outcomes have a very particular definition: they are understood as changes in behaviour of actors that the intervention is influencing directly. It is this unique feature that makes OM a well suited accompaniment to AcT's log frame; since the results at each level (outputs, purpose and goal in the logic model described in Figure 1 above) are strongly dependent on changes in behaviour and attitude of many different stakeholders. OM therefore occupies a particular space in AcT's results' framework, not as a panacea expected to monitor results at every level, but as a method for planning for and monitoring the behavioural and attitudinal changes that underlie and enable the results that AcT are intending to bring

about. This is described in Figure 2 below: OM is the instrument used for the green box, which informs the full spectrum of results in the blue boxes through to the final outcome.

Figure 2: Demonstrating how attitude and behaviour underlie higher level results
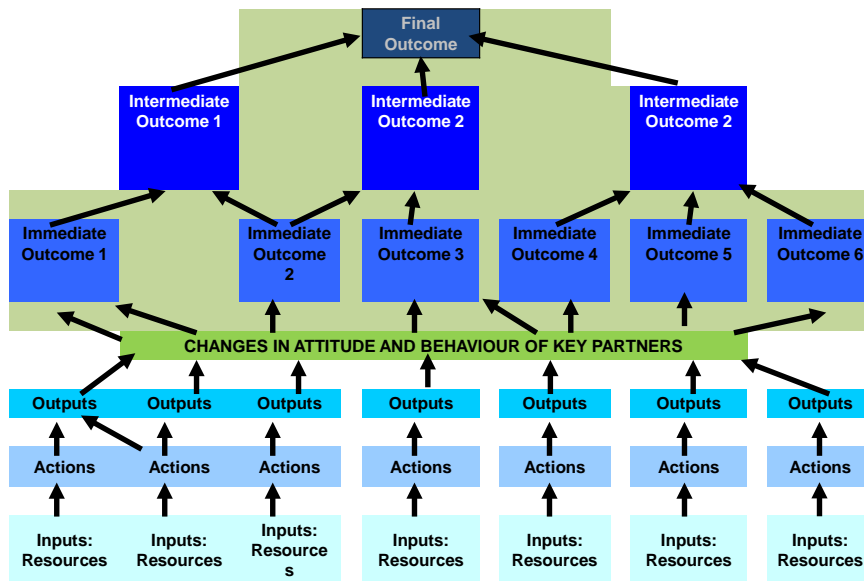
Source: Dyer, 2012

Outcome Mapping as an applied methodology is intended to be adaptable. The original manual (Earl et al 2001) has a series of steps and tools but the precise application of these is less important than the embedded principles – a version of which can be seen in Box 1.

Box 1: Principles of outcome mapping

Actor-centred development and behaviour change: OM recognises that people and organisations drive change processes. The problem to be tackled, the aims of the project and the indicators of success are defined in terms of changes in behaviour of these actors. Understanding and influencing change requires engaging with these actors, their role, their relationships, their mind-sets and motivations. This is crucial, as they have different visions and perceptions of change. OM is sensitive to this, allowing different actors to explore their own perspectives.

Continuous learning and flexibility: OM emphasises that the most effective planning, monitoring and evaluation activities are cyclical, iterative and reflexive. They aim to foster learning about the actors, contexts and challenges involved in influencing social change. OM enables this learning to feed back into adaptations to the project as it proceeds, and can be used by project partners to influence their actions.

Participation and accountability: By involving stakeholders and partners in the PME process and emphasising reflection on relationships and responsibilities, participation incorporates valuable perspectives and fosters a two-way accountability that is often missing in frameworks oriented towards upward accountability. It could help agencies work towards commitments in the Paris Declaration on mutual accountability and ownership.

Non-linearity and contribution, not attribution and control: With OM, processes of transformation and change are owned collectively; they are not the result of a causal chain beginning with 'inputs' and controlled by donors, but of a complex web of interactions between different actors, forces and trends. To produce sustainable changes, projects should contribute to and influence these processes of social change, rather than focusing on controlling specific outcomes and claiming attribution. A more honest approach can generate a more meaningful picture of the actual contribution and role of a project/programme in achieving results.

Source: Jones and Hearn, 2009

The particular version of Outcome Mapping being applied by the AcT programme, based on the RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (see Young and Mendizabal, 2009), focusses on three key components: ex-ante analysis of the political economic context and the key stakeholders, development of a theory that clearly expresses the intended changes and how resources will be applied to influence them, and a monitoring and learning approach that makes use of this theory to understand how the situation is changing in practice and what effect the interventions are having. These three components are discussed in turn:

Context and stakeholder analysis

There is a tendency in development planning to focus heavily on technical elements within a sector or issue and to take formal institutions at face value, ignoring the wider political economy of decision making and the nuances of power dynamics. Initiatives aimed at influencing policy or governance are inherently political and deal with complex change processes which are not immediately obvious and so it is extremely important, in this context in particular, to make an explicit analysis of the political economic context around the policy issues of interest. AcT's approach to OM builds this in at the beginning, providing tools such as the RAPID Framework, political economy analysis, stakeholder mapping and the alignment influence interest matrix (AcT, 2011) to build a greater understanding of what drives change and what the underlying incentives and relationships are as well as the opportunities for influencing change.

Theory of intended change

If an intervention is to be designed not just to deliver a service but to bring about change in its wider environment then there has to be a clear understanding how that intervention will contribute to change.

There are many ways in which the theory of change can be expressed, for example using logic models, network diagrams, archetypal models, narratives etc. Outcome Mapping uses an actor-centred approach that draws on the context analysis to identify a small number of 'boundary partners' (sometimes referred to as priority stakeholders); which are the actors the intervention works with directly to bring about change. Outcome Mapping provides tools to describe the progressive behavioural changes of the boundary partners from early signs of alignment through to signs of transformative change. It is these 'progress markers' that describe the theory of intended change and provides the team with a mental map of how to recognise success. The progress markers themselves are developed in a participatory way, where possible involving the relevant boundary partner, but certainly involving the full project team; this ensures a common language across the team.

MONITORING AND LEARNING

The most comprehensive and well-meaning planning will not make a difference to an initiative unless there is intention for on-going collection of data and the use of reflective learning spaces to make sense of the data. In Outcome Mapping, there are three types of data collected: data about the relevance and viability of the programme, data about the strategies implemented and data about the behaviour changes observed in the boundary partners. In OM, these three elements are very much connected (see figure 2) and all three are needed to make decisions or judgements about the project/programme. Instead of being the responsibility of a designated M&E person or an external contractor, in OM the data is collected by each team members themselves to make sure that the learning is shared by all.

Figure 3: Three types of monitoring data
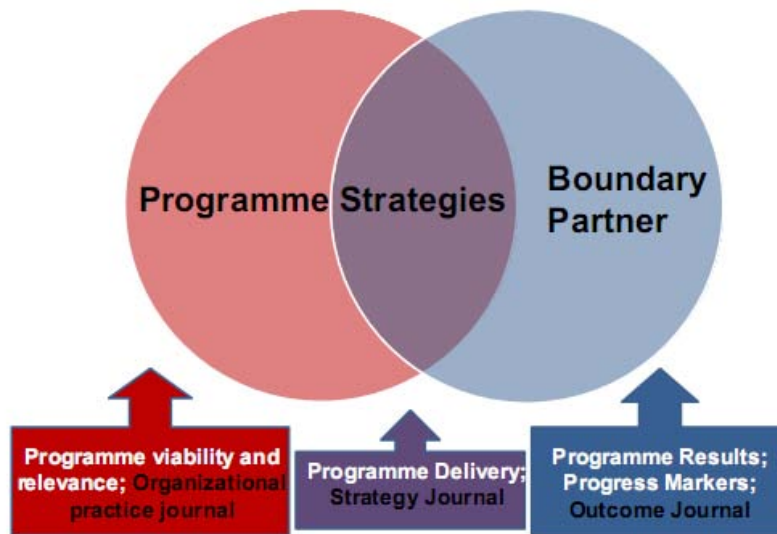
Source: AcT, 2011

Data collection is facilitated through the use of journals, which at a basic level are forms to be filled in by project or programme team. There are three types of journal: organisational practice journals which record information about the internal operation of the project or organisation; strategy journals which record

information about the interventions with boundary partners and the outcome journal which records observational information against each of the progress makers.

The journals themselves are just the product, more important is the reflection and analysis that goes into creating the journals and time spent making sense of the information collected; usually in team meetings and learning events. Outcome Mapping builds in a use-oriented approach to monitoring in that data is only collected if it can be proved to be useful for the dual purposes of learning and accountability: hence the selection of boundary partners and the identification of progress markers are as much about planning to monitor as it is about planning to implement.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

AcT bring these components together in a set of iterative steps – see figure 3 below. The process is depicted as a spiral because each step will inform the next but will also inform the preceding step in some cases – for example, new stakeholders may arise when developing a strategy to influence change. Project teams may go through the steps more than once before they settle on strategy that they are comfortable with, and they will likely keep traversing the steps throughout implementation as they reflect on progress and make adjustments to the plan based on what they see happening. In this way the process is used for **strategic planning**, **monitoring** and **learning**.

Figure 4: AcT's Outcome Mapping Approach
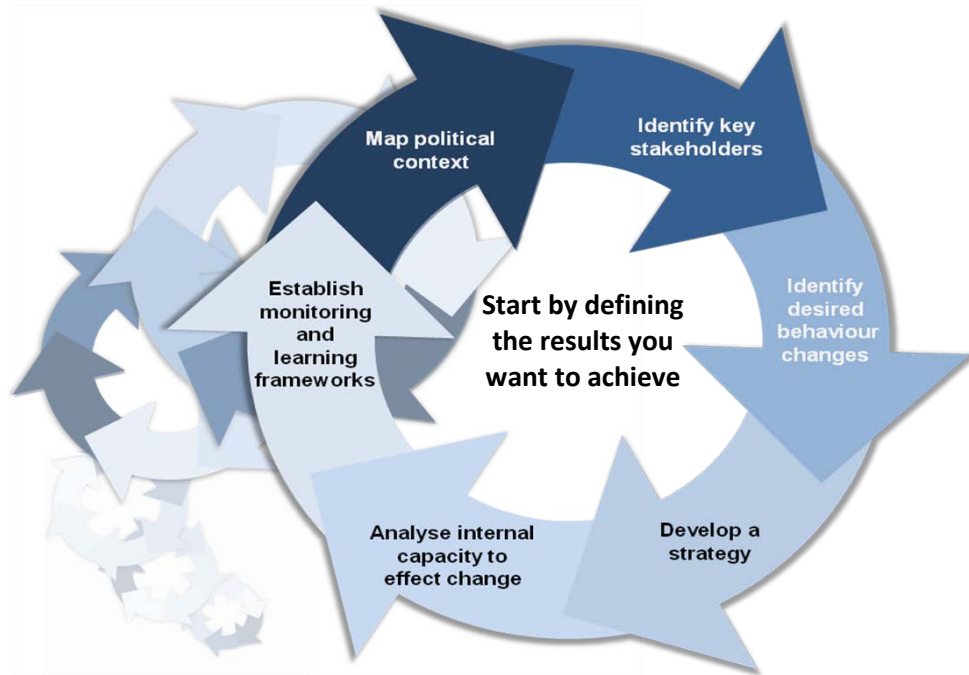
Source: AcT, 2011 (Derived from an original produced by the Research and Policy in Development programme at ODI)

3 OUTCOME MAPPING IN PRACTICE

3.1 HOW IS OM INTRODUCED TO CSOS?

The Outcome Mapping approach was new to all of the CSOs interviewed for this study, insofar as they hadn't heard of OM or were unfamiliar with the specific terminology of boundary partner, outcome challenge, progress makers etc. before becoming part of the AcT programme. We found, however, that each of the CSOs had been applying the underlying principles of OM to some extent – whether explicitly, implicitly, or under different names. We found this in the 2011 study and again in this current study.

Most of the CSOs said they were in the habit of undertaking contextual analysis as part of their planning process, but few of them would record this explicitly and make clear links to their programming decisions. Most of the organisations were used to working with logical frameworks but were using this more as a management and accountability tool than for learning. In general the planning processes tended to focus more on the delivery of services and less on how those services are intended to bring about change. Many of the CSOs reported that their data collection was mostly limited to tracking (or at worst just counting) outputs and rarely went to the level of outcomes or the changes brought about through the outputs. Some of the CSOs would collect stories of change to compliment the predominantly quantitative data but this tended to be an add-on rather than an equal source of information. None of the CSOs had a systematic way of gathering data on changed behaviours of key stakeholders, although most of them recognised this as a gap and were already trying to find ways to address it; for example REPOA had made it a high level priority to focus on use of research rather than just count research reports; and NCA had been requesting more outcome oriented systems from their head office for the past two years. In terms of reflective learning practices, these were already quite strong in some of the CSOs, particularly the international NGOs who tend to adopt practices from their head office, but in the indigenous and local CSOs (including partners of AcT grantees) these practices tended to be ad hoc and not based on a systematic understanding of how change happens.

OM was introduced to CSOs by AcT with careful consideration of the organisation requirements. AcT learnt very quickly that insisting that CSOs adopt OM would not work to bring about the kinds of positive changes they are hoping for but would tend to have the opposite effect, adding to the reporting burden that CSOs already bear. Instead they realised that it would have to be adopted willingly (albeit with strong encouragement), with an understanding of what would be required and with a commitment to take ownership over the process, adapting OM to fit with their context rather than struggling to fit with OM. It was also made clear that OM would not be a replacement of other results based management approaches being used but rather would be designed to complement the existing systems.

These requirements meant that AcT have had tailored the introduction of OM for each CSO, which so far seems to be working very well. In the 2011 study, which was soon after AcT had adopted this tailored approach and had just contracted the first Planning Mentor to lead the OM process, we found that the approach was very much appreciated and had resulted in a high level of understanding and confidence in applying OM at the early stages. This study has demonstrated that even though the number of partners

going through the process has increased, AcT have been able to maintain the same level of quality in their tailored approach and are achieving the same level of appreciation from new partners being introduced to the approach for the first time. We found that new grantees have a good knowledge of the theory of OM, as well as a realistic understanding of how it can be applied.

Grantees further on in their application of OM have continued to receive support from AcT, but it is noticeably less now that there are many other partners to support. The additional staff that AcT have available for OM support has mitigated this to a certain extent but there are signs that demands from new partners is outweighing the supply that AcT can offer – e.g. some of the partners are having to carry out OM training and facilitation themselves, particularly as they begin introducing it to their partners. AcT's support is also of a different quality to the support they received when they were being introduced to OM, primarily as the CSO's encounter more advanced implementation challenges. In the early stages the emphasis was on building CSO capacity to apply and adapt OM to their programmes, but in recent interactions with AcT the relationship has been more reciprocal as they work together to overcome challenges, and in some cases the CSOs are becoming more experienced than the AcT team as they adapt the approach to their needs. The CSO's are also learning from each other more than they used to, rather than depending on AcT, for example in the development and use of monitoring journals.

As part of the grant application process, AcT reviews the strategic plans, M&E strategies and other documents to assess whether to offer OM to the CSO or not. In the majority of cases OM is offered; only if the theory of change is very clear will AcT not offer OM. The general process for introducing OM starts with an informal introduction to the approach in a meeting between members of the AcT team (usually the programme director and/or one of the results specialists) and senior members from the CSO. This meeting is used to discuss organisational requirements and constraints and helps put together the most appropriate support package for the CSO as well as establishing commitment to the process.

There have been different experiences of this process for the CSOs we interviewed (for this study as well as the 2011 study). For some there was very quick recognition of the value of this approach and ambitious plans put in place to introduce it to the organisation and even partner organisations: two of the interviewed CSOs decided it wasn't sufficient for just the project team to learn about and be involved in the OM process so they organised workshops with their partners, one of which involved over 100 people. One CSO even took on the task of translating the training material into Kiswahili. For others it was a more cautious start, focussing on introducing it to a small team and introducing it gradually, for example one CSO said they would only report on 'expect to see' progress markers in the first year. But in each case the AcT team would facilitate the organisation (and/or partners) through the relevant OM stages (context analysis, identification of boundary partners, outcome challenges and progress markers and development of the outcome journal) and the team would then continue working through the steps themselves until they had a set of workable progress markers. In most of the organisations there was a clear champion of the OM process who would keep things on track, and in some cases even conduct training and facilitate OM sessions themselves.

In most of the CSOs we interviewed the AcT team facilitated multiple workshops and visited the organisations several time to guide them through the process. The support from AcT required by the CSOs

to implement OM has been more than initially expected due to the wide variance in organisational contexts (and hence need for tailoring OM each time) and needs as well as an increasing number of partners adopting OM. In the 12 months since the 2011 study the number of partners trained introduced to OM has doubled from 8 to 16 and AcT have responded by increasing the size of the core team with a focus on bringing people in who can facilitate OM. This has been recognised by the CSO partners who have appreciated the level of support and quality of advice provided by the Results and Effectiveness Managers, and is clearly one of the key contributors to the effective adoption of the OM approach.

Another emerging contributor is the organisational buy-in at the early stages. One CSO who went through the OM process with AcT in 2009 (one of the earliest to do so) didn't end up using it until 2011. This is mainly put down to bad timing within the organisation which was undergoing restructuring, but also because at that time the OM support being offered by AcT was more limited. Other than this experience the commitment to OM among the CSOs we interviewed has been very high with senior managers buying in to it not as a necessary evil but as a valuable addition to their planning, monitoring and learning systems.

3.2   HOW ARE CSOS APPLYING OM?

The 2011 study was unable to dig very deep into the CSO's implementation of OM because they were all very new to the approach, only having recently completed the first workshops. The furthest they had got at the time was identifying their Boundary Partners and developing a set of Progress Markers for each; they were still very much at the stage of figuring out how to integrate OM into their planning processes, let alone their monitoring and reporting practices. At the programme level, they were just beginning to experiment with integrating OM into their data collection and analysis.

The current study has found significant progress, particularly for the two CSOs who have been using OM for over a year now, but also for the other two who are newer; even though they are at a similar stage to the 2011 cohort, they are much more advanced in their plans for OM use with clear ideas of how it fits with monitoring and reporting. This is most likely a reflection of the fact the AcT Programme itself has a much clearer idea of how to put OM to practice, and their advice and training to CSOs is therefore clearer and more immediately practical.

The interviewed CSOs are using OM in three interconnected ways: for strategic planning, for monitoring the implementation of that plan and for learning about the changes that are happening as a result.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Following the initial introduction of OM, almost all of the interviewed CSOs went on to integrate the information generated by the OM steps into their strategic plans. In some cases the thinking behind OM drove the development of the strategic plan, in others it led to changes in their existing strategic plans and for others still it helped them unpack and clarify the ideas they already had. For example, TFCG used the context and stakeholder analysis steps of OM to decide who to influence through the project, and they used this and the outcome challenges to inform their choice of strategy – how they intended to influence those stakeholders (MJUMITA/TFCG, 2010; see case study below for more details). NCA already had a strategy in place themselves but intend to merge it with the OM approach in the near future. What has been more useful for them at this stage is introducing OM to their partners, who are beginning to use it

themselves for planning their activities – in particular they used the stakeholder analysis tools to help decide who to influence. Oxfam were also in the position of having a strategy in place but they used OM to help articulate their intentions in terms of influencing behaviour to aid monitoring. REPOA's use of OM came after the development of their strategic plan and so wasn't initially used for this purpose but they have since decided to redesign their strategic plan based on the OM approach after it was re-introduced more recently.

OM has been applied at different levels within the interviewed organisations. For example, Oxfam and TFCG are applying it to a discreet project in the organisation whereas REPOA and NCA are applying it across the whole organisation at the level of their strategic plan. In the case of NCA it is being applied to each of the organisational themes: livelihoods and trade, public resource and finance, HIV and AIDS, gender based violence and justice and climate change; and used to guide the annual planning process. In REPOA, although they have a similar thematic structure, they have decided to implement OM at a higher level to track the uptake of research in general rather than pursuing specific thematic objectives.

There is also variability in who was involved in the OM planning process. When REPOA and TFCG went through the process it was just with a small team of senior staff members, which in both cases has expanded to more operational staff as the teams grew but nonetheless remained within the organisations. For Oxfam and NCA there was immediate interest in involving partner organisations (that is, the implementing organisations as opposed to boundary partners, although there is some overlap) in the planning process. NCA's partners, for example, are now using OM to structure their proposals to NCA, using progress markers instead of the conventional indicators they had previously been using. NCA themselves developed a set of generic progress markers covering the boundary partners they are most interested in influencing, and their partners are then asked to select the boundary partners most relevant to them and adapt the progress to fit with their local context. This not only results in more relevant progress markers but also demonstrates that they understand their context as well as the concepts of OM.

MONITORING

By far the most common use of OM we found was for monitoring changes in the boundary partners, which is quite different to the 2011 study which found that OM was only being used at the planning stage and very little thought had yet been put to data collection and analysis at the CSO level. All of the CSOs we interviewed had developed outcome journals (sometimes called progress marker journals) based on the progress markers and had processes set-up for periodic review of the collected data. The journals use a similar format across the organisations, following the guidance from AcT which promotes the standard OM format (AcT, 2011); one journal per boundary partner, a list of the progress markers, space to write observations against each, and boxes to write additional details such as contributing factors, sources of evidence, unanticipated change and lessons for the programme. Although, REPOA uses a simplified version which just has space to comment on the progress markers, none of the additional boxes.

The journals are used in similar ways in each organisation and have three main purposes. Firstly, relevant staff members are given copies of the journal templates and they are used to record observations related to the boundary partners as and when they occur. For example, Oxfam provides journals to field staff when they visit partner organisations to record what they see happening on the ground. They also provide blank

'diaries' to their partners (the 'animators' they support across the 200 villages they work in) to record their observations in an unstructured story-telling manner, documenting events and meetings. The diaries are used as a source of evidence by Oxfam staff when filling in their journals. Secondly, the journals are used to structure conversations between staff about progress, allowing them quickly keep abreast of what is happening in the project. Thirdly they are used for reporting; in all cases (except NCA who hadn't gone through a reporting cycle using OM yet) the OM journals were collected and compiled into one report and sent to AcT. Oxfam, TFCG and REPOA all had similar practices of bringing the project team or relevant members of staff together on a six monthly basis to review the journals, bring all the information together into one report and assess each progress markers against a pre-defined scoring system. The scoring they used was similar in each case, following the convention provided by AcT: they all used a three level classification of low, medium and high evidence of the behaviours described in the progress marker. Low occurrence being defined as little or no evidence and high meaning the behaviour is now the norm among the boundary partner group.

In the case of Oxfam, because their boundary partner groups were very large (since they are working across 200 villages) they were able to assign numbers to the classification: low indicating the progress marker has been observed in 1-40% of cases, medium 41-80% and high 81-100%; they note, however that the assignment of a rating is very subjective and not scientifically rigorous. In practice they weren't able to monitor all 200 villages because they simply weren't able to be present at each one. They started by filling in journals as and when they made field visits but this was ad hoc and unsystematic. In the end they hired external consultants to undertake systematic monitoring of a sample of villages. This additional data was used alongside the journals in learning sessions and for producing the report.

As described in section 2.3 above, the AcT approach to OM also provides tools for monitoring organisational practices and strategies. As of yet, the interviewed CSOs are not using these tools, although one organisation expressed an intention to start experimenting with the strategy journal and the organisational practice journal. For monitoring of strategies, and to some extent the internal performance, REPOA and TFCG both use logframe formats for reporting against indicators and Oxfam uses a narrative format for describing project activities. None of these mechanisms make formal links back to the outcome journals, which can be a useful practice for helping assess causality between CSO outputs and observed outcomes.

LEARNING

The third use of OM, closely related to the planning and monitoring, is learning. In the two CSOs who have been using OM for the longest there is clear evidence that information from monitoring is leading to a greater understanding of change processes and feeding back into planning (or re-planning) through learning spaces. For example, through the outcome journals, TFCG noticed that the media is having a much stronger effect than other strategies on influencing the Forest and Beekeeping Division to respond to illegal activities – so much so that government officials have told them that they feel under pressure. This has led them to adapt their strategies to work more with media. Likewise, Oxfam found through the journals that they weren't seeing community leaders responding to increasing demands from citizens as they expected. They decided to alter their strategy and introduce a new pilot activity to support community leaders directly.

Oxfam also realised quite quickly that the progress markers they developed were not capturing the changes exactly. This didn't worry them but in fact helped them to understand what was really going on. Instead of expecting to see the progress markers 'ticked off' one by one they found that there was almost always deviation from the plan, both positive and negative, and it was these deviations that enable them to spot trends in behaviour change that they either had not anticipated or had been influenced by external factors. They built on these early experiences and adapted their journals to include a section specifically for recording positive and negative deviations.

It is these kinds of feedback loops and reflection moments that OM is designed to facilitate, and to see CSOs using OM in this way is an indicator of success – that OM is helping the CSOs be more adaptive and responsive to their changing contexts and emerging outcomes. Although in the 2011 study, we found that the OM planning process was revealing new insights and opportunities for the CSOs, we didn't find any evidence that it was helping them put their learning into practice. This time we are seeing the payoff; that the extra effort put in to develop the progress markers and monitoring journals is contributing to more effective programming.

3.3   WHAT HAVE CSOS FOUND USEFUL ABOUT OM?

1. Changing the way they think – outcomes rather than outputs

The most common benefit of OM reported by the CSOs we interviewed was the way in which it helped them change the way they think about their work. As discussed previously, many of them reported that they were outputs or activity oriented before adopting OM and now they are able to think in terms of outcomes. For Oxfam, it helped them to be much more sensitive to the process of change rather than always looking for the results. For NCA, the bottom up approach to planning activities came at the right time for their partners, who related very strongly to the approach. For REPOA, thinking about the behaviour change they are looking for through the training activities they conduct has helped them be a lot more selective about who they agree to train, making sure they will be able to see the outcomes.

2. Learning about the big-picture

OM is helping the CSOs build learning into their programming. Having a clear picture of what change looks like not only helps them reflect together about their effectiveness but also to take a step back and how and why change is happening. For Oxfam, it helped them to quickly understand the responses to their activities and move quickly to adapt their approach. For example one of the village councillor's they had trained was physically assaulted for demanding more accountability; having a common language and understanding of their intended direction across the team meant they could respond quickly. For REPOA, one of the main reasons they decided to adopt OM was because of its emphasis on learning as opposed to accountability. They are finding that they have many more reflective discussions now, and find it positive that all staff members are now involved in monitoring.

3. Meaningful and useful reporting

OM has provided CSOs with very clear and focussed monitoring areas where before it has been difficult to know what to report on and how. NCA in particular have found this to be the case with their partners, who are very good at implementing projects but not so strong on the reporting elements. Previously their

reporting would often miss out key results or would busy interesting findings in long stories. With OM, they are able to tell useful and focussed stories by helping them think logically in advance. Also, by breaking complex change into constituent parts, OM helps to report on those results which are very ambitious and long term. As one respondent put it "[with OM] even long term outcomes have feathers."

4. Clarifying roles

By focussing on spheres of influence, OM is helping CSOs understand their role in the change process – particularly in situations where they are working with and through partner organisations. It's helped them to be realistic about their results and not try to claim everything as their impact.

5. Understanding stakeholders better

The analysis tools of OM are helping CSOs to better understand their stakeholders and make better choices about who to influence. For example, one of NCA's partners has been working on a Female Genital Mutilation awareness project for some time but it wasn't until OM was introduced that they really analysed the agendas and incentives of the different stakeholders – this led to a more informed choice of who to influence to achieve change.

6. Flexibility

Many of the CSOs have found OM a flexible tool to use, as evidenced in the variety of ways in which it has been adapted for use. One respondent noted that this was one of the factors that has contributed to its successful implementation.

3.4 WHAT HAVE CSOS FOUND CHALLENGING ABOUT OM?

7. Limited definition of results

One CSO found that the definition of outcomes didn't go far enough to explain the effect of changed behaviour. For example, a citizen wrote a letter to the local council protesting that their market place had been unfairly taken away from them: that represents a significant change in behaviour on the part of the citizen and can be captured in a progress marker. The progress markers can even track whether the council responded by giving back the market place. But the progress markers can't unpack what effect this had – did it contribute to increased wealth for the individual or economic activity in the village? This level of analysis was felt to be important for the CSO to demonstrate the value for money of governance work to ensure continued investment in governance work as opposed to more direct interventions, but they felt the OM process didn't help with this kind of data collection. One way they suggest of getting around this in the future is to combine progress markers with conventional indicators.

8. Greater risk of failure when results are more ambitious

Another CSO told us that some members of their staff are apprehensive about OM because it could mean greater risk of failure when the results are redefined in terms of the effects of the outputs rather than the outputs themselves. This highlights the mind-shift that is often required when taking on OM and the need for carful introduction.

9. This kind of change takes time

Many of the CSOs are discovering that the kinds of transformative changes that OM encourages take time to emerge and are difficult to see. One CSO even had concerns about whether they would be able to observe the 'expect to see' changes. There is also the problem of attributing observed changes when there are so many other factors. For example, TFCG/MJUMITA are working in the Eastern Usambara forest to raise awareness of illegal mining activities there. Out of the blue, the Vice President paid a visit to the area and met with the District Commissioner, but it is very hard to say to what extent their media campaigns influence the VP.

10.   Hard work

In general, many of the CSOs found OM to be harder work than they expected – the initial planning process as well as the on-going monitoring. One CSO reported that they now have to carry out more field visits to keep up with the data collection – if they could change one thing in the future it would be to reduce the number of boundary partners. Another CSO very concerned about how to manage data collected by their 21 partner organisations. But mostly they recognise this as an investment which will reap rewards later on; one CSO is already seeing that the hard work in initial stages was well worth it.

11.   Integrating with existing way of working

Looking to find ways of integrating OM into existing systems is a common theme among the CSOs. One of the concerns mentioned was the potential for having to produce multiple reports to suit different reporting formats.

12.   The terminology

One final challenge mentioned by some was the specific terminology that comes with Outcome Mapping. This seems to be a common challenge when introducing OM to others in the organisation or to partners. One CSO reported that some colleagues found it too confusing and just reverted to using the familiar logframe terminology.

4 CASE STUDY: FOREST JUSTICE IN TANZANIA

Forest Justice in Tanzania is a three year project to promote improved governance and increased accountability in Tanzania's forest sector in order to conserve forest ecosystem services for the benefit of Tanzanian citizens and local communities. It is a partnership between the Community Forest Conservation Network of Tanzania (known as MJUMITA) and the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG), which has been active in advocacy, capacity building, research and awareness raising on forest issues in Tanzania for 25 years. The project is working at the supply side and demand side of forest governance aiming to see government leaders at all levels supporting effective forest management as well as citizens demanding improved forest management and governance. In order to bring about these changes, the project works directly to influence a small group of key stakeholders through four inter-related strategies: monitoring forest governance and forest condition; promoting the enforcement of laws and by-laws; research, analysis and communication; and agreeing standards.

Outcome Mapping was introduced by AcT to TFGC and MJUMITA in 2010. For both organisations it was a new approach to planning and monitoring their work. With the log frame approach being the predominant tool they were not used to tracking behaviour change of their key stakeholders and data collection was mostly quantitative against higher level indicators. After being introduced to OM, they quickly saw the potential for filling the gaps in their logic model and, working with AcT, they were able to articulate a new version; presented in Figure 5 below . The green box shows how OM helps the project team monitor how their actions are contributing to their high level programme outcomes through intermediary actors.

Figure 5: Forest Justice in Tanzania project logic model
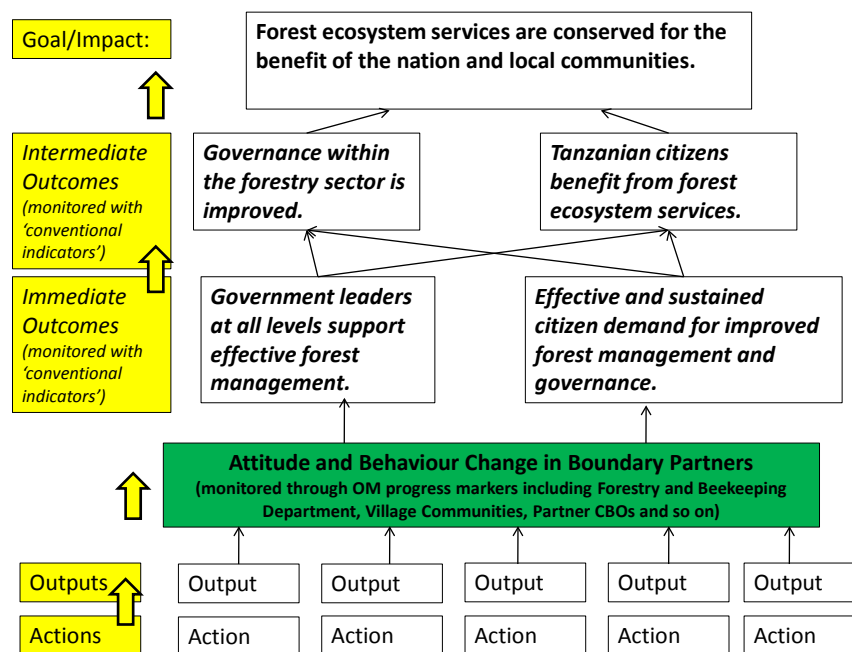
OM was used in this project for the three uses outlined in section two: context analysis, theory of intended change and monitoring and learning. During the initial OM workshop, involving the core team of the project, they used the Alignment Interest Influence Matrix (Figure 6 below) to identify the most strategic stakeholders to work with or influence directly: i.e. those that can themselves influence change in government leaders or citizen action. This came from recognition that although the primary beneficiaries of the project are the communities adjacent to forests, their wellbeing is within the power of many other actors. Some of these stakeholders were identified as natural allies with aligned approaches and values while some would need their positions challenged by the project before they would be supportive to the changes sought. This kind of analysis was very useful for the project to separate out the outcomes that are within the project's sphere of influence, and hence be able to monitor, and those that are beyond the direct influence of the project.

Figure 6: Stakeholder analysis using dimensions of interest and influence

The priority stakeholders selected by the project were: village government, MJUMITA members, District Officials, Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) / Tanzania Forest Service, major wood buyers and CSOs. Once identified, the team developed 'Outcome Challenges' for each priority stakeholder; narrative statements describing the ideal behaviour of the stakeholders in terms of actions, activities and relationships. For example:

> *"Civil society organisations including international and national NGOs and community based organisations are demanding improved forest governance from all levels of government and are exposing corruption and other governance shortfalls within the forestry sector. CSOs are also shining a spotlight on forest biodiversity loss and deforestation and the linkages with climate change mitigation and adaptation."*

Along with the outcome challenges, the team also developed a set of indicators for each priority stakeholder, called 'progress markers', to describe the typical behavioural changes that will be looked for to indicate that the stakeholder is progressing towards the outcome challenge. The progress markers are expressed in three types: changes the project expects to see as a basic response to initial activities, changed they would like to see as the stakeholder begins working proactively towards the outcomes and transformative changes the project would love to see as the stakeholder begins to play a central role in bringing about change in the sector. Examples of these are:

> *"The project expects to see CSOs raising awareness amongst communities in the areas where they are working on forest governance, forest biodiversity values and linkages between forest management and climate change mitigation and adaptation."*

> *"The project would like to see CSOs taking individual and joint actions to promote the plight of Tanzania's high biodiversity forests and to highlight forest biodiversity loss."*

> *"The project would love to see CSOs working together effectively to lobby successfully for adequate protection of Tanzania's high biodiversity forests, specifically that all Eastern Arc forest reserves and nature reserves have management plans that protect biodiversity values and that are being implemented and monitored." (MJUMITA/TFCG, 2010)*

Taken together, the six sets of progress markers for each priority stakeholder represent the theory of change within the green box in Figure 5 above. By having the priority stakeholders clearly identified and their outcome challenges articulated, the team could develop strategies to support those changes with confidence of the rationale behind them. They developed four inter-linked strategies (monitoring forests, promoting enforcement, research and analysis and agreeing standards), some of which target a single stakeholder, some target multiple stakeholders and some target the environment with which those stakeholders interact.

The progress markers were used by the project team in the field to monitor the behaviour change they observe in the priority stakeholders, as the strategies are implemented, to see if they are moving in the intended direction. To do this they use 'progress marker journals' which provide a format for staff to record observations against the progress markers, building up a picture of how that priority stakeholder is progressing towards the outcome challenge. Twice a year the project team get together and review all the

progress makers of each priority stakeholder, gathering the evidence of change to make an assessment of the extent to which a progress marker has been achieved. They use a three point scale: low achievement meaning no observed behaviour change corresponding to the progress marker, medium achievement meaning there are one of two examples of changed behaviour, and high achievement meaning the progress marker has been fulfilled and the behaviour is now the norm among the priority stakeholder group. The journals also provide space to discuss the effectiveness and relevance of the project's strategies in influencing the changes, as well as considering other contributing factors.

The on-going monitoring and regular refection has allowed the team to spot emerging trends in how the priority stakeholders are responding to their strategies and contributing to the outcomes, and thus adjust their strategies for greater effectiveness. For example they discovered that media campaigns are more effective at influencing the FBD towards positive action than reports of illegal activities from local communities. The effectiveness of the media strategies was a surprise for the team and they are now planning to make more use of it. Overall they found OM to be an effective approach to measuring their impact, by analysing a small number of priority stakeholders and their interest and influence over accountability and good forest management.

5   CASE STUDY: CHUKUA HATUA

Oxfam in Tanzania is working with smallholder farmers and vulnerable groups in the regions of Arusha, particularly in Ngorongoro district, Tanga, Dodoma, Morogoro, Geita, Simiyu and Shinyanga. Oxfam is helping to strengthen citizen-led monitoring of government service delivery and public resource management with the aim of improving the quality of both. The idea is that communities can make their voices heard and demand accountability of government authorities through print, broadcast and other media.

Oxfam become an AcT partner in 2009 through its Chukua Hatua programme. The goal of Chukua Hatua is to increase accountability and responsiveness of government to its citizens. The programme aims to achieve this by creating active citizenship; that is citizens who know their rights and responsibilities, are demanding them, and are able to search for and access information. The assumption underpinning this is that if Tanzanian citizens begin to demand their rights and entitlements then the government will be increasingly compelled to respond. Broken down, the programme rests on four broad (and inter-connected) areas that they are seeking to influence: awareness; mobilisation and action, forums and spaces; and response by leaders and duty bearers.

Outcome Mapping was introduced to the programme by AcT in 2009 as a new approach. Most of their programmes use traditional log frame whereby most of the information gathered was quantitative, of course with specific success of how the programme has change the welfare of their beneficiaries, but did not focus specifically on behavior change. Chukua Hatua programme was the first one to use the OM approach within Oxfam and they are using it in their context analysis, theory of intended change and planning in monitoring and learning.

Outcome Mapping was first applied during a two day workshop involving the core programme team, staff from partner organisations, journalists, government officials, community members, civil servants and politicians; these are among the boundary partners that Chukua Hatua planned to influence directly. The objective of workshop was to develop the boundary partners, outcome challenges and progress markers. They used the Alignment Interest Influence Matrix to identify the boundary partners that the programme will be working with and influencing directly. Although the programme is primarily interested in working with citizens within communities, the programme team recognises that many other actors have to be involved to bring about change at this level. Therefore, the programme selected other boundary partners apart from community members; these are students, teachers, politicians, media, CSOs, civil servants, regional and district commissioners and non-governmental leaders.

They then developed outcome challenges for each boundary partner. Outcomes challenges focus on how boundary partners will be behaving as a result of being reached by the programme. These are statements describing how the behaviour, activities and relationships will change if the programme is successful. For example;

"Politicians consult regularly with their constituencies/electorate and allow for feedback and flows of information between citizen and politician. They focus on the needs of citizens, and use dialogue with communities to identify these needs. They represent the opinions and issues deemed important by their constituencies at different levels of government (e.g. village council, district council, parliament), in the media, and at national and international forums, as well as fulfil promises they have made to their respective constituencies. They represent the needs of women and marginalised groups at decision-making levels. They should use their power and access to resources to work towards fulfilling the needs of their constituencies and not for personal financial gain. All politicians are aware of their roles and responsibilities as based on the constitution and laws of the United Republic of Tanzania and execute their work according to these laws and regulations."

The team also developed three levels of behaviour indicators known as progress markers; they describe how change will be happening for each boundary partner. The progress markers show the complexity of the behaviour change process and are also guiding the information that will be gathered when monitoring desired outcomes. The developed markers were what the programme would start to see as immediate outcome of initial implementation of the programme's activities; the follow up level is what the programme would like to see as its boundary partners begins working proactively towards the intended outcome and the final level of completely transformation that the programme would love to see as they are adopting a core role in bringing about the intended change.

As an example, one of the progress markers for community members states that the project will start to see community members read information that has been placed on notice boards in their village and ask questions from officials and leaders. This has been observed by programme partners in many of the villages they are working, for instance, in Mwime village in Kahama district one of Chukua Hatua farmer animators, Maimuna Said, was able to find about a Board of Trustees responsible for managing a Tshs 180 million fund from Barrick Gold on behalf of the villagers. After speaking to village leaders it turned out that the Board was formed without any consultation with the Mwime villagers and Maimuna was able to lobby for the dissolving of the Board and the election of a new one.

Maimuna Said, a farmer animator from Mwime Village in Kahama district, Shinyanga region as she explains her role in dissolving of the unselected Board of Trustees that was responsible to receive Tshs million 180/- on behalf of Mwime Villagers, from Barrick Africa Gold Mine

Photo by Kisuma Mapunda

The process of developing boundary partners, outcome challenges and progress markers has enabled the team to review their strategy by analysing their context and developing their theory of change. By expressing their intentions in this way they were able to test a variety of approaches to raising citizens' awareness on rights and mobilisation for action. These include active musicians, students' council, election promise tracking, farmer animators and community radio. The intention was to identify which approaches can act as a catalyst to active citizenship, and enable wider active citizenship to build and spread. Outcome Mapping was particularly suitable for this purpose because of its flexibility, its focus on behaviour and its ability to make complex change processes traceable.

As for monitoring, the team has been using outcome journals to track changes in their boundary partners; these are anecdotal records of any events that related directly or indirectly to the progress markers with additional columns of description of change, contributing factor and actor for the recorded change, source of evidence for change, unanticipated change and lesson learned. These columns provide additional information on how monitored behaviours against developed markers can be used in informing back the programme. For instance the column of description for change provide data that show how and why change has been happening, while contributing factor and actor describe what individuals and factors that has cause change to happen or not to happen. The column for source of evidence explains the source of the information collected i.e. is the data coming from direct observation, testimonials, or a ready report etc. There are changes which are beyond what was expected and the last column provide lesson learn for the programme to adopt in the strategy.

These journals are filled by programme and partner staffs when visiting field to monitor changes of each boundary partner against developed markers. The two biannual Chukua Hatua's outcome mapping reports based on the information gathered from outcome journals shows some activity by communities against most progress markers, including some at the like-to-see and love-to-see levels, and several at the start-to-see level. The two monitoring reports were shared to their partners in their Learning Events.

Participants exchange ideas in the learning event of Chukua Hatua held on 26-27, September 2011 at Oceanic View Girrafe Hotel in Dar-Es-Salaam.

Photo by Kisuma Mapunda

6 Conclusions

This study set out to explore the question of whether OM is an effective tool in helping AcT strengthen its partners' capacity to influence change towards greater accountability and strengthened governance. OM was introduced because it was seen to address three particular gaps in CSO capacity experienced in the past in Tanzania: a disconnect between the political-economic context and strategy development, a lack of critical reflection and application of learning, and inadequate systems for managing for results.

The 2011 study revealed that the CSOs had a good understanding of OM, were investing in the new approach and were confident that it would be helpful for them but we were unable to identify significant benefits from the use of OM because the CSOs were only just beginning to learn and apply the approach. **This study has demonstrated a significant advance in the use of Outcome Mapping one year on, at the level of the programme as well as the CSOs.** The AcT programme team themselves have a clearer understanding of the purpose of OM and its role in their results framework. When OM was first applied in the programme it was done so in a very experimental manner without a clear idea of how it would work out and what benefit it would have, but as the team have increased their confidence with the approach, experienced it in practice with the early CSOs and adapted the tools along the way, they have been able to bring more CSOs on board and provide more support for OM use. While it has been a challenge for AcT to maintain the high level of support they set out with, they have managed remarkably and all of the partners we interviewed were appreciative of the time and effort taken by the AcT team to walk them through the process and respond to their particular challenges.

This study has found that the CSOs, particularly those who have been applying OM for some time, are competent and confident with the approach and are adapting it to their needs and making it a part of their standard practice. Even the CSOs who are new to the approach seem to have a clearer understanding of its benefits and limits, and are more confident with the approach than their counterparts were in the previous study. Where previously, the CSOs were mainly using OM for strategic planning and for conceptualising the behavioural changes they want to see, they are now using it for monitoring and are developing data collection instruments much earlier in the planning process than before. The CSOs are also sharing their OM experiences with each other much more than was observed previously; not only at the AcT learning events, but also informally for example, by sharing journal and reporting formats with each other. But the study has also revealed that there is a lot more beyond this that the CSOs could be learning from each other, for example, how to train and introduce OM to partners, translation of OM terms into Kiswahili and how to make use of the information generated through OM.

OM is helping CSOs better understand the political economic context they are working in. The CSOs are using power analysis and stakeholder analysis tools to develop (and re-develop) strategies that address the risks and opportunities around accountability work. This has been demonstrated in AcT partner learning events; where CSOs share a wide range of activities implemented using the OM approach. Although the approach is new to all the CSOs and requires time to understand and can be confusing to begin with, all of the studied CSOs agreed that the approach has been helping them to understand the power dynamics that are involved in their accountability work. There is less evidence that this analysis is being explicitly used by

CSOs to develop or modify their strategies. That is not to say that they are not doing so, but it is more likely that they are making these connections implicitly based on their tacit knowledge of the context. The planning and reporting documentation tends not to be detailed enough to see where decisions have been made based on context analysis.

OM is helping CSOs gather useful data on the results of their interventions. Almost all of the interviewees stated that prior to being introduced to OM by the AcT programme, they were predominantly monitoring their governance work at the level of outputs; that is the tools and methods they were using were suited to collecting information about activities (what they were doing) and the immediate effects of those activities, e.g. the number of people trained in such and such or the number of people reached through a particular campaign. One of the biggest changes that OM has contributed to in the way these CSOs work is the ability to generate evidence of the change that they are contributing to through the outputs they are producing.

As stated in section 2.3, OM isn't intended to be an all-in-one approach that provides all the answers. AcT is modest about the role of OM and make it clear what it is useful for and what it isn't: i.e. it can help understand and track changes in behaviour, relationships and power dynamics but it won't provide data on the number of people lifted out of poverty or the number of households with clean water or the amount of aid money better spent. This level of result may be out of reach for OM, but when it comes to governance work, where much of the change needed is of a 'soft' nature, for example subtle shifts in power balances, values and agendas of different people, OM becomes invaluable. OM is enabling the CSOs to understand their results, even in situations where long term results are unknowable, for example, OM may not help a CSO know whether their campaign has resulted in a higher level of education in the country, but they are able to find out whether schools in their district are monitoring their own quality of education and making the information available to the community, which Oxfam has been able to do through OM journals (Oxfam, 2012). The OM journals also show that the CSOs are contributing to many different changes in the way government is engaging with civil society as well as specific changes in budget, policy, legislation and procedure of public bodies.

OM is helping CSOs build learning into their programmes. They have been able to develop and adjust strategies and design new engagement approaches that are based on reflections of their work using data from OM. Oxfam has been able to reflect and review their strategies every six months during learning events and this has become part of the normal way of working for most of their programmes. TFCG are regularly gathering and synthesising what they have found in their monitoring and share the information they have during two gathering each year where programme staff reflect on what has been happening. These reflections have enabled them to review their strategy and find better ways to influence change. What we didn't see was a practice of CSOs recording these process-type outcomes and creating spaces for reflecting explicitly on their planning, monitoring and reporting, a practice that is often called 'double-loop learning'. Since these outcomes are as significant for the AcT programme as the changes in governance and accountability that the CSOs are contributing to, this level of analysis would be a useful accompaniment to the external outcomes they are now well versed in capturing.

For the past two years since the start of AcT programme we can conclude that there is clear evidence that OM is helping AcT to strengthen CSO capacity in the three areas mentioned above: strategic planning,

reporting on results and putting learning into practice. The predominant factor in the success of OM is not the tools per se, but rather the congruence between the principles that the tools help to embed and operationalize, with the principals that the AcT team have worked hard to build into the programme over the past two years. The OM approach by itself has limited intrinsic value for the CSOs, but coupled with a clear theory of change, strong leadership and encouragement and tailored support, it becomes an invaluable tool for influencing change in policy, power and practice.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has highlighted a number of recommendations for the AcT programme for the management team. The recommendations focus on AcT's support for OM, the learning function of the programme and how AcT programme communicates with its partners. We would like to make it clear that some or all of the recommendations might be already planned or being implemented; they should be interpreted in this case as adding further support for the importance of these actions. Additionally, some of the recommendations have been carried through from the 2011 report where the researchers felt that they were still relevant and useful for the AcT programme team and partners.

7.1 SUPPORTING OM

1. The study has demonstrated that OM introduces a very different way of working for CSOs in Tanzania, and requires a change in mind-set of individual team members as well as organisational changes which often take time to set in and may only be realised through implementation. This emphasises the importance of building in support mechanisms after the initial training and framework development to ensure that the tools and frameworks remain relevant and useful.

   We recommend that OM frameworks should be reviewed and rationalised on a regular basis every 9-12 months. While this can be done by the CSOs themselves, there is a great opportunity for AcT to play a facilitation role. One suggestion, based on the experience of this research process, would be to facilitate peer-review as well as self-assessment of OM frameworks. For example, CSOs could be paired up and encouraged to review each other's frameworks and practices. This would generate two-way learning in the same way as this study has by involving a member of the programme in the research team. One aspect of this peer-review could be the idea of study-tours where a variety of AcT partners visit another of the CSOs to learn about one of their particular projects or activities and see how things are done in the field – presenting a very different perspective than a workshop presentation.

2. The number of partners in the AcT programme has been increasing steadily since its inception, and even since the 2011 study the number of partners choosing to apply the Outcome Mapping approach has doubled. This has put a lot of pressure on the AcT support team, who have had to grow in size and capacity to match demand. This step change in support from AcT has been noticed and appreciated by the partner CSOs, particularly as it has maintained the principle of tailoring the approach for each CSO. As the programme continues to grow, and as the depth of support required by the CSOs also grow – as they progress in their application of OM and encounter more advanced implementation challenges – the AcT team will have to continue to keep up with demand.

   Two other factors compound this, the first being that as the number of partners grow, so too does the diversity meaning that the tailoring of OM becomes ever more important and more time will be needed to work with partners on understanding how OM can be applied in different contexts for different purposes. The diversity is also a strength of the programme and could be utilised for the benefit of all CSOs. For example, we found very little evidence that partnership with AcT led to

31

additional collaborations with other CSOs, so AcT could do more to identify potential collaborations where CSOs can learn from each other and build on each other's strengths, challenge each other's theory of change, share their context analysis, mitigate risks and build confidence in these new ways of working.

Second, that many of the newer CSOs themselves work with a network of partners, who will also be involved in the implementation of OM, thus exponentially increasing the support challenge. This can already be seen with NCA, who are introducing OM to their partners and have requested support from AcT for training those partners. If this tendency continues, the core team will be stretched to a point where the support they are able to provide has a negative effect. One suggestion here is to focus attention on particular champions in the CSOs who can then go on to support their partners.

3. The Outcome Mapping journals are a critical part of the process, not only for demonstrating outcomes when monitoring but also for promoting ownership of the OM process, but they are also a potential weak point. There is no easy way to generate a universal format for a journal that will be picked up and used; it involves trial and error and an openness to be creative and learn. Some of CSOs have managed to develop a format which covers more than progress markers. Oxfam has added other way of data collection; by looking to source of evidence, utilizing lesson learned from the process to be adopted in the programme strategy as well as how change has been happening in connection with contribution factor and other. As the CSOs enter another round of reporting – and some of them for the first time – there is a need for critical reflection on the practice of journaling, reflection and reporting. Some of the more experienced CSOs like Oxfam and TFCG will certainly have some very useful experience for those going through the process for the first time, and will likely be able to discuss ways of making it more useful and streamlined. Our study has found that the CSOs are sharing their journal and report formats with each other – and useful innovations are being shared between them – but we recommend that this be accompanied with discussions facilitated by AcT on the use and design of journals and reports, perhaps as an e-discussion on a web forum or mail-list where partners can post their journals and describe how they designed them and why.

4. One of the recommendations in the 2011 report was about the value, in some situations, of going back to the original IDRC Outcome Mapping framework and including steps like vision and mission – which is particularly relevant where OM is being applied in a participatory manner involving a variety of stakeholders. This research has shown that OM is being introduced in a very flexible and tailored manner, not sticking rigorously to the steps outlined in AcTs manual but open to other ways of doing things that are sensible to the situation. This is very encouraging to see. However, this study has shown that OM, by emphasising the monitoring of changes at the level of boundary partner, does not always help CSOs go beyond their outcomes and generate evidence of longer term results in the delivery of services. While the question about impact assessment of governance work is a complicated one which can't be dealt with in this report, there is work by other researchers on this issue that could be interesting for AcT to engage with.

As a practical recommendation, there could be a case in some situations to guide CSOs through a process of building a theory of change that goes beyond boundary partners and theorises how changes in boundary partners lead to further downstream changes – something which is not explicitly captured in Outcome Mapping. The Theory of Change (www.theoryofchange.org) tool could be a useful addition to AcTs toolkit in this case.

7.2 FACILITATING LEARNING

5. The face to face learning events that AcT facilitates are very much appreciated by the CSO staff, particularly the recent event on sharing experiences with Outcome Mapping. In the previous study we found interest among the CSOs for building on the face-to-case interaction with online engagement and find that this recommendation still stands. AcT could facilitate online interaction among members of staff in the partner CSOs between the face-to-face meetings. This could be through an email list, a private blog or better use of the AcT website for knowledge sharing among partners. The important factor to consider is the need for dedicated facilitation to ensure participants are not overloaded with information but that the optimum pace of interaction is maintained with a steady flow of relevant content. This role would to best be played by a member of the AcT management team; the programme coordinator or one of the planning mentors would be appropriate.

6. As well as facilitating interaction among partner CSO staff in general, AcT could facilitate more focussed communities of practice around particular competencies, for example financial management, communication, media campaigning and M&E. In particular, we recommend regular convening of the OM champions within partner CSOs – those that are responsible and drive the adoption and adaptation of the OM approach. As the process of this study has shown, there is much that can be learned when two OM practitioners have the opportunity to explore each other's practice in detail.

7.3 COMMUNICATING WITH PARTNERS

7. Three of the interviewees mentioned their concern about recent requests from AcT for numeric data about number of interventions and number of people reached, which was noted as a deviation to the usual type of data requested through the Outcome Mapping journals. The interviewees expressed an appreciation of the necessity and importance of numeric data, but were concerned by the potential for it to become more highly valued in the assessment of success than the qualitative information obtained through the Outcome Mapping process. So far AcT have been careful not to push partners too hard that they revert to the kind of compliance and counting of outputs type monitoring discussed in chapter 2 above, and in fact have been seeking to use the requirement for numeric data as an opportunity for partners to think about the scope and scale of what they are doing and to think through reasoned choices about strategy and what constitutes value for money.

Building on this, we recommend, on the basis of suggestions from interviewees, that approaching the next monitoring cycle, AcT take more time to support partners to make better use of numeric

data, alongside the data from OM, to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programming work. It is clear that there are strong opinions, and a range of valuable experiences, among the partners and it would be a constructive step for AcT to convene a discussion on this issue to work towards a common approach for all partner CSOs. Involving DFID and other donors funding governance work in Tanzania in these discussions would also be a positive way to engage them in these issues.

8. Linked to some of the above recommendations, AcT should provide partners with the big picture of the programme to show how partners can develop in terms of their areas of interest, geographic scope, types of strategies and partners, and patterns of outcomes. This would help partners to understand their role in the programme's theory of change and to have a clearer idea of how they can coordinate with other partners.

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