Making Outcome Mapping Work
Volume 2

Innovations in Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

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Preface

In 2007, the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC) published the book titled "Making Outcome Mapping Work: Evolving Experiences From Around the World". It was a compilation and synthesis of discussions from the OMLC. It proved to be such a key resource for the community that we have decided to follow up with a sequel. This book represents the experiences and knowledge shared by the community members between the period Jan – Dec 2007. It has taken the combined effort of a number of community members to document, summarise and synthesise a large number of discussions. We hope that the product of this process will be a true asset to the whole community, both as a repository of new knowledge but also as a testament to the creative and generous nature of its members and collaborative environment of the community. Without the many hours of volunteers' time, this publication would not have been possible. We would like to thank everyone who shared their pearls of wisdom or their valuable experience. In particular we would like to thank those members who contributed their time and effort in producing the discussion summaries: Kate Graham, Sharon Low, Robyn Tan, Stefan Dofel, Bernhard Hack, Laxmi Prasad Pant and Eva Cardoso. A big thank you also goes out to Eva Cardoso for her amazing formatting and design skills.

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1 Introduction

The Outcome Mapping Learning Community is an informal group of over a thousand members from around the world. It acts largely as a dynamic platform for sharing knowledge and experiences relating to Outcome Mapping, a methodology for planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes developed by the International Development Research Centre. Members come together to solve problems, to showcase and trade their discoveries and good practices, and to support one another in applying Outcome Mapping.

In order to capture, record and disseminate the knowledge shared through the community, a practice of summarising and synthesising discussions has emerged. This book is a product of that practice and is designed to be a reference and a summary of how OM is evolving and being adapted and applied around the world.

The knowledge and experience presented here broadly fits around four strands which carry through the various discussions and topics:

1. *Application*: Applying OM in the most efficient and effective way
2. *Adaptation*: Adapting OM to fit the purpose and making sure it is appropriate for the users
3. *Contextualisation*: Ensuring OM is sensitive to the local geopolitical, socioeconomic and thematic context
4. *Communication*: Best practices for communicating OM to partners, donors, colleagues and peers

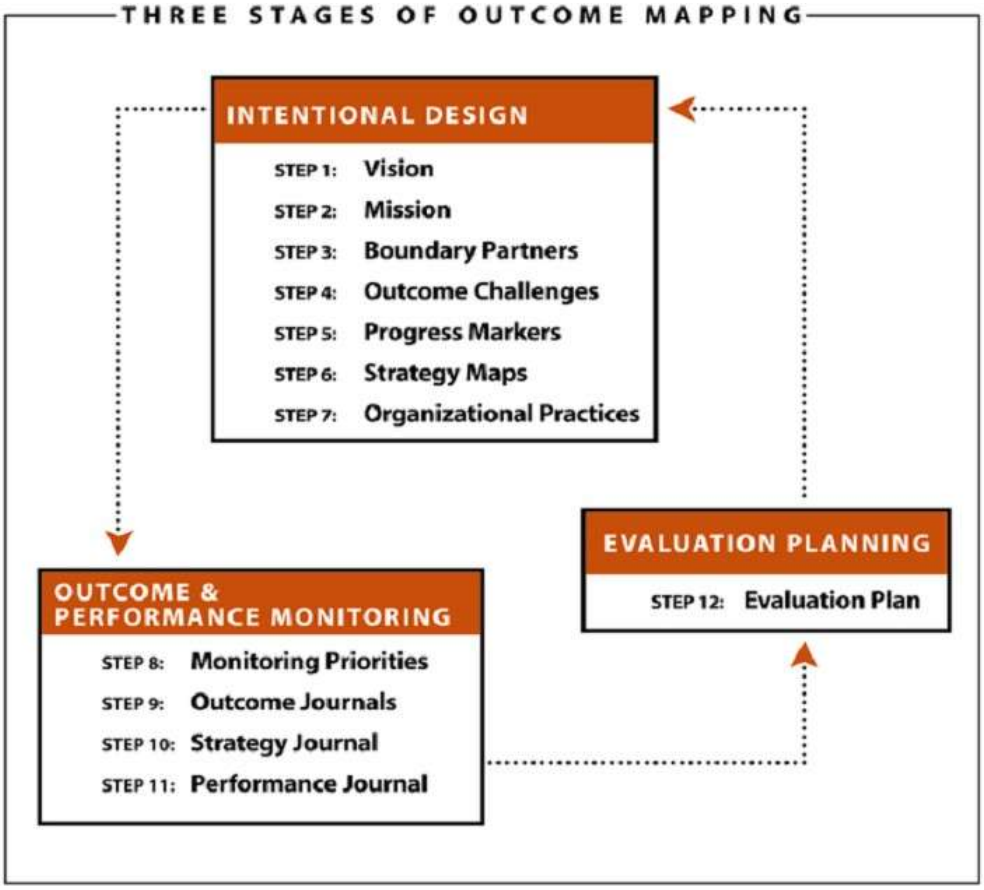
This book is divided into two sections. The first section is a series of syntheses which pick up the lessons from the discussions and presents them by topic: OM steps, OM in specific sectors, complimentary tools and approaches, communicating and advocating for OM and complexity and OM. The second section is a collection of twenty discussion summaries, representing a year's worth of knowledge shared among community members. Please note this is provided for reference and is not intended to be read from cover to cover.

We want to ensure that these discussions are not static so if there is anything you would like to comment on or contribute to, then please do interact via the community website: www.outcomemapping.ca.

2 *Synthesis by topic*

2.1 OM steps

When it comes to applying OM by the book, there are many tips and hints that are not included in the manual. One of the great benefits of a learning community is the sharing of practical lessons. This section presents an overview of what the community has shared in relation to implementing the OM steps as presented in the manual.



Intentional design

Members of the OM learning community felt that projects dealing with emergent change processes are better guided by shared values, principles and purpose (rather than planned outcomes) that can be ´crystallised´ through the development of the project´s **vision**. When facilitating a visioning exercise it is important to achieve the right balance between thinking outside everyday life and listing unrealistic expectations. Community members have used various tools to address this challenge, e.g. weaving a group vision statement from common themes in vision pictures drawn by the participants, the vision-action-request tool, evolving storylines, and using the relationship between the project, boundary partners and the ultimate beneficiaries (www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=118) (see also section 2.3).

The **mission** step of the intentional design injects some realistic thinking after a group has gone through the 'collective dreaming' of the vision. It should allow you to identify key areas to work in, and understand your organisation’s particular role to play in achieving the goals you’ve set. To draft a mission statement, it’s important to think about what makes your organisation unique, your accountability to the people you serve and the appropriate scope of your responsibilities. It can be useful to revise the mission as the key contributions of the project became clearer as the group works through the various steps of the intentional design. In some contexts it can be challenging to draft a mission, particularly where a group is not well established or is not clear on its aims. This needs careful facilitation, and can be helped using strategic management techniques.

The concept of **boundary partners** is one of the ways in which Outcome Mapping really sets itself apart from other approaches. It forces you to recognise the limits of your influence and to think realistically about whom you want to work with to affect change. It is wise to constantly re-assess the boundary where control ceases and influence begins; Intense monitoring of boundary partners and the changes in their behaviour, relationships and actions is more important than planning or evaluation. It can often be beneficial to undertake a comprehensive stakeholder analysis to complement the boundary partner step. OM community members have used additional tools to aid this process, such as. the alignment interest and influence matrix in both its two dimensional form (www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=135) and its three dimensional form (www.pmforum.org/library/tips/2006/PDFs/11-06-Lucidius.pdf).

Triggered by the question why the ´like to see´ **progress markers** are the most difficult to develop, two tips were given to tackle this issue: 1) Don´t get bogged down by the sequence of the ´like to see´ progress markers. The actual sequence of change will emerge during the monitoring and evaluation process. 2) First develop the love to see progress markers as they are derived largely from the Outcome Challenge statements. Thereafter proceed with the ´expect to see´ ones. It becomes then easier to develop the ´like to see´ progress markers as behaviours that both contribute to the vision and that are achievable in the lifetime of the project.

When developing the intentional design there is need for sensitivity towards language and culture. In some parts of the world, ´behaviour change´ and ´influence´ have negative connotations. In such cases the jargon may have to be adapted to suit the cultural context. For example, ´change in practice´ can be more acceptable than ´change in behaviour´. Bringing in elements of OM by stealth (meaning the use of OM without explicitly labelling it as such) or avoiding the OM jargon might also help in such instances.

Monitoring

OM community members indicated that using an OM-based monitoring system means expressing performance indicators as changes in the behaviours of partners and target audiences with which we interact directly. Such approach can lead to greater accuracy in differentiating between outputs and outcomes.

The OM monitoring plan worksheet can help to clarify some important questions including who, why, what, when, how, and leads to a monitoring scheme based on a clear overview of the whole monitoring system, involving the different boundary partners, implementing organisations, and other stakeholders. This can also help to clarify the different responsibilities during the monitoring process (i.e. who does the monitoring and what happens with the data?).

An outcome mapping based monitoring system, including the monitoring tools, is often customised or adapted according to the specific needs and available capacities of projects. Examples of such customized monitoring tools from the St2eep project can be accessed on http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=109. Many OM users have also used other approaches such as most significant change, alignment interest matrix and LOT quality assurance sampling, to complement the OM based monitoring system (see section 2.3 for more information about these approaches)

While in some situations it is possible for the formal monitoring system to be embedded in the management and planning structures of the overall programme, and in line with the reporting requirements, in other situations we may need to take "stealth" approaches to incorporating OM monitoring tools. They take time to be trusted and properly implemented, but when they are, it can lead to a strong management case for change.

Evaluation

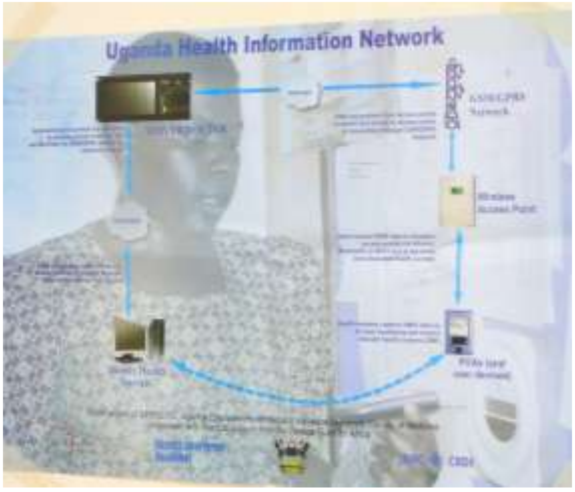
OM is specifically useful for evaluations that seek to develop deeper understanding about **how** broader social change can be brought about. As such OM based evaluations support organisational learning and focus on converting the generated knowledge into action. Shared experience around the application of OM in evaluations is still limited. There is therefore need for OM practitioners to document and share case studies about OM based evaluations.

2.2 Reflections on OM Implementation in Specific Sectors

Much of the activity of community members is focussed on supporting each other in in applying OM in different sectors. There have been discussions initiated by OMLC members seeking support for projects on: Better Parenting: OM Outside Development: Organizational Restructuring; Education Projects and International Networks. The learning community was quick to share experiences and lessons learned.

In the case of better parenting projects there were valuable conversations about knowledge and power and the importance of valuing local knowledge. Even in the poorest areas, OM can be used to draw out local capacity for planning and project design especially when OM is practised in a participatory way with maximum engagement of boundary partners. In another example from parenting projects a tool was shared that can be used along side OM to provide a baseline participatory assessment and review process for working with families over a period of time and monitoring outcomes for families in an ongoing way. The tool can be accessed on http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/download.php?id=30&sid=2e2f1ebe11f0302bd62e8109217f07c7

Organizational Restructuring was another area of great interest to community members. OM is a valuable tool for organizational change. It can be used for strengthening organizational practices and also as a starting point for strategic planning. To apply OM to organizational restructuring, various parts (departments, teams, sections) of the organization can be viewed as specific boundary partners and progress can be developed and measured at appropriate capacity levels. One example shared was from the West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF/FRAO). In their organisational restructuring process, OM was helpful in identifying the key internal boundary partners and the kind of behavioural change needed by the partners to contribute to the new direction.



OM has been applied to the Uganda Health Information network. See here.

Strong arguments were made for the use of OM with projects involving multi-layered international networks. International networks are well suited to OM because they operate in complex and dynamic contexts where outcomes are not easily predictable (see section on Complexity and OM). International networks exist on several levels at once (National, Regional, International) and OM can ensure that the chain of change serves to strengthen all levels and not just the highest. In international networks OM is best applied from the perspectives closest to the bottom of the chain. That way OM processes provide direction about the roles and actions regional and international networks can play to support change at the local and national levels.

There are a number of OM applications in the education field. One presented on the OMLC is an education-related country programme in Zimbabwe (2008-2013) by the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation.

The programme, which aims to support teacher education with a focus on addressing the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children, is one of the most advanced examples of OM in the education sector. The programme includes an 'Organisational Learning' framework, and integrates Log Frame Analysis, in the OM design. There is an outline of the programme in the resource library, accessible by the following link: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=122

OMLC members shared some examples from around the world where OM is being applied outside of international development. Most of these examples were from the social development sector where behaviour change is a primary objective. There were potentially some advantages to applying OM in western contexts, particularly were planning for and monitoring change is understood as complex. However there are significant challenges. The main one being the lack of understanding, few if any case studies exist, and also a lack of appreciation for the importance of participatory evaluation. Since OM was designed to be used in a development context, it has been suggested that attempting to apply OM outside of international development may require revising the current training approach being used for project staff.

Willingness to apply a tool like OM is greater in the field of development cooperation, where the effort can lead to additional /continuous funding of the project / programme. There may be some interest in using OM to strengthen partnerships and collaboration amongst, for example, service providers but there is a lack of organizational commitment to utilizing resources (no funding for OM) and valuing OM results.

There is a need for well developed case studies in different sectors that explore the contextualisation and customisation that is needed to more effectively implement OM in areas outside of international development for which it was originally designed.

Ideas for further discussion

Members conclude that a theory of change is a required underlying motivation for social interventions and an important pre-requisite to apply OM. Interventions without aspiration to contribute to social change can opt for traditional cost/benefit methods to account for the funds spent.

In addition to the five themes discussed, the implementation of OM in a number of specific programs and projects were mentioned including: water supply and sanitation sector reform; emergency, relief and crisis recovery programmes; transitional justice and reconciliation; arts and culture programmes; climate change / behavioural change evaluation; literacy for women health and empowerment. There is now a strong case to be made for organizing a thematic section on the OMLC website to facilitate knowledge-sharing between similar types of projects.

There is not much discussion of evidence as yet being shared between practitioners working in the same fields or discussion of what is not working and why that might be. Implementation issues discussed tend to be at a general level. There is a need for well developed case studies in different sectors that explore the contextualisation and customisation that is needed to more effectively implement OM in areas beyond that for which it was originally designed.

2.3 Complimentary tools and approaches

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

When OM was designed, a set of tools were built into it which have proved to be sufficient for most purposes, but invariably people like to customise and tweak the tools to fit their purposes and contexts. Every part of the OM process has, at some time or another, been adapted in some way, usually by integrating other tools and approaches such as contextual analysis, stakeholder analysis, facilitation methods, self-assessment tools, data collection and reporting. The discussions during this period have touched on some of these areas and have contributed to the growing wealth of experience.

Different uses and users

OM has been adapted in different ways to suit different uses and users. One of the most common points of discussion on this topic is how to integrate OM with log frame approaches. The popularity of this discussion comes from the desire for implementing teams to use an approach that supports their desire to learn as they work while at the same time satisfying the monitoring requirements of donors and management. OM is often first recognised at the implementation level, by the programme officers or field staff, as a tool that they can use internally to embed learning and participation and explore the on-the-ground complexities. But at higher levels of programme management, the requirements from donors to use log frame approaches for accountability and reporting is often incompatible with the learning requirements of the implementing team as they are used by and speak to different people. There is a need to use both of these approaches – this is discussed in the previous community publication, *Making Outcome Mapping Work*, downloadable from the OMLC resource library: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=139.

The fundamental differences in the underlying logic of the two frameworks (OM being based on complexity while LFA is based on reductionism) make this task somewhat ambiguous. OM users have shared a number of approaches to address this challenge, some of which require careful planning and some of which just require a little persuasion. The extent to which the two approaches are integrated depends on the context. If an implementing team has settled on OM as an operational framework while at the same time requiring LFA as an accountability mechanism, then an integrated approach such as implemented by the St2eep and VECO programmes is needed. This approach requires significant planning and process of 'bricolage', a term used by one OM user to describe the complex process of building an integrated framework. A recent community publication deals with this topic directly: A conceptual fusion of the logical framework approach and outcome mapping: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=231.

On the other hand, if OM doesn't have to be implemented strictly, then it can be possible to embed OM thinking into the logic of the LFA – ensuring that the framework reflects real-world change processes. Building behaviour change language into the LFA can very easily achieve this, as well as being sensitive to the needs of the users – keeping it practical for the implementation team but strategic for management.

Another method that is becoming more and more popular for evaluation is the Randomised Control Trial (RCT). Commonly used in the health-care sector, RCTs involve the random allocation of different interventions to different target groups, and then analysing the different results. There is often conflict between this kind of rigorous, quantitative research method and softer, qualitative approaches such as OM. But some have suggested that the two could be complimentary as each contributes to a different kind of knowledge that can be used in different ways with different target groups.

The lesson here is that the use of the tool is more important than the choice of tool.

Context specific tools

Although OM was designed by IDRC to be used by their funded research programmes, it is clearly applicable in a much wider range of settings. However, experience from OM users has shown that OM can't and shouldn't be applied step by step blindly, but that it requires a process of contextualisation and thoughtful integration. Members have shared a wide range of tools that can be used as part of the OM process in specific contexts to give greater clarity and applicability in those situations.

In particular, the planning, monitoring and evaluation of networks has been identified as one situation where OM can be particularly useful if applied in the right way. Social Network Analysis has been identified as a complimentary approach that can be very powerful. When combined with OM, SNA can be used to track changes in relationships between members of a network. Another approach suggested was Value Network Analysis, which could be used to identify outcomes in the form of tangible and intangible 'value' that is generated or transferred by the network.

Other users shared tools that are specific to the thematic area in which they work, be that health, education, early childhood development or disaster risk reduction to name a few. One example is an outcomes tool that was developed for a parenting project in the UK which can be used as a substitute for the outcome challenge and progress markers tools in OM. A similar tool for mental health recovery was also shared.

Enhancing the process

OM users also identified a number of methods that can enhance the implementation process of OM. Different stages of the OM process require different skills and competencies so it can be very beneficial to have additional resources and references on hand as the process is carried out. Workshop facilitation has been identified as one area where it can be helpful to augment OM. A number of approaches were shared that can enhance the learning and reflection aspects of self-assessment workshops. Approaches such as 'open systems learning', 'dares' and 'Appreciative Inquiry' have all been suggested as useful for planning and monitoring meetings.

The data collection stages of Outcome Mapping have also been identified as rather weak and many people have been creative in the use of additional tools to aid the process. Most Significant Change can been used to collect stories of change, Lot Quality Assurance Sampling can be used to collect KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practice) data and social network analysis can be used to collect data on relationships among boundary partners and beneficiaries. Many OM users also create tailored data collection instruments based on the OM framework which can be used by team members to monitor multiple boundary partners using a common and pre-agreed template. Finally, the Alignment, Interest, Influence matrix can be used in planning stages to identify priority boundary partners to engage with and also as a communication tool to show visually how key actors are changing as the project progresses.

A recent community newsletter focussed on this issue:
http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=223

2.4 Communicating and Advocating for OM

Many of the contributions by community members are related to how OM is communicated to key stakeholders and project partners. Members have shared advice on two key issues: 1) advocating the use of OM to colleagues, managers or donors; and 2) supporting the use of OM by project team and partners. In both cases, there have been useful insights and experiences that can enhance the implementation process.

Making the case for OM

Because of the participatory nature of Outcome Mapping (OM) and the way the approach supports the work of boundary partners who often have low organizational capacity, certain types of development interventions are better suited to OM than others. To communicate and advocate for OM, there has to be an understanding of the development context and whether it lends itself to OM. For example, if you want to contract municipal authorities to build a women's community centre you may not need to use OM. If however, you want the various women's organizations to take ownership of the centre over time and run programs and services out of the centre, then OM is ideal. OM is one of the most effective tools to use when planning, monitoring and evaluating complex adaptive systems and situations that are constantly changing and this is a key starting point when advocating an OM approach as opposed to a linear one.

OM allows you to map the processes, events and actions of people, to reflect upon them and to have the evidence for development progress. Practitioners need to understand the strengths of OM such as: it embeds collaborative and participatory principles; it defines outcomes as behavioural change; it is able to capture current contributions to changes in knowledge, attitudes and actions. Once the strengths are understood, practitioners can sharpen their ability to communicate the strengths in response to development challenges at the community level. For example, in the context of a food program for victims of domestic violence, one challenge faced in identifying program outcomes was that the evidence being gathered was related to the number of women and their families using the food boxes each week and how many were reporting that they accessed other support services. Outcome Mapping presented an opportunity to capture how the food program was influencing the women's perceptions about their health and their ability to advocate for themselves with various agencies and make informed decisions.

To be effective at communicating OM, practitioners need to use examples and target their messages to their specific audience. The way to explain and advocate for OM with your project team is very different from the way you communicate about OM with funding organizations; and different again from what you do with your boundary partners.

The community members expressed a wish to collect presentations, exercises, language and terminology that OM practitioners have developed for different audiences (potential project partners, donors, peers with an interest, others wanting to adopt the methodology etc), as well as for communication materials for different purposes (training, informing, advising) and from different regions. Such resources will be beneficial for effectively communicating and advocating for OM.

Enabling use of OM

There is often a tension when introducing OM to a project team and/or partners between providing adequate OM training and 'getting the job done', i.e. planning the project and setting up M&E processes. Members have shared useful advice on how to get this balance right for different audiences and when and how to 'teach' OM.

Some members have found that partners don't necessarily need to know about the OM concepts and can experience the approach in an applied and practical way without explicitly being taught the methodology. For those who need to learn to apply the methods there are different opinions on the best communication approaches to take.

To introduce OM to people on your team who need to know how to apply the method, it is essential to use interactive exercises with practical examples and visuals to bring home the concepts. This way the project team are experiencing the concepts while they are also producing useful new thinking about their work.

Some members believe that formal presentations on the differences between OM and LFA are needed to situate the method for project staff. This is particularly true when a hybrid model combining OM and LFA is proposed for the project or program. Donors need a pitch that presents the concrete evidence generated by OM describing the specific contributions of the project to changes in boundary partners.

There are cultural aspects that affect how to communicate OM concepts. Terminology can be a stumbling block. In some cultures words like "boundary partners" are not well understood and terms like "influencing behaviour change" are not suitable. Phrases such as promoting "changes in practice" or "becoming more efficient, are preferred to "change in behaviour". It is important to contextualize the process before introducing OM and make sure it is relevant to the culture it is being applied to. Use of locally relevant examples is strongly advised.

Further support

OM is a different way of thinking about outcomes and about what makes good development. It is very important to find the best ways to communicate the underlying principles and concepts of OM. There are a number of resources that can assist with this:

- IDRCs resources and presentations available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

- OM in 3 minutes: a collection of tips from community members on how to communicate OM in just three minutes: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/download.php?id=18&sid=b125c54be9680fdb434c8457a46eb93c

2.5 Complexity and OM

Insights from community members have shown that the underlying principles of Outcome Mapping acknowledge and resonate very well with complexity theory. In particular, Outcome Mapping recognises: : 1) Large numbers of independent agents who interact in interdependent and unpredictable ways, 2) Diversity amongst the agents is necessary for adaptability and sustainability, 3) The relationships between the parts is more important than the parts themselves, 4) Power and control are distributed rather than centralised, 5) Outcomes emerge from a process of self-organisation and are thus unpredictable, 6) The relationship between outcomes and inputs is nonlinear.

Processes of social change are often recognised to be complex. In such complex processes, the relationship between cause and effect is difficult to assess or predict ahead of time. Traditional result based indicators assume this can be done at the planning stage of projects that deal with complex contexts. The use of such indicators will therefore not promote deeper learning about how social change is taking place and how the project is contributing to it.

Outcome mapping might be better placed to deal with complexity. Firstly OM´s focus on measuring success through behavioural change is more likely to capture the multiple dimensions of problems facing people. Secondly, OM shifts the focus towards the processes behind development, demystifying the 'black box' of social change and increasing understanding of the interactions and relationships that lead to development changes. Such an approach allows projects to learn about what works and what does not work and why. As such it goes much further than merely establishing if project X will deliver Y result. OM therefore offers a learning based approach which is likely to be more productive than a results-based approach in a context of continual flux and perpetual novelty as is the case when dealing with complex social systems.

Another helpful aspect from complexity theory for outcome mapping is the idea of positive feedback in attempting to facilitate behaviour change. The self-reinforcing aspects of behaviour (e.g. if some members of a community do it makes it more likely that others will do it as well), seem particularly relevant in working to help communities achieve greater results by working together than they would otherwise. This resonates very well with outcome mapping where progress markers help programmes to monitor the changes in behaviour and relationships of boundary partners.

The important lesson here is that complexity theory can provide OM practitioners with a conceptual framework that is able to unify and explain various aspects of development and OM practice which previously have been seen as ´common sense´ or ´lessons from experience.´ Examples of such aspects include: influencing and monitoring behavioural changes; the insights coming from looking at problems from the perspectives of the actors involved; the power of attempting to help those actors develop their own solutions to their problems; and the importance of taking a holistic view of the situation.

Complexity theory thus offers a scientific framework that OM practitioners can use to communicate the realities of working on the ground in development that often seem to fail to filter through to the higher echelons. In other words, complexity theory can help OM practitioners to develop a stronger argument about why outcome mapping provides a much more suitable approach to deal with complex social processes and complex adaptive systems than the more dominant linear planning methodologies such as the Logical Framework Approach.

For further reflection on this, see a recent community newsletter which focussed on this issue: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=203.

Other link

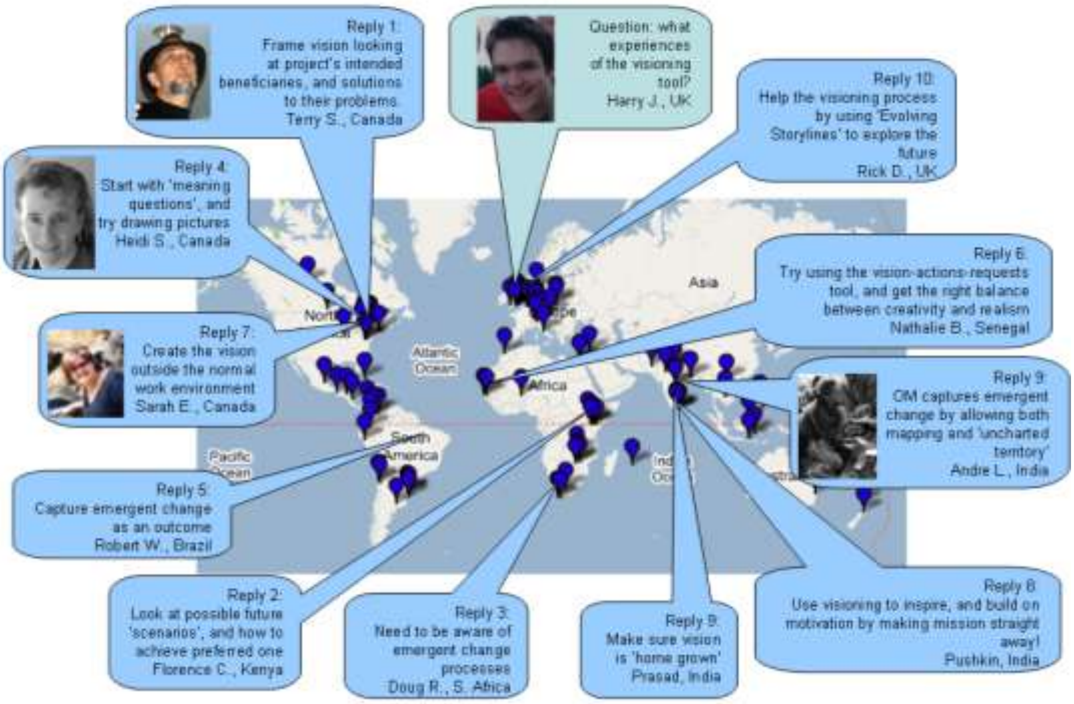
http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/files/READING_LIST_-_Complexity_science_s__and_social_change_organisations_204.doc

3 Discussion summaries

3.1 A structured look at OM: Vision

Prepared by Harry Jones

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=125



Original Email

Harry Jones, UK, 21st May 2007

In the recent OM knowledge exchange, there was a useful suggestion made that we have a more structured discussion of the OM steps/stages. Discussing each element of the OM framework should give practitioners the opportunity to ask questions, share lessons and experiences, and discuss any issues they may have encountered. If we look at each part individually it will help direct our conversation so that it is suitable both for newcomers to OM and the more experienced users.

To get this discussion underway, I suggest we start with a look at the Vision Statement, and see how much we can learn from our collective experiences over the next week or so.

The OM manual says the vision reflects the large-scale development-related changes that the programme hopes to encourage, and describes the changes that the programme hopes to bring about, as well as broad behavioural changes in key boundary partners. The creation of a vision is important because it provides a focus, purpose and direction for planning development projects. It gets us to ask the question "how would we like the future to evolve?", to help us answer the question "what should we do now?".

What experiences do community members have of using the 'visioning' tool? What has worked well, and what hasn't? And if you are a newcomer, what are the burning questions you have about the "vision" step?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Terry Smutylo, Canada
Florence Chege, Kenya
Harry Jones, UK
Doug Reeler, S. Africa
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
Robert Walker, Brazil
Nathalie Beaulieu, Senegal
Sarah Earl, Canada
Pushkin, India
Andre Ling, India
V L Prasad, India
Rick Davies, UK

Summary of Responses:

1. Terry Smutylo contributed a new angle on visioning, from his collaboration with the Thai Health Promotion Foundation this year. This involved framing the vision statement by looking at the situation faced by a project's intended beneficiaries, focusing on the solutions to their well-being, and the behaviour of the actors which influence these solutions. He attached a graphic illustrating the exercise (http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=118)
2. Florence Chege shared her experiences from environmental projects in the Horn of Africa, in which she used a visioning tool with groups to explore alternative future scenarios (albeit with more of a focus on practical outputs such as planting trees). They looked at the pros and cons of each scenario and then assessed what needed to be done to achieve the preferred vision.
3. Harry directed members to Terry's graphic, briefly recapped the discussion so far and urged other members to share their experiences.
4. Doug Reeler posed a question relating to whether OM is suitable in situations where development "programmes" were not the best vehicle for change. He argued that change can involve emergent processes that are hard to predict or plan in advance. In these contexts, the key element of development practice is for those working on a project to share core values and principles (rather than planned outcomes), and while planning is also important, the outcomes that emerge 'along the way' are often the most powerful. While this aspect of development projects could be structured as an Outcome to suit donors, Doug worries that this may be to 'add on' an important components rather than 'building it into the fibre' of a project.
5. Heidi Schaeffer shared her experience of using Terry's new perspective on visioning, she found it particularly useful to go through intentional design in a short amount of time while clearly distinguishing the 'ultimate beneficiaries' of a project from its boundary partners. While using this tool, it is important to ensure that the 'inspirational' part of visioning is not lost. Heidi then shared tips from her experience with visioning work. Starting a group off discussing the meanings of important terms such as "the environment" and "behaviour change" allows participants to be connected with their core values and beliefs before attempting to create a vision. She has also found that getting groups to draw vision pictures is useful, because it is a more creative activity. A group vision statement can be woven from the common themes in the various pictures.
6. Robert Walker shared his experiences of monitoring and evaluating projects in Brazil aimed at the productive inclusion of youth. Echoing Doug's suggestion, his team defined an

outcome to capture the emergent nature of change. He also feels that it is important to include log frame style 'impacts' while planning, to ensure the outcomes generate real change.

7. Nathalie Beaulieu introduced herself, and shared a tool based on visioning, called 'Visions – Actions – Requests'. It involves workshop participants reflecting on their vision for a preferred future, on what they can do themselves to achieve it, and what they need to request from others to achieve it. This is done in small stakeholder groups, then results are shared with other groups, and often one group's 'request' matches with another's 'action', and vice versa. She has found two common problems while facilitating visioning exercises: participants can either be too realistic (pessimistic) or unrealistic (optimistic) with their wishes. She finds that guiding them through visual processes, and suggesting they imagine their wishes were granted by a supernatural entity (e.g. the Virgin Mary), can help. Nathalie feels that this tool would serve as a useful approach with which to introduce OM, and will be sharing her experiences of using it this way soon.

8. Sarah Earl shared the suggestion that the vision statement should be created outside the normal work environment to encourage different thinking.

9. Pushkin has found that visioning is an important element often left out of projects. A vision statement is useful to motivate and inspire boundary partners with realistic thinking. She argued that the visioning exercise should be immediately followed by the mission statement, in order to build on the motivation and inspiration that come from the visioning process.

10. Andre Ling replied to Doug's questions about whether OM is too 'restrictive' to facilitate emergent change. He feels that the idea of 'mapping outcomes' emphasises the fact that outcomes can be charted onto a blank space, working in uncharted territory. Andre is currently working on an action-learning project with pre-schools in Rajasthan, India, using an adapted version of OM, where the progress markers have been "reduced greatly" to reflect broad categories within which change can happen. Another way of allowing for the unexpected 'emergent' changes is to revisit progress markers, outcome challenges and the vision on a regular basis. He feels that this shows that OM can be sensitive to emergent change, and that Doug's issue may be lass with the tool itself and more the way it is sometimes applied.

11. Prasad introduced herself and explained her experience so far with OM on water sanitation reform programmes. She suggested that it was imperative to nurture a vision that was 'home grown' by facilitating learning sessions with locals.

12. Rick Davies suggested community members see his recent posting about a tool called 'Evolving storylines', useful for visioning processes, on his blog.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward:

- Visioning helps to crystallise the purpose and direction of development projects. This can be especially important with regards to 'emergent' change processes, that are hard to plan for in advance: in these situations, projects may be better guided according to shared values, principles and purposes (rather than planned outcomes), and these can be built into a project with a vision statement.

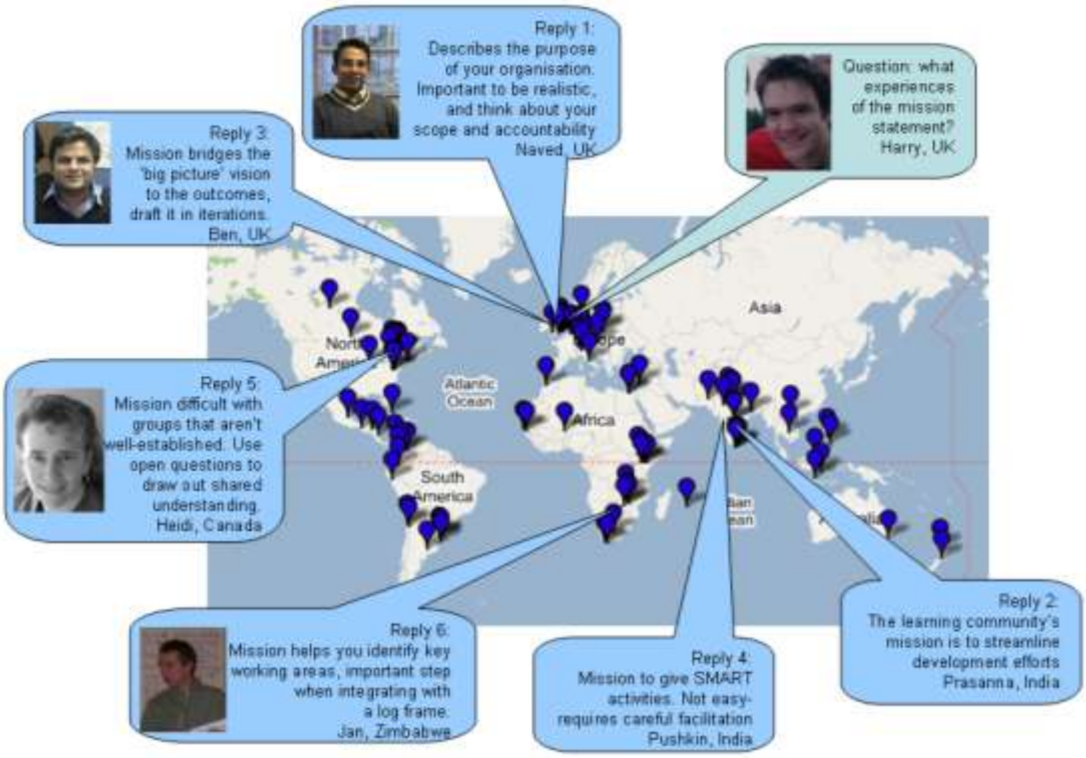
- When facilitating a visioning exercise it is important to achieve the right balance between creativity and realism- it is often hard to get communities or colleagues to think outside the realities of everyday life, and it is also hard to ensure that you don't go too far in the other direction, listing unrealistic and unreachable expectations. Some ways that community members have addressed this issue include using visual processes such as drawing vision pictures, and conducted visioning outside the normal working environment.

- It can be beneficial to introduce the vision statement with reference to other parts of OM (such as Terry's method using the relationship between the project, boundary partners and the ultimate beneficiaries of the project), or using other tools (such as Nathalie's vision-action-request tool, or Rick's 'evolving storylines).

3.2 A structured look at OM: Mission

Prepared by Harry Jones

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=129



Original Email

Harry Jones, UK, 5th June 2007

> Thanks to everyone who contributed to last week's discussion on the Vision Statement. I will be uploading a summary of that discussion to the learning community website in the next few days.
>
> During that discussion, Pushkin suggested that "the visioning exercise should be immediately followed by developing the mission" in order to build on the inspiration and motivation that come from the development of a vision statement. I think that it would be useful to follow this idea, and continue our structured discussion of OM by looking at the Mission Statement over the next week or so.
>
> The OM Manual says that "The Mission statement describes how the programme intends to support the vision", identifying "the areas in which the programme will work toward the vision", describing how it can best contribute to achieving it.
>
> What are your experiences of planning for and using the Mission Statement? Are there any practical tips for facilitating the creation of a mission statement, and how to use it to shape your work? And does anybody have any burning questions about this part of Outcome Mapping?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

> Naved Chowdhury, UK
> Prasanna Kumar, India

Harry Jones, UK (2 contributions)
Ben Ramalingam, UK
Pushkin Phartiyal, India
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
Jan van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe

Summary of Responses:

1. Naved Chowdhury said that a mission statement describes the overall purpose of your organisation. It follows on from the vision by asking "okay this is our dream, how do we contribute to that?". He thinks that it can be a good motivational tool, although some missions can be too idealistic, or unrealistic. He has found developing a mission statement culture-specific and time-consuming. He offered some tips- when creating a mission statement it is very important to respect the views of all participants and to consider the organisation's accountability to the people it serves. It is also important to think carefully about the scope of your mission, and what makes your organisation's role unique.

2. Prasanna Kumar shared his thoughts about the mission of the OM learning community. She emphasised the importance of M & E to development, through its potential to identify underlying causes of underdevelopment and streamline work.

3. Harry Jones summarised the points made so far and asked other if members had any experiences or questions to share.

4. Ben Ramalingam shared the experiences of the RAPID team, who formulated a mission as part of using OM to inform the group strategy. He felt that it was useful to finalise the mission through iterations: they drafted the mission, then worked through the boundary partners, outcome challenges and progress markers, and then revisited the mission and revised it based on what they considered to be the key contributions they could make. Ben believes that the mission statement acts as a 'bridge' between the 'big picture' of the vision statement and the outcome challenges you want to contribute to in your priority boundary partners. He feels that it is one of the most straightforward steps of the OM process.

5. Pushkin Phartiyal thinks that the mission statement is an important process to transform the collective thinking from the vision process into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) elements, for the real world. Because of this, he disagreed with Ben's suggestion that it is straightforward. He thinks that it is a difficult task to assist the group to think realistically and requires good facilitation. He shared his experiences from an exercise he undertook with a women self help group in a remote mountain village for income generation activities. After creating a vision about possible enterprise activities, the group had to be informed by insights from the project staff into the economics of products and market competition.

6. Harry Jones asked whether members agreed with Ben, who has found it quite straightforward to 'bridge' the vision and outcome elements with a mission, or Pushkin, who felt that in many contexts, it is a challenging and nuanced task to inject some realistic thinking after 'dreaming' up the vision statement.

7. Heidi Schaeffer felt that the mission statement was difficult when working with a group that is not well-established or clear about what they do or what they want to do. In these contexts, she uses a strategic planning approach to flow from the vision to the mission. It involves getting the participants to answer questions such as "what can I do to contribute to the vision", "what can we as a group do", and "which groups can we work with directly to contribute maximally to the vision?". This helps the group construct clear ideas where there is shared understanding.

8. Jan van Ongevalle argued that while the vision allows a group to get consensus on the overall direction of a programme, the mission was helpful to 'get back to reality', and get an idea of the key working areas for the project, and of useful boundary partners. The mission is also an important element in trying to integrate OM and logical framework requirements: the realistic working areas identified help the formulation of 'intermediate result areas', and of SMART indicators, as required by logframes. Jan added that the mission was important because while the vision is something that boundary partners should contribute to, the mission guides the programme to look at the strategies which it should take. This helps give a group insight into how far removed from the eventual beneficiaries a programme is.

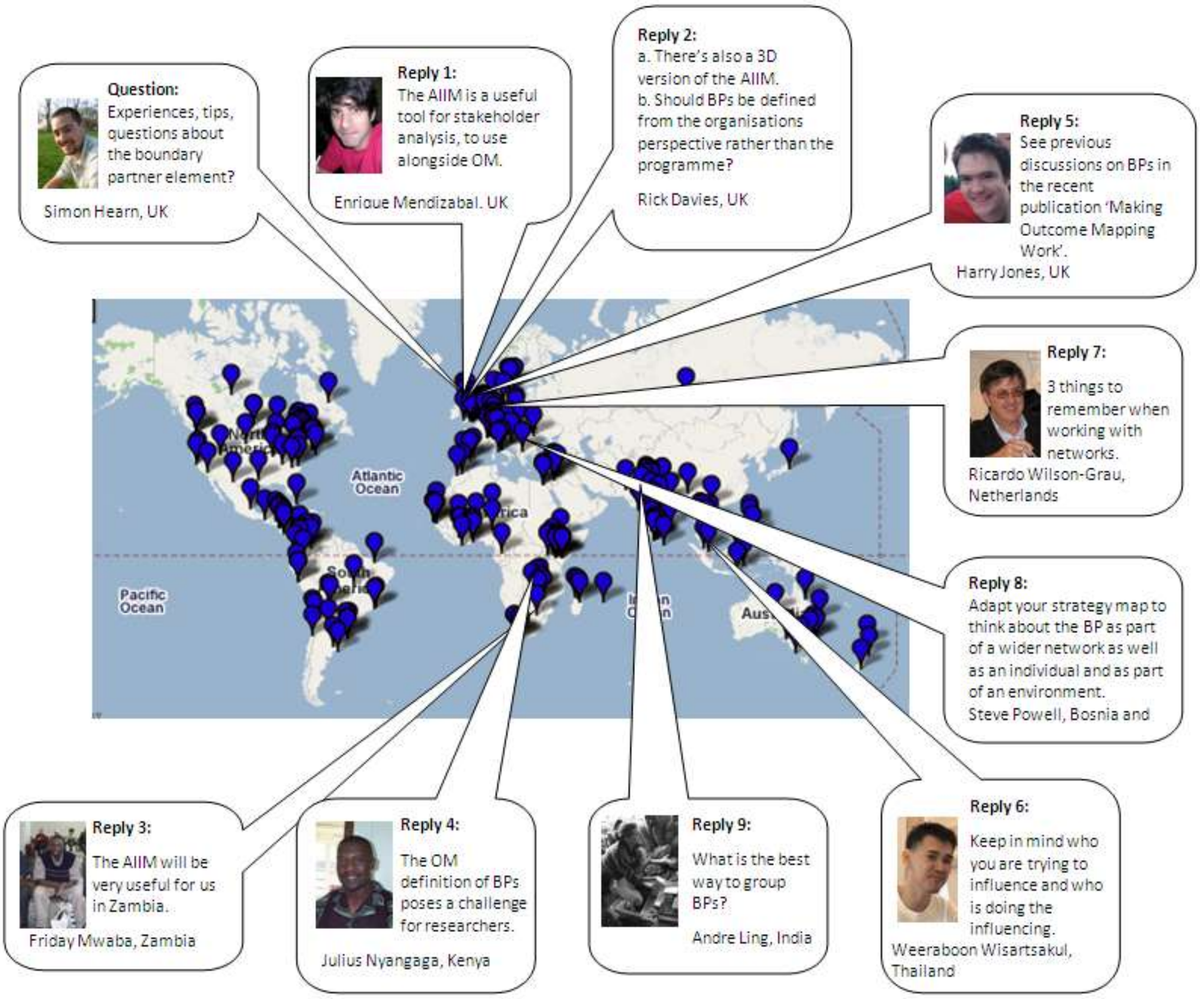
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward:

- The mission statement element of OM injects some realistic thinking after a group has gone through the 'collective dreaming' of the vision. It should allow you to identify key areas to work in, and understand your organisation's particular role to play in achieving the goals you've set.
- To draft a mission statement, it's important to think about what makes your organisation unique, your accountability to the people you serve, the appropriate scope of your responsibilities, and to look for SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) activities. It can be useful to iterate the steps from the mission statement to the progress markers to refine them.
- In some contexts it can be challenging to draft a mission, particularly where a group is not well established or is not clear on its aims. This needs careful facilitation, and can be helped using other tools such as Heidi's strategic management techniques.

3.3 A structured look at OM: Boundary Partners

Prepared by Simon Hearn

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=158



Original Email

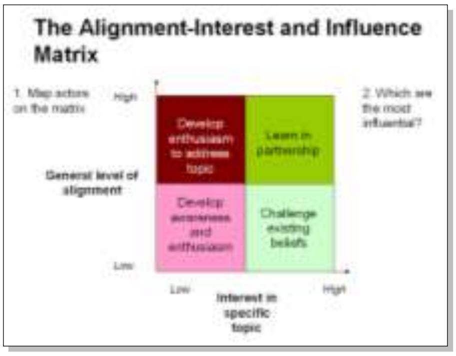
Simon Hearn, UK, 10th October 2007

> A while back we started a series of discussions centred around the 12 steps of OM. We first looked at Vision (Harry Jones produced a summary here: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=119), we then looked at Mission (http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=120).
>
> We're going to kick off the new season with a discussion on step 3 of OM: Boundary Partners.
>
> The OM Manual says "Boundary partners are those individuals, groups, or organisations with whom the programme interacts directly and with whom the programme can anticipate opportunities for influence". What are your experiences of applying the Boundary Partners element of OM? Are there any tips for identifying boundary partners, and how to shape your work around them? Does anybody have any burning questions about this part of Outcome Mapping?

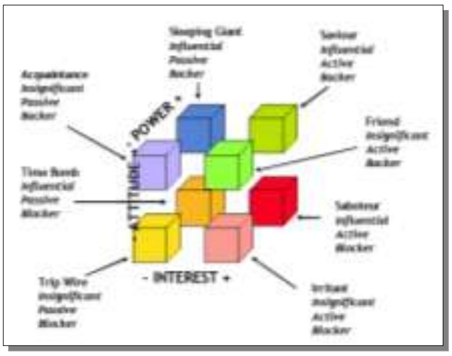
Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

[Enrique Mendizabal](), UK
[Rick Davies](), UK
[Friday Mwaba](), Zambia
[Julius Nyangaga](), Kenya
[Harry Jones](), UK
[Simon Hearn](), UK
[Weeraboon Wisartsakul](), Thailand
[Ricardo Wilson-Grau](), Netherlands (2 contributions)
[Steve Powell](), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2 contributions)
[Andre Ling](), India (2 contributions)

Summary of Responses:



1. Enrique Mendizabal offered a simple stakeholder analysis tool used by RAPID, called the AIIM (Alignment, Interest, Influence Matrix). It has been found to be useful for identifying boundary partners and gives an idea of the kind of work that needs to be done and how challenging it could be. For more details about the tool and guidelines on how to use it see the resource uploaded by Enrique: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=135



2. Rick Davies took this idea further by directing the community at a three dimensional version of the AIIM developed by Ruth Murray-Webster & Peter Simon in their 2006 publication “Making Sense of Stakeholder Mapping”: http://www.pmforum.org/library/tips/2006/PDFs/11-06-Lucidius.pdf.

   Rick also raised the issue that defining boundary partners from the perspective of the programme, as stated in the manual, is a problem since programmes are often very complicated and it is often uncertain as to who is in the programme and who is a BP of the programme. Rick suggested that it would be easier to operationalise if BPs were defined from the perspective of the organisation.

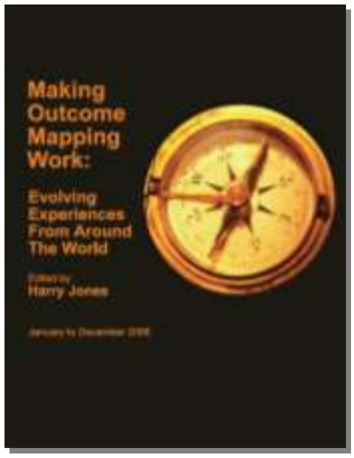
3. Friday Mwaba shared his experience of working with partners in Zambia and immediately saw the potential of using the stakeholder analysis tools described above to make the job of partner selection easier.

4. Julius Nyangaga contributed to the discussion a short article about BPs from the researcher’s approach (http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=136). His premise for the article is that the researchers work in a different way to development practitioners and that the OM definition of BPs presents a challenge for researchers using the method to plan their projects. Namely,

   a. researchers are reluctant to engage with other actors during the design phase;

   b. researchers often fail to see the value in measuring behaviour change of BPs and look straight to changes in beneficiaries.

   In the article, Julius shares his experience working with research teams applying OM and some possible ways of understanding and applying the concept of boundary partners.



5. Harry Jones linked back to previous discussions on this forum and quoted from the recent publication 'Making Outcome Mapping Work', a collection of discussion summaries from the first year of the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=139). The discussions were about the importance of BPs as a concept in OM and some concerns about whether this concept constrains the way the project/programme works.

6. Simon Hearn responded to Rick Davies comment on perspective and on defining whether a particular actor is a BP or part of the programme. He gave a couple of recent examples where this problem has posed a challenge and asked for experience and advice from other members.

7. Weeraboon Wisartsakul shared a few ideas about how the Thai Health Promotion Foundation dealt with this challenge. They focussed on whose behaviour needs changing and who has the influence to change it. In some cases Thai Health are influencing their grantees to change, in which case they would be an internal BP. But not all grantees are BPs. In other cases grantees, together with Thai Health, are influencing other people or organisations to change; these would be external BPs.

8. Ricardo Wilson-Grau made three recommendations from his experience working with international social change networks:

    c. it is wise to constantly re-assess the boundary where control ceases and influence begins;

    d. internal or organic outcomes are a necessary complement to changes in external social actors;

    e. intense monitoring of boundary partners and the changes in their behaviour, relationships and actions is more important than planning or evaluation.

9. Steve Powell added an alternative approach dealing with the challenge of networks as BPs which arose from work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and treats BPs as individuals and systems at the same time while planning strategies for both. The idea is to add a third row in the strategy maps table called *system* or *group* placed between the *individual* and *environment* rows.

10. Ricardo Wilson-Grau agreed that the distinction between groups and individuals is helpful to think about in network situations because you often want to influence the network staff or representatives as well as the network members. But he didn't find it helpful to think about systems as BPs in this context because systemic changes are usually changes in state or environment and OM isn't concerned with measuring these.

11. Steve Powell agreed with these points and suggested sticking with the *groups* title. He also suggested, as an alternative to the adaptation of the strategy maps, that the individuals and the groups can be treated as separate BPs.

12. Andre Ling wanted further clarification on this adaptation of the strategy maps. He questioned the addition of the *group* row, suggesting that an *organisation* row would also be needed for completeness. He also offered some advice about thinking in terms of *system.* Firstly, that it's useful for seeing the big picture of how the 'totality of everything contained in the OM framework' is functioning. Secondly, that the complexity of reality is not lost when systems are used to create 'models'.

13. Andre Ling also had a question about applying the BP element of OM in a community development project in India that he is involved in. He wanted advice about how to group BPs and whether a sub-group ('particularly active citizen leaders') should be treated as separate BPs.

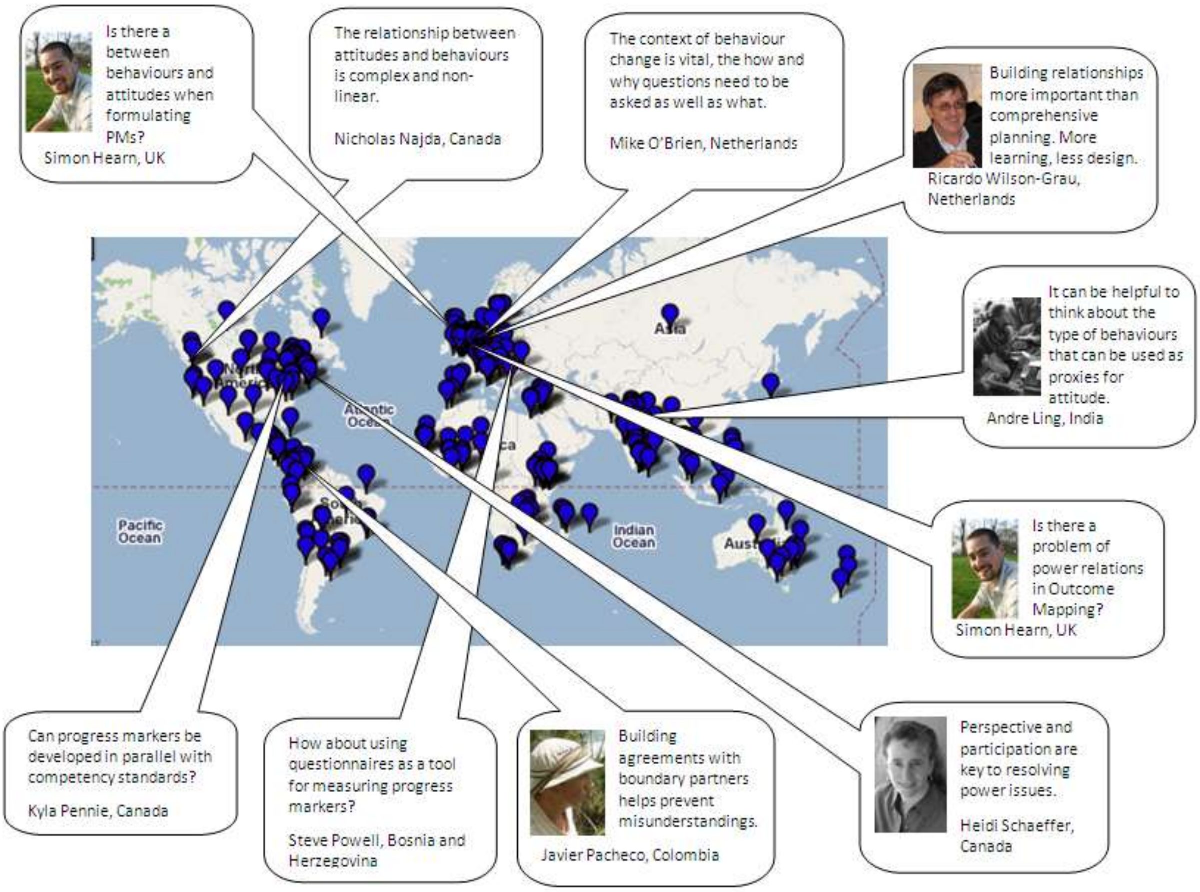
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward:

- The concept of boundary partners is one of the ways in which Outcome Mapping really sets itself apart from other approaches. It forces you to recognise the limits of your influence and to think realistically about whom you want work with to affect change.
- The crucial thing to remember with Outcome Mapping is perspective. When identifying boundary partners, you have to put yourself in the picture at a specific point and define BPs from that point.
- Outcome Mapping is robust and flexible enough to allow it to be adapted and applied to a wide range of contexts. The boundary partner element often needs careful thought at the beginning of the project to ensure it works in the specific context - e.g. researchers, networks.
- It can often be beneficial to undertake a comprehensive stakeholder analysis to complement the boundary partner step. There are additional tools to aid this process.
- The question of how best to group boundary partners has yet to be answered.

3.4 A structured look at OM: Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers

Prepared by Simon Hearn

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=276



Original Email

Simon Hearn, UK, 21st April 2008

> We're starting a structured discussion today on Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers. The discussion will last for three weeks, which is actually not that long, so please contribute whatever you can, whenever you can. This could be a great opportunity for some of our newer members to probe the expertise of the wider community.
>
> The discussion will be informal – no question is too simple and all comments or points of view are valuable – so please don't hold back. What I'll do is start with a question that will hopefully get the ball rolling, but please do ask your own questions if you have them.
>
> Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers are all about behaviour change. They help us to visualise what our boundary partners will be doing differently if our programme were to be extremely successful. For some people this focus on behaviour could be a stumbling block as many people often think in terms of attitude. They could argue that a change in behaviour may not be sustainable and what actually counts is the resulting change in attitude. For example, a public servant can change their behaviour is a very superficial way in order to gain respect, by saying the right things in their speech for instance, but it's only when their attitude to a particular issue changes that a sustainable outcome can be obtained.

Has this conflict between behaviour and attitude come up in your conversations? In what contexts is it particularly critical?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Robert K. Walker, Brazil
Nicholas Najda, Canada
Andre Ling, India (2 contributions)
Wouter Van Damme, Belgium
Ricardo Wilson Grau, Netherlands (3 contributions)
Michael O'Brien, Netherlands (2 contributions)
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
Gonzalo Romero, Bolivia
Javier Pacheco, Columbia
Garth Graham, Canada
Terri Willard, Canada
Simon Hearn, UK
Steve Powell, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Julius Nyangaga, Kenya
Abass Kabiru Olatubosun, Nigeria
Kyla Pennie, Canada
Sana Gul, Pakistan
Jan van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Andre Proctor, South Africa
Weeraboon Wisartsakul, Thailand

Week one summary

After a very active first week of this discussion, a summary was made that tried to cover all the main points:

The question posed was one of attitudes versus behaviour in how we describe the changes we want to see in our Boundary Partners. Many of the contributions challenged this distinction. Our approach needs to have a 'dual compliance structure', taking into account both normative and utilitarian and recognising the spectrum of cognitive processes that are involved in any kind of social change. It has also been suggested that the relationship between attitude and behaviour is not always linear and positive – the two are distinct yet interconnected in a complex way. This highlights the need for grounding any kind of change in the context in which it is occurring; the question of how and why have to accompany what kind of change we are looking for.

In terms of how we measure change, we focus on behaviour as it gives a useful proxy of attitude, which is harder to measure. Perhaps a more robust proxy is intention based on i) attitude to behaviour, ii) subjective norms and iii) perceived behavioural control.

There is a resounding concern among the contributors that the language of OM implies a 'power' relationship between 'the programme' and 'the agent of change' which could be interpreted as patronising and controlling. Communication is key here: Softer language could be used (support, facilitate, assist instead of influence). A focus on modifying policies and practices rather than changing beliefs, thoughts, feelings or challenging competencies could be more constructive. The power problem becomes less of an issue if the perspective of the change is clarified, and if it is originating from the vision rather than the mission. Firm agreements can ensure the ownership of the change is clearly in the domain of the Boundary Partner rather than the programme.

Summary of individual responses

1. [Robert Walker](#) suggested that attitudes and behaviours often exist side by side in a dual compliance structure of normative and utilitarian outcomes. He highlighted the importance of identifying a project's strengths and weaknesses in terms of these two types of outcome.

2. [Nicholas Najda](#) reminded us of the complex, non-linear, relationship between attitude and behaviour and that often they are two independent entities with differing influences. He also brought up the question of power – to what extent can a system influence an individual's behaviour or attitude and to what extent can an individual act in accord with their attitudes while existing within the confines of the system they are living in?

3. [Andre Ling](#) reframed the question from one which conflicts attitudes and behaviours to one which asks what kind of behaviours can be considered as suitable proxies for attitude. He also raised the point that behaviours are more interesting to measure than attitude as they represent systemic transformation.

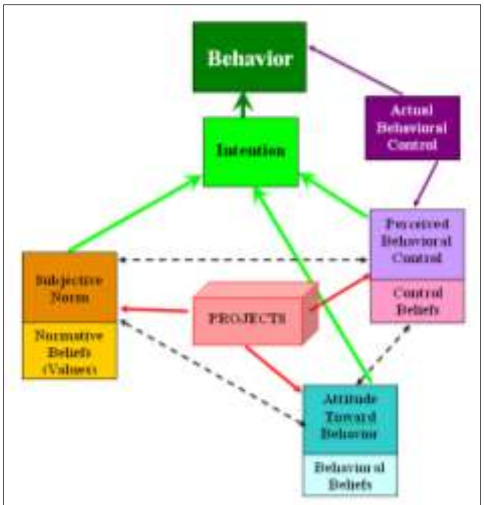
4. [Wouter Van Damme](#) pointed us to [Blooms taxonomy](#), which describes a spectrum of cognitive processes which can help us define what we mean by behaviour and attitude (see right).

5. [Ricardo Wilson-Grau](#) highlighted a few challenges he has faced in working with a large global network. The language used in OM was problematic for many non-English speakers. Particularly the use of the term 'influence' which implies a power relation. Softer words like facilitate, support and assist have been found to be friendlier. Focussing the outcome challenge on new or modified policies and practices rather than on beliefs, opinions, feelings or competencies can also help to avoid the power problem. There is, though, always an unavoidable danger of patronising our boundary partners.

6. [Mike O'Brien](#) discussed the common temptation to treat progress markers as a simple checklist rather than a self-evaluation, reflection and learning tool. He suggested that a deeper understanding of the behaviour change processes could prevent this misuse. In particular, by considering behaviour change in the context in which it occurs and deepening our understanding by asking ourselves how and why the change takes place.

7. [Ricardo Wilson-Grau](#) posted again with a note about the balance between M&E design and M&E implementation. He suggested that there was a tendency to spend a lot of effort on the intentional design phase, planning in detail the changes sought rather than on the agents of change themselves. A light and imaginative intentional design will allow more time to be spent building relationships, ensuring participation and frequent monitoring, learning and adjustment of the strategy.

8. [Heidi Schaeffer](#) shared her experience with intentional design and the importance of perspective and strong participatory processes. She argued that the problem of power, and particularly the feeling of paternalism, shouldn't be an issue if the OCs and PMs are developed from the perspective of the partner and tied to the vision rather than the mission. And if strong participatory processes are in place to support the partner in articulating their beliefs, attitudes, and vision then the OC becomes a self-created picture for the partners to see where they are heading and the PMs become a road map of



transformational change that will help direct the support of the programme.

9. Gonzalo Romero shared his thoughts on the 'economics of behavioural change' in a short article. He suggests that *intention* could provide a more accurate proxy of behaviour. In his model (see right), intention is a function of three other influences: the attitude towards the behaviour, the subjective norms and the perceived control over the behaviour change.

10. Javier Pacheco contributed his thoughts on the necessity to build *agreements* among the boundary partners in order to proceed in a mutually convenient way and to support the changes envisioned by the partners. He emphasised the need for partners to own the direction of change and the strategies and to understand the relation between the two.

11. Garth Graham commented on the trend in the discussion so far to focus on behaviour change among individuals. He suggested that this didn't reflect the intention of Outcome Mapping, which is to measure how learning changes the collective behaviour of systems. He posed a new question to the community; what progress markers have boundary partners identified to indicate that shift from individual behaviour change to system behaviour change?

12. Terri Willard replied to Ricardo's first post with a comment about the difficulty for networks to identify boundary partners and progress markers. She suggests that this could be indicative of a wider problem that many networks get caught up in information sharing and networking can easily lose sight of how/why and organization might use the information or contacts as part of a broader development change process.

13. Mike O'Brien noted that many of the contributions had emphasised the importance of relational and reflexive activities such as partner engagement, connecting emotionally, inspiration, feelings, visioning and dialogue-based monitoring. He highlighted the fact that such activities require a lot of time and energy investment and are difficult to maintain. He asked what the limitations were and how they have been overcome. He also suggested that along with the too little of this type of activity, there could be too much and that a point of diminishing returns could be met.

14. Andre Ling contributed a number of points about learning in a social context. One of the strengths of Outcome Mapping, he states, is its evolutionary nature with built in multi-level feedback loops that stimulate a 'reflexive' culture. Performance evaluations, in relation to progress markers and vision, can help maintain the dynamic balance between reflection and action. But ultimately, if learning and reflection is built into the programme, as opposed to focussing on target-based programming, then the programme will be able to focus more on quality, innovation, creativity and partnerships.

15. Simon Hearn came back to the topic of power with the following post:

    As we continue our discussion on Outcome Challenges and Progress Markers this week, I just wanted to throw a few things in.

    Many of you touched on the issue of power last week and this has come up many times before in conversations and in workshops. I just wanted to explore this issue a bit further in the context of describing behaviour changes though OCs and PMs.

    Do you agree that there is a problem of power relations? Either in the sense that OM engenders (or is perceived to engender) a paternalistic or controlling nature or that there's a risk of partners feeling patronised by the process.

    Is this an issue of language as suggested by Ricardo? Perhaps OM needs to be contextualised and made more culturally sensitive. Or maybe, as Ricardo says, a certain amount of patronisation is inevitable.

Or is it a matter of perspective as suggested by Heidi? That there shouldn't be a risk of paternalism if we truly build the OCs and PMs from the perspective of the boundary partner, not from the perspective of the 'programme' and the interventions it is planning.

We all want to see our boundary partners changing, transforming, and developing in some way. And we recognise the need to describe these changes in order to focus and prioritise our efforts. But we also want to empower our partners by ensuring they have ownership over the changes. How can this balance best be achieved?

16. Garth Graham pointed out an important principle when talking about power, or empowering; that acculturation works in both directions. In a complex, dynamic, self-organising system, the programme is not external to the system but rather a part of it and therefore the ability of a programme to empower is imagined.
17. Andre Ling commented that power relations will always be a problem in some way in social change contexts and group processes. Many of the problems are enshrined in the identity, biases and preconceptions of the facilitators and the group members themselves. He reiterated the need for deep, open, inclusive and participative dialogue between the various partners about their own desired behaviour changes and their own visions. '*Thinking in terms of power 'with' rather than power 'to' or power 'over' probably makes for a more flexible and creative approach to modelling the change process which encourages the dissolution of the problem of power relations as engagement proceeds*.'
18. Mike O'Brien asked for a particular example of this type of 'problematising'.
19. Ricardo Wilson-Grau states that it is only useful to identify boundary actors and formulate outcome challenges. The unpredictability of the environment in which they work, as well as their own complexity, openness and dynamism, means that going further to identify progress markers is an unhelpful intellectual and mechanical exercise.

Splinter conversations

Out of the above conversation two other discussions emerged.

A) Questionnaires as a tool for measuring progress markers

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=273

1. Steve Powell described an approach he recently applied where he used likert-surveys to monitor the progress of the boundary partners in terms of the progress markers – how far along the road of behaviour change are they. He was interested in hearing any feedback about this approach and whether anyone has any similar experiences.
2. Julius provided some concrete examples of the type of questions that could be useful to track progress in terms on knowledge, attitude and practice.
3. Abass Kabiru Olatubosun mentioned that UNICEF Nigeria is doing a similar KAP survey for the evaluation of a hygiene promotion programme.

B) Progress markers versus competency based training

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=280

1. Kyla Pennie shared an interesting problem she recently came up against when planning a capacity development programme for community development practitioners that sat alongside a formal, long-term training programme. There was a confusion between progress markers for behaviour change due to the wider programme versus competencies exhibited as a result of the training. She asked for advice on how to distinguish between the two and how best to graduate the progress markers while being sensitive to the mix of transformative changes and practical skill development.

2. Sana Gul replied with a similar experience and suggested that practical skill development markers were ‘like to see’ and the more transformative changes were ‘love to see’.
3. Jan Van Ongevalle commented that clearly defined boundary partners – whom the programme aims to influence and is able to monitor – may clear up the confusions. He mentioned two instances where BP clarity has helped and he uploaded an M&E plan for a five-day life skills training event which features a set of progress markers to facilitate the monitoring of longer-term training outcomes.
4. Andre Proctor suggested that competency standards and progress markers are different things. The competency standard is simply a tool that you can use to measure whether the outcome has been achieved. The progress markers could include whether a certain level of competency has been reached but they could also include many other indicators such as constituency feedback.
5. Weeraboon Wisartsakul shared a similar experience he was involved in where the training workshops were seeking ‘inner change’. This type of change was very hard to measure in terms of progressive behaviours. He asked whether anyone has a similar experience.
6. Andre Proctor added that in the case of community development practitioners, there is a need to build soft ‘inner qualities’ as well as hard competencies and skills. Good practitioners need to be effective animators, facilitators, mobilisers and drivers of new attitudes, understandings, behaviours and actions in others. But how can these qualities be certified? He suggests that practitioner effectiveness can be read in the relationships they build, the energy they mobilise in others, the creativity and innovation they inspire and in the real sustainable differences in community well-being that flow from these.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

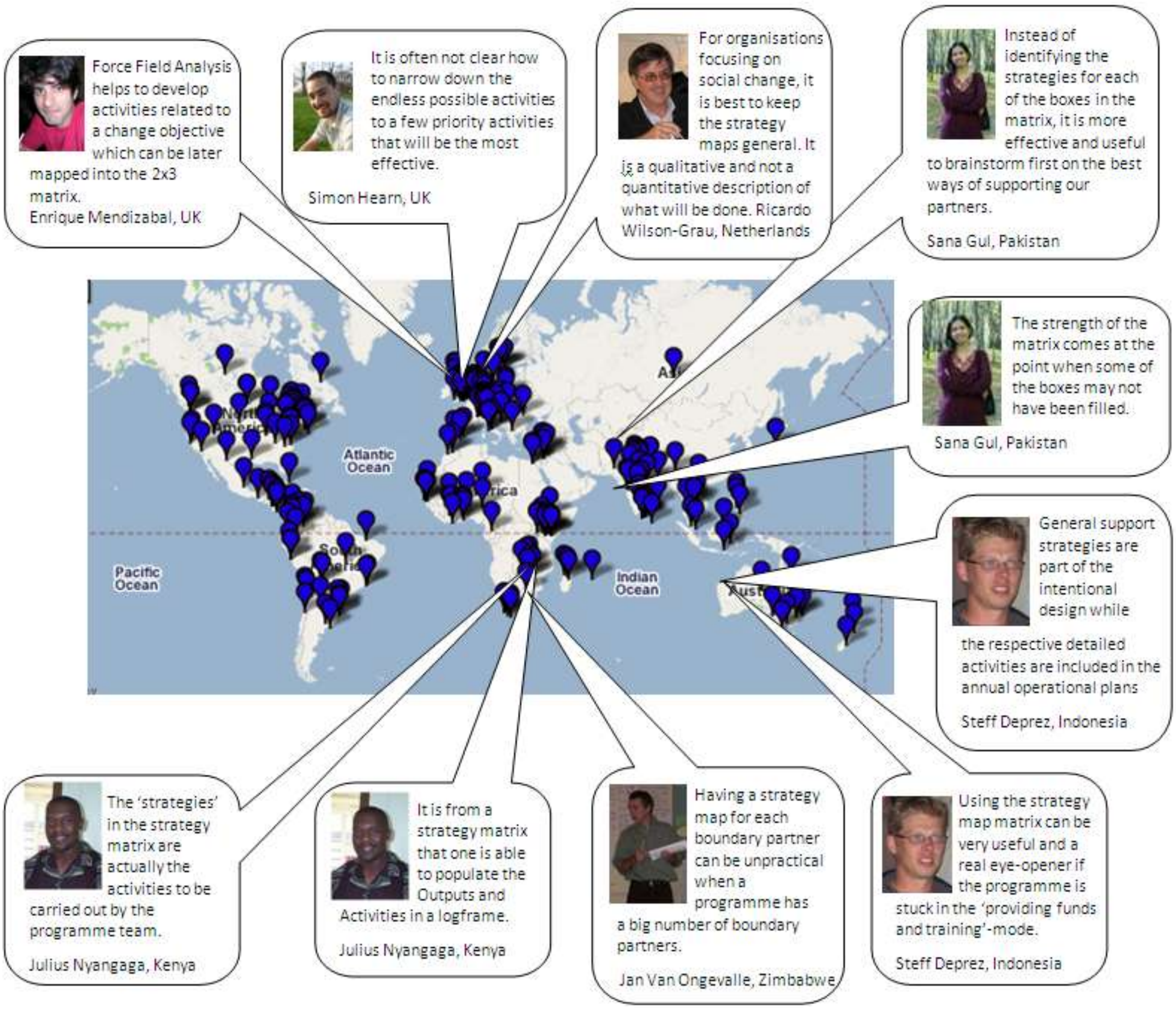
- The question of attitudes versus behaviour stimulated a very interesting discussion. The contributors commented both on the difficulty to measure attitudes and unhelpfulness of attitudes when thinking about systemic transformation. There were also worries that explicitly aiming to influence attitudes could result in power problems and that partners would be more cooperative if the changes explicitly being sought were practical rather than fundamental.
- The contributors very quickly identified that the relationship between attitudes and behaviours is complex and non-linear and that they exist simultaneously as part of a more diverse spectrum of cognitive processes. Different projects have different needs in terms of the level of change they are trying to influence, but ultimately it is behaviours that need to be measured; often as proxies for deeper changes.
- The power problem raised some very good, and very practical points. Stronger agreements and participatory processes can help smooth partner relations. OCs and PMs that are from the partner’s perspective and focussed on the vision should negate any paternalism. ‘Programmes’ have to recognise that they are part of the system and therefore are learning and interpreting from the ‘partners’ just as much as the other way round. Thinking in terms of power ‘with’ rather than power ‘to’ or ‘over’ should help to dissolve the problem of power.
- Points for further debate include:
    - What progress markers have boundary partners identified to indicate the shift from individual behaviour change to system behaviour change?
    - Are there any examples or cases where the power issue has been problematised in a project?

- Are there any further thoughts or examples of using questionnaires to monitor progress markers?

3.5 A structured look at OM: Strategy Maps

Prepared by Simon Hearn

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=289



Original Email

Simon Hearn, UK, 21st April 2008

For the next three weeks we'll be looking at step 6 of the OM methodology: Strategy Maps (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28388-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html#page-61).

So, you've identified your boundary partners and formulated your outcome challenges; now you need to figure out how you can contribute to the achievement of these outcomes. The Strategy Map tool was designed to do just this. It helps programmes clarify the approach they will take and is particularly useful for developing a balanced strategy. See the OM manual (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28388-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html#page-61) for a complete description of this tool.

One of the most common comments I hear about the strategy map tool is that it doesn't map strategies at all, but that it is aimed at the level of activities. Does this indicate confusion in how best to use this tool? How have you found it useful in your work? How have you integrated it into your planning process?

Please feel free to comment on these points, or bring up your own points related to strategy maps.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Julius Nyangaga, Kenya
Sana Gul, Pakistan
Ricardo Wilson Grau, Netherlands
Enrique Mendizabal, UK
Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Simon Hearn, UK
Martin Bunch, Canada
Steff Deprez, Indonesia

Summary of individual responses

1. Julius Nyangaga mentioned that the 2x3 matrix offers one of the most powerful spaces to be creative and innovative in identifying ways of supporting a partner. However, he added that the strategies are actually the activities that a team will carry out. Calling them strategies could be quite confusing when the team has just gone through a strategic planning. It is from a strategy matrix that one is able to populate the Outputs and Activities in a logframe. The matrix is also helpful as a way of thinking of how to support the translation of a project's outputs to outcomes and from outcomes to impacts. It fills in the gaps between quantifiable deliverables (project outputs) and desired qualitative outcomes and impacts.

2. Sana Gul focuses on some of the practical challenges of identifying and categorising strategies with a team. It is suggested that teams first brainstorm on what could be the best ways of achieving the OC's, translate this into activities and then to define the strategies behind those activities. After this, strategies are put in the respective sections of the 2x3 matrix and empty sections can be used as a trigger for further identification of new type of strategies.

3. Ricardo Wilson-Grau suggests that for multi-annual plans strategy maps outline the general approach to influence the boundary partner, i.e. a qualitative description. Strategies for annual plans can be more detailed on what will be done, where, by whom and how much budget is required. However, in either case, Ricardo concludes that for programmes focusing on social change, it is best to keep the strategy maps general, light and flexible.

4. Enrique Mendizabal states that there is a big gap to jump from progress markers to strategy maps. He finds it very useful to use Force Field Analysis before using strategy maps. Force Field Analysis assists in developing strategies (activities related to a change objective) which can then be mapped in the 2x3 matrix to identify overlapping strategies and check the right balance between individual (I) & environment (E) support strategies as well as between causal, persuasive and supportive strategies.

5. Jan Van Ongevalle experienced that developing strategy maps for each boundary partner can be unpractical especially if the programme has a big number of boundary partners. He used elements of the programme's logframe to address this challenge. After the 'normal' strategy map exercise, they combined strategies from the multiple boundary partners into one strategy framework aligned with the intermediate result areas of the logframe. It resulted in a smaller list of strategies, dealt with overlap between various activities, avoided fragmentation of the programme and assisted in budget monitoring.

6. Martin Bunch comments on Field Force Analysis as a very useful way to identify specific relationships to address, but not necessarily to identify strategies to address these

relationships. It provides insights into "restraining forces" that might be transformed into "driving forces", not simply dealing with a relationship by removing a barrier.

7. Simon Hearn reinforced a previously mentioned idea that it is a common problem to move from the outcome challenge to the strategy map and that it is often not clear how you narrow down the endless possible activities to a few priority activities that will be the most effective at contributing to the outcome challenge.

8. Steff Deprez experienced that the 2x3 matrix can be a real eye-opener if a programme is stuck in a 'providing funding & training'-mode. When OM is used for programme design and monitoring, Steff takes an approach whereby the intentional design of the programme (multi-annual) is focusing on the general support strategies while the respective activities are included in the annual operational plans (incl. budget). It implies that the strategy maps are determining the structure of the annual operational plans.

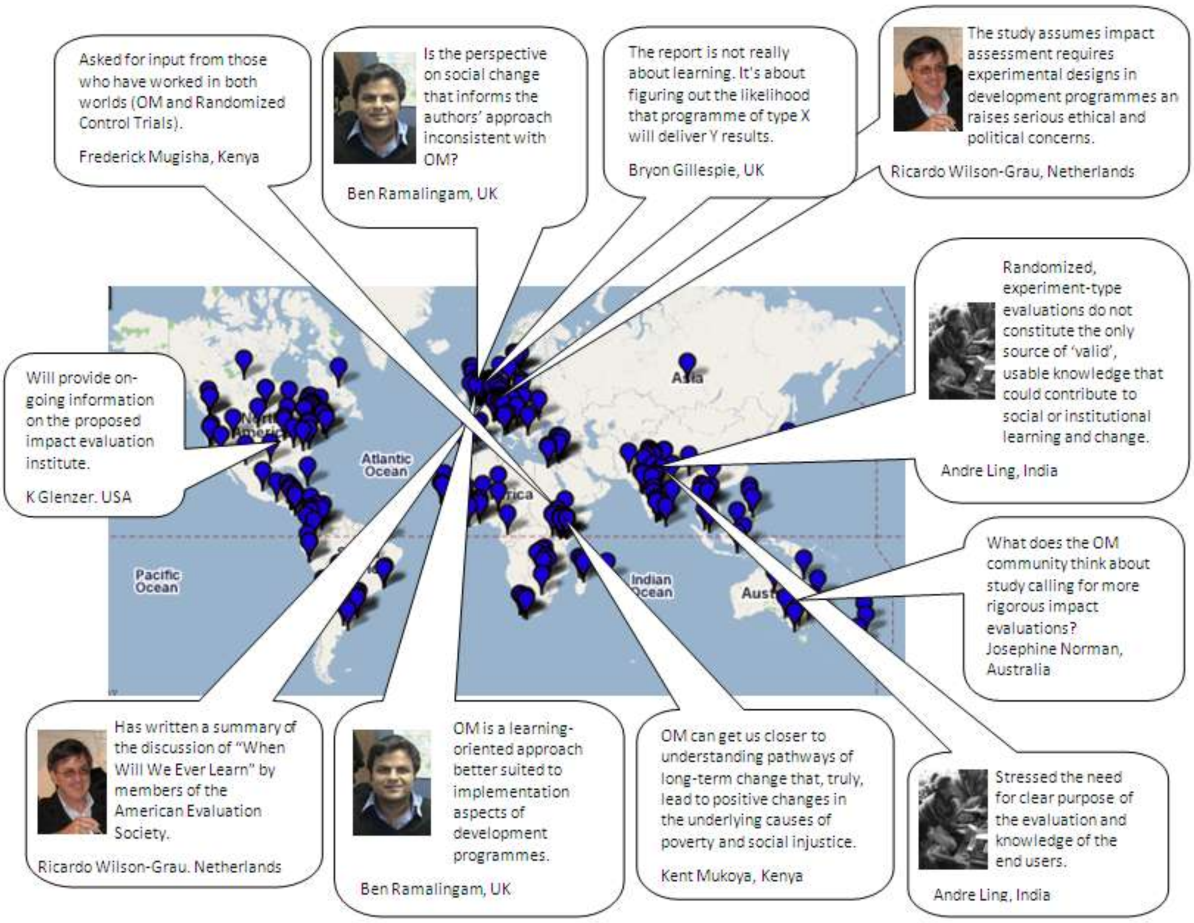
Remarks and actions to take forward

- Contributors in this discussion highly appreciate the use of the 2x3 strategy map matrix. It is seen as a great tool/approach for analysing existing strategies and the identification of creative & innovative strategies in support of partners.
- Depending on the context and realities of the programme, people seem to have different perceptions on how detailed the strategies should be formulated. It can range from detailed activities (including information on what is done, where, who and respective budgets) to very general strategies. Over-all, it can be concluded that for multi-annual plans, general strategy maps are recommended while for annual plans more detailed activities are required.
- Contributors seem to be creative in the way they use strategic maps in programme design exercises. Before developing the strategy matrix, people use other approaches such as Force Field Analysis, brainstorm, …
- Strategy maps seem to have some 'connecting' possibilities with the logical framework. Contributors mention the linkage with the activity and output level of the logframe as well as the possibility of aligning strategies with the intermediate results in the logframe.
- Interesting issues for debate could be:
    - Further discussion on strategies vs activities in strategy matrix. How do we define strategies and activities for use in strategy maps?
    - How do we best facilitate the step between progress markers to strategy maps? Is it indeed a non-straight forward step? What are practical tools and approaches to be used?
    - How do we deal with the monitoring of strategy maps in programmes with a big number of boundary partners? What are the implications of combining strategy maps into one set for all boundary partners?

3.6 "When Will We Ever Learn"

Prepared by Heidi Schaeffer

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?p=356



Original Email

Josephine Norman, Australia, 9th January 2007

Hi all,

EVALTALK (the listserv of the American Evaluation Association, EVALTALK@BAMA.UA.EDU) has just started a discussion on a recently released report by the Center for Global Development calling for more rigorous impact evaluations.

http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/7973

I'm interested in the response to this from the OM community. Was anyone on this list involved in the process?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Netherlands
Ben Ramalingam, UK (2 contributions)
Andre Ling, India (2 contributions)
Frederick Mugisha, Kenya
Kent Mukoya, Kenya
Bryon Gillespie, UK

Kent Glenzer, USA (2 contributions)

Summary of individual responses

1. Ricardo Wilson-Grau explained the importance and conclusions of the study. The purpose of the study is to establish an impact evaluation council with four functions: Establishing quality standards for rigorous evaluations; Administering a review process for evaluation designs and studies; Identifying priority topics and Providing grants for impact evaluation design.
2. Ben Ramalingam talked about theories of change and pointed out that the continual reference to randomized trials suggests a very particular perspective. Ben asks if the perspective, that programs are ineffective until proven to be effective with specific data (experimental design), is consistent with OM?
3. Andre Ling thoughtfully detailed a number of challenges with the study. He talked specifically about the importance of organizational learning and the link between generating knowledge and converting it into action. He believes that the OM approach to evaluation can increase understanding about how broader social change can be brought about.
4. Frederick Mugisha asked for input from those who understand the relative strengths of both OM and randomized control trails to evaluate an intervention designed to enhance secondary school transition in the slums of Nairobi.
5. Andre Ling stressed that the objectives and users of the evaluation should guide the methods used. In some cases, Outcome Mapping and Randomized Control Trials can complement each other as each contributes to a different kind of knowledge that can be used in different ways with different target groups
6. Kent Glenzer talked about his role in reviewing findings from the study in an effort to form an evaluation institute dedicated to improving evaluations in development. Kent invited anyone in the OMLC who is interested in the ongoing deliberations around the establishment of an evaluation institute to send him a message.
7. Bryon Gillespie concludes from all of the comments shared that the study is not really about learning. He believes it is designed by and for people who prefer brief, hard-boiled accounts of what a particular programme delivered and how likely it is that the programme can be credited for bringing about those changes, preferably expressed quantitatively.
8. Ben Ramalingam makes a distinction between the different skills, knowledge and tools which might be needed at the conception stage of a social development project, compared to those needed at the implementation phase. He argues that Logframe and Randomized Control style approaches are best used for the contractual aspects of development programmes, while OM and learning-oriented approaches are better suited to implementation aspects.
9. Ricardo Wilson-Grau offered a summary of the debate and discussion of the study by the American Evaluation Society.
10. Kent Glenzer shared a message from William Savedoff recapping a recent meeting of the group set up to develop the proposed evaluation institute. William Savedoff is the leader of that group, called "the leading edge group", that are developing a charter for the proposed institute. The main points coming out of the 3 day meeting were shared and further information is available from kglenzer@care.org

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

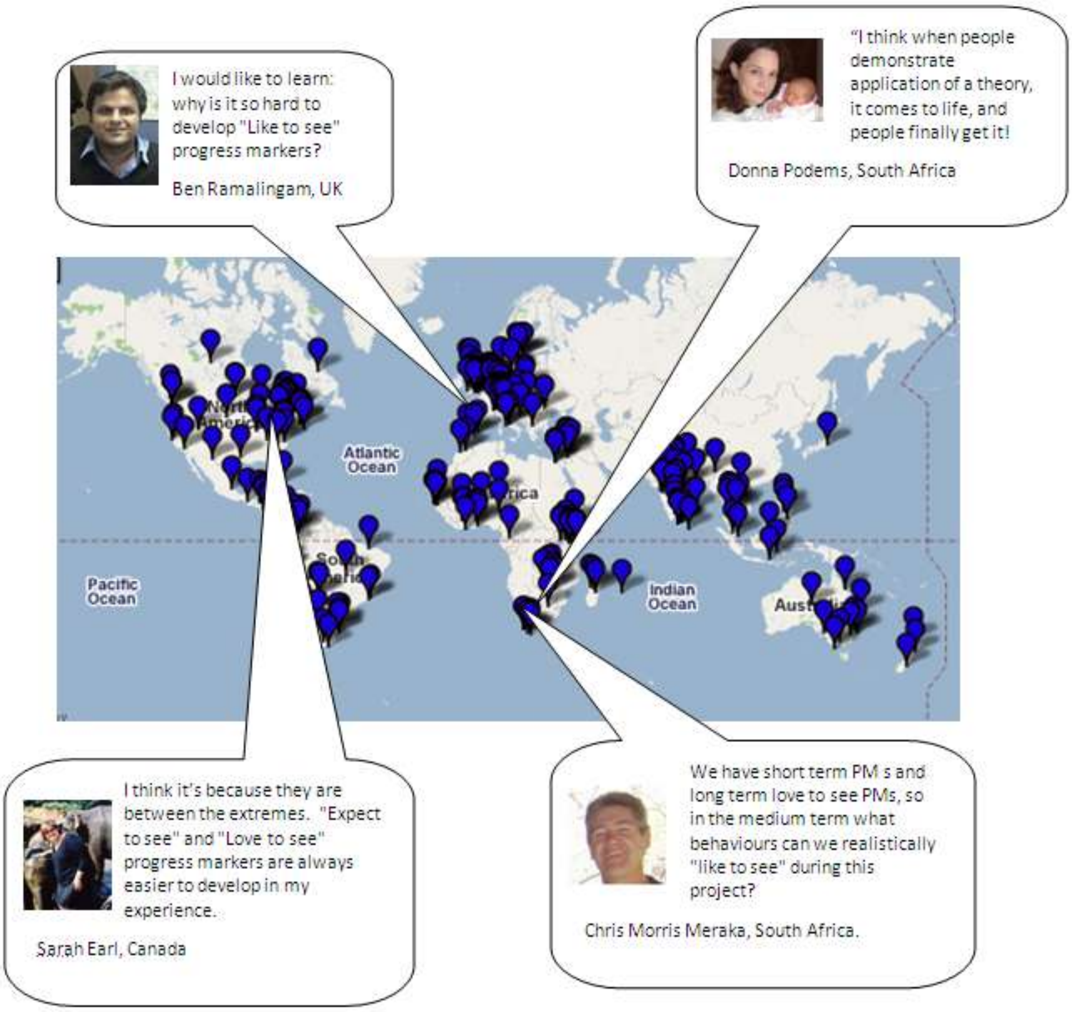
- This is important work to follow and participate in because it could very well lead to a shift in the standards for development planning, monitoring and evaluation for years to come.

- Kent Glenzer is a contact person and part of the group to develop the International Institute for Impact Evaluation
- Some important recommendation were contributed by members including:
    - There are different purposes and end users that should guide the evaluation approach taken.
    - Different methods contribute to different knowledge needs. One approach can't do everything.
    - Hybrid models that connect logframe with OM can bridge the gap between outputs and outcomes in social development.

3.7 High Speed OM in Bhutan: One thing to share and one thing to learn

Prepared by Kate Graham

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=90



Original Email

Ben Ramalingan, UK, 27th January 2007

I am currently in Bhutan for the launch of Phase II of the IDRC Pan Localization Project, which works to develop and disseminate IT tools in Asian languages. It brings together researchers, NGOs and universities in 10 countries across Asia (see www.panl10n.net for more details). I have just delivered a 1.5 day high speed course on OM, in order to introduce OM and to initiate plans to take OM forward within country-level projects. I applied many of the lessons from the "2 Day OM course" discussion we had last year - it really was very useful!

Sana Gull (another member of the community and full-time OM person on PAN Localization) and I will be sharing emerging lessons as they come through, and asking you for feedback and ideas. But based on the discussions we have had, there is one I would like to share, and one thing I would like to learn.

I would like to share: the idea of treating the strategy map as an spectrum, enabling you to place activities relative to each other on a progression from Causal-to-Persuasive-to-Supportive, rather than a grid. This makes it much easier to place chosen strategies relative to each other, could make people feel less uncomfortable about those strategies which straddle the lines. They can still have the all-important discussion about the balance of activities relative to the progress markers.

I would like to learn: why is it so hard to develop "Like to see" progress markers?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Sarah Earl, Canada
Chris Morris Meraka, South Africa
Donna Podems, South Africa

Summary of individual responses

1. Sarah Earl suggests that it is difficult to develop "Like to see" progress markers because they are between the "Expect to see" and "Love to see", which are much easier to identify. The "Like to see" markers are critical as milestones, the changes in behaviours you want to focus on. This can require hard decisions, and some groups can get bogged down in discussing the order of the "like to see" progress markers (i.e., this change would come before that change, etc). The order doesn't matter at the planning stage. In the monitoring or evaluation, when the changes actually happen, you can collect data on what the behaviours were, why they happened, how, what influenced them, etc. and then it is interesting and important to look at the sequence of change.

2. Chris Morris Meraka brings in time scale: he reports that his experience in developing Progress Markers (P.M.s) is start with the "expect to see" and develop some of the immediate short term P.M.s. They then move to the Outcome Challenge for the Boundary Partner and "dream the dream" - what are the associated behaviours we would love to see from this partner if the project was really successful? Having established the immediate short term PMs and the love to see long term dreams, we can then ask, in the medium term what contributing behaviours (to the Outcome Challenge/Vision) can we realistically "like to see" during the life of the project? This recognises the fact that behavioural change can be long term and one does not always achieve the love to see PMs during the life of the project.

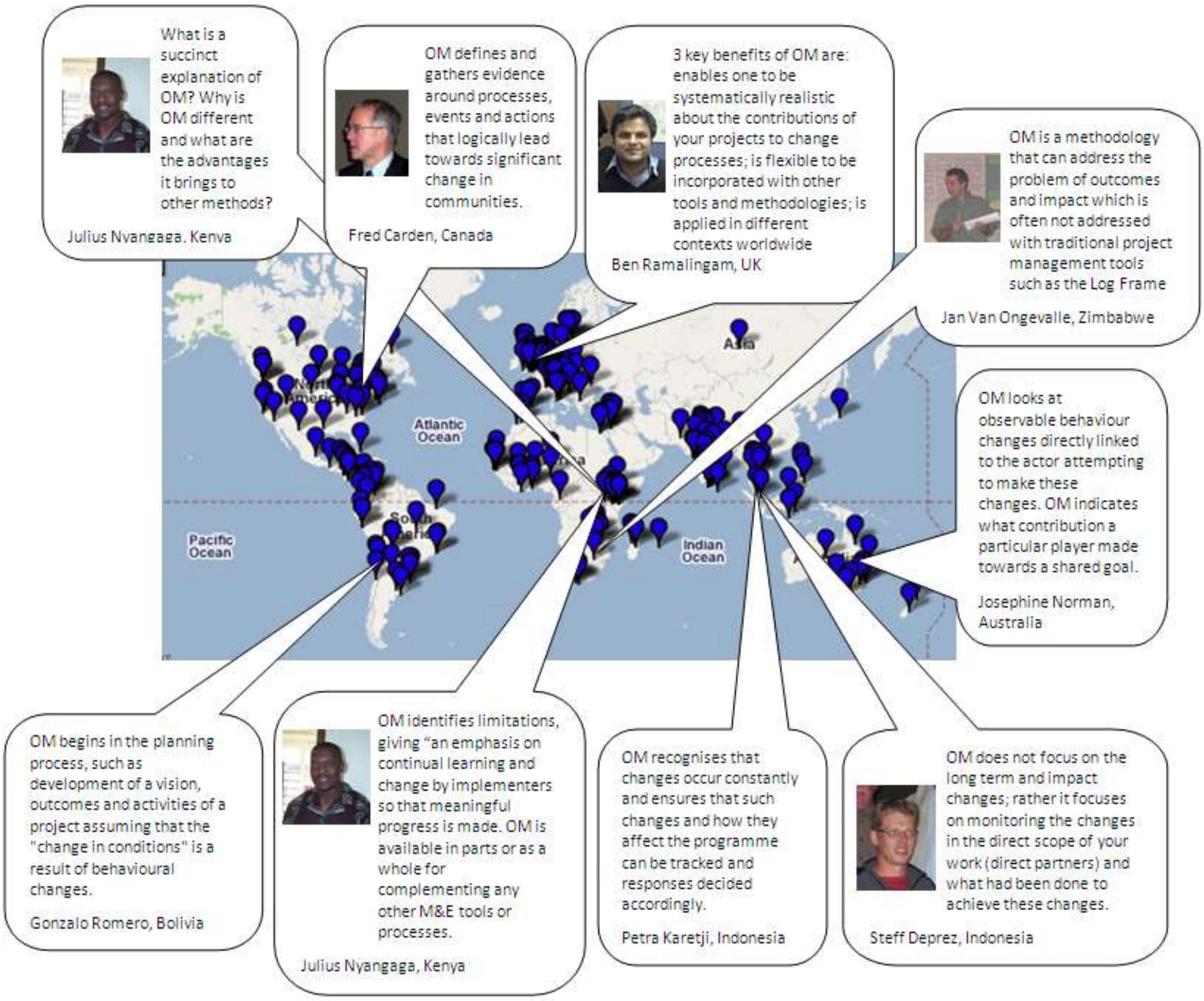
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

Working out the extremes of the desired changes is relatively straightforward, if people will dare to dream. It is the middle bit however which is key, as these are the changes that you are most likely to see in the project lifetime. Having a clear vision from the "love to see" ensures that these middle markers are seen as steps on the way rather than becoming the project outcomes just because they are achievable.

3.8 What is Outcome Mapping in 3 minutes?

Prepared by Sharon Low

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=91



Original Email

Julius Nyangaga, Kenya, 5th February 2007

Many times this question has popped up when least expected, or when one is least prepared to give a satisfactory answer. It happens quite a number of times, for example during a completely un-related planning or training meeting. You are suddenly asked to explain what Outcome Mapping to people who may never have heard of it or are only vaguely familiar with the term. A recent example was during Michael P Quinn's Utilization-Focussed Evaluation workshop at the AfrEA Conference when about two dozen of us stood up and gave as many versions, which – according to Michael – did not quite give justice to what OM brings to the field of P, M & E.

In many cases, the question is directed to you because have had rather fundamental training and probably one who leads its application. And many times – without the aid of no PowerPoint, or reading notes, in a space of less than five minutes – you are only required to give a brief definition or explanation, why it is different and what advantages it has over other methods.

We are asking community members to suggest words and lines or whole accounts that should be given in that brief space giving the definition, explanation and/or unique features of Outcome Mapping in ways that will justifiably describe the approach and attract interest for more details. An explanation that is short but (borrowing Terry's favourite) "…. sexy enough to attract 'a date' for details".

What do members have to say? Tell us, what is Outcome Mapping?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Julius Nyangaga, Kenya (2 contributions)
Josephine Norman, Australia
Supakorn Buasai, Thailand
Ben Ramalingam, UK
Mustapha Malki, Egypt
Fred Carden, Canada
Olivier Ralaiharivonison, Madagascar
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
Petra Karetji, Indonesia
Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Steff Deprez, Indonesia
Gonzalo Romero, Bolivia
Kevin Ireland, UK

Summary of individual responses

1. Julius Nyangaga asked how individual could explain OM in 3 minutes, stating its unique features and what advantages OM would bring to other methods.
2. Josephine Norman explained that OM focuses on observable behaviour changes that are directly linked with the actor making these changes, uses directional markers to show progress and shows the contribution a particular player made towards a shared goal.
3. Ben Ramalingam explained that OM can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate social development projects. Firstly, determine the vision and mission of the programme. Secondly, identify the individuals and groups the project works directly with. Thirdly, focus on hoped-for changes in the behaviours, attitudes and relationships. These changes are used to map the milestones in the change process. Next, the programme develops a map of the activities which will contribute to the changes. Then, the programme focuses on its own organisational practices and the requirements to become an effective agent of change. 3 key benefits of OM are: enables one to be systematically realistic about the contributions of projects to change processes; is flexible to be incorporated with other M&E tools; is applied in different contexts worldwide.
4. Fred Carden shared his OM presentation at the AfrEA conference. He explained that OM is a methodology for planning, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. It focuses on defining and gathering evidence around processes, events and actions that lead towards significant change. It monitors change when it occurs. Change is ongoing and needs to be mapped and reflected upon to have the evidence for development progress.
5. Heidi Schaeffer suggested opening up the discussion by asking how OM is explained in our own context when asked. What stories can be shared from actual experiences.

6. Petra Karetji shared that OM is a method with tools to identify these different groups and individuals affected by the change process. It systematically plans and tracks changes. If the changes move positively, they are recorded as indicator of success. However if negative responses occur, these are also recorded and adjustments are made to the project approach. OM recognises that changes occur constantly and ensures that such changes and how they affect the programme can be tracked and responses decided accordingly.
7. Olivier Ralaiharivonison explained that understanding of OM philosophy means to differentiate between to be and to have. Boundary partners (e.g. the people and the organisation) control the change. Both boundary partners and the programme need tools to measure the progress to their vision.
   The process of change is more important as the product of change.
8. Jan Van Ongevalle drew reference from Michael Patton's explanation. According to Patton, OM is a methodology that can address the problem of outcomes and impact which is often not addressed with traditional project management tools such as the Log Frame. He quoted from 2 sources: "State-building: Governance and world order in the 21st century" (Fukuyama; 2004) where Fukuyama argued that donor organisations are often responsible for the destruction of institutional capacity instead of capacity development. Often, the direct provision of services by the donor undermines the local government's capacity to provide those services once the aid programme terminates. Fukuyama emphasised that donors ought to choose capacity-building as their primary objective rather than the service provision that the capacity is meant to provide. According to USAID review (2001) of basic education reforms in five African countries, the reform policies targeted at building factories, using blueprints, rather than farms, using seeds, fertiliser, soil and weather, such that the system would function more or less mechanically when in place. However, case studies had shown that whether the activities thrived or failed depended on how well farmers nurtured each reform during the implementation phase. OM provides a methodology to avoid possible pitfalls along the way.
9. Steff Deprez explained that OM is based on the idea that development programmes are realised through local partners and they are crucial for fulfilling programme aims. OM does not focus on the long term and impact changes, rather it focuses on monitoring the changes in the direct scope of your work (direct partners) and what had been done to achieve these changes.
10. Gonzalo Romero described OM as a method to plan development projects emphasising on "change of human behaviour and its relations". This emphasis begins in the planning process, such as development of a vision, outcomes and activities of a project assuming that the "change in conditions" is a result of behavioural changes. OM has a built in model for monitoring, evaluation which includes outcome and organisational performance.
11. Kevin Ireland expressed that the use of an outcomes framework requires one to ask fundamental questions, such as what changes is one seeking to achieve? Where is one with regards to the change? Where is OM taking the programme? And how does one get there?
12. Julius Nyangaga gave a summary of the responses. OM is a tool, a methodology or an approach to project planning, monitoring and evaluation. OM focuses more on immediate social changes the project wishes to initiate or establish; changes which are meant to influence the desired impacts. Once a project's vision and mission are defined, the approach focuses on expected changes in the behaviour or social structures of boundary partners. Then the project develops a wide range of strategies to effect these changes. Application of these strategies and progression of changes becomes the foundation for achieving the

desired intention, while learning what works and what does not and making any necessary alterations. The advantages of OM are as follows: First, OM acknowledges that a project can largely influence short term changes in partners within its sphere of influence. Secondly, OM identifies limitations, giving an emphasis on continual learning and change by implementers so that meaningful progress is made. Thirdly, OM is available in parts or as a whole for complementing any other M&E tools or processes.

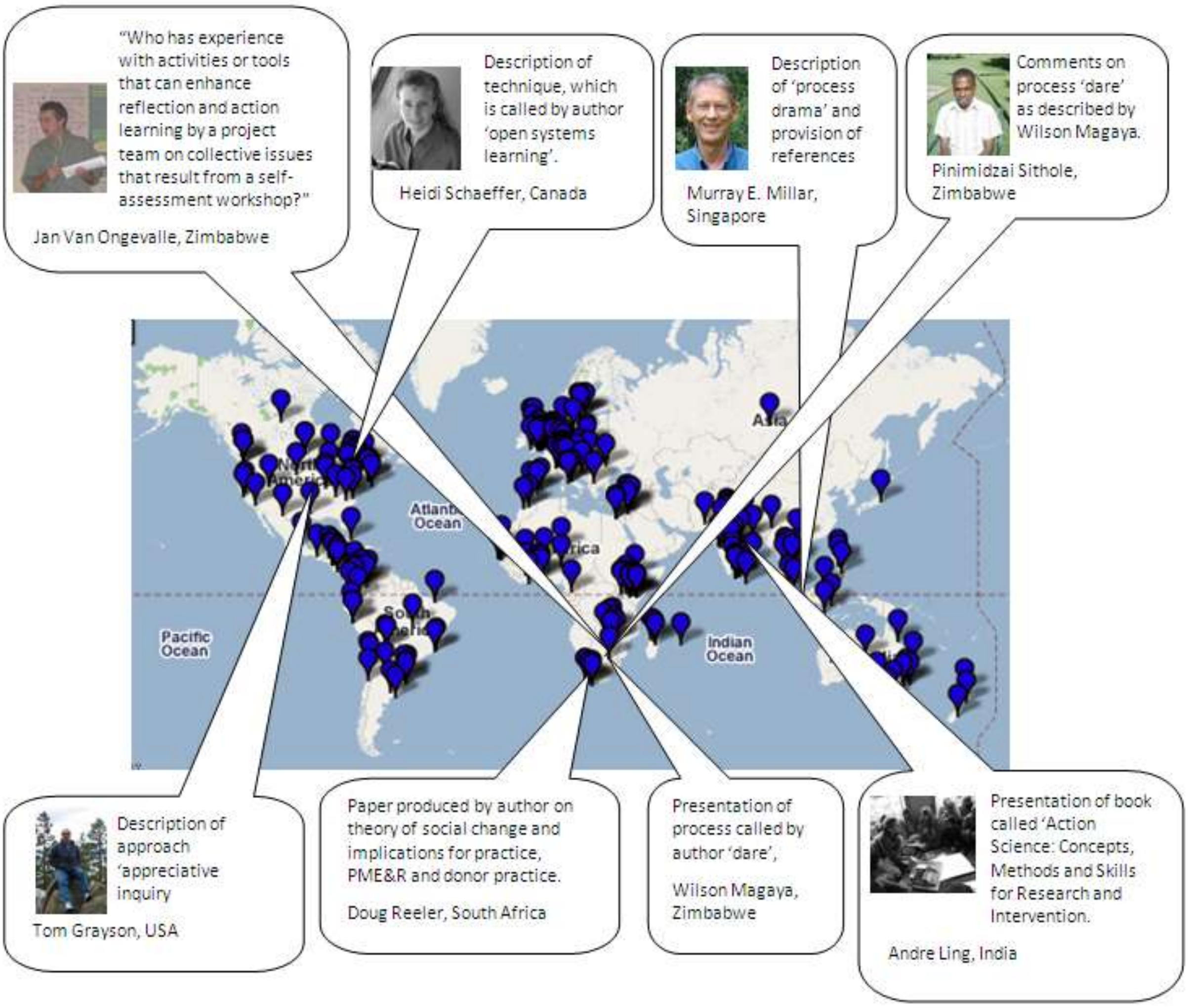
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Julius attached a summary of discussions received from individuals who had responded. He summarised the discussions into 3 key points – the definition of OM, how OM is unique and different from other M&E tools and the strengths of OM.
- Julius invited individuals to share practical examples to clarify further how OM works or has worked.

3.9 How to enhance reflection on outcomes of self-assessment workshop

Prepared by Stefan Dofel

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=106



Original Email

Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe, 28th February 2008

> An important component of our evaluation system in the St2eep programme is a self assessment activity at the end of each year. Last years self assessment workshop allowed us (project team, donor, representatives of boundary partners and beneficiaries) to identify 5 priority areas on which St2eep needs to improve. During the workshop we also managed to come up with somewhat vague strategies to address the identified priority areas which include issues like communication, participation in M&E, networking, etc.
>
> As a project team we now want to reflect deeper about these priority areas during our next action learning exercise next month. We have half a day for this activity. Does anyone know or has experience with specific activities or tools that can enhance reflection and action learning by a project team on collective issues that result from a self assessment workshop? The project team consists of about 12 people who know each other quite well.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
Murray E. Millar, Singapore
Wilson Magaya, Zimbabwe
Pinimidzai Sithole, Zimbabwe
Doug Reeler, South Africa
Andre Ling, India
Tom Gryson, USA

Summary of individual responses

1. Jan Van Ongevalle asked if there were members who have some practical experience with activities that can be used during a meeting or a workshop to enhance meaningful reflection by all members of a project implementing team. His project team consists of 12 people and half a day or full day is planned to have this action learning sessions. His particular concern is that it is not easy to have the whole team to reflect critically about personal challenges, assumptions and meanings which makes it in turn difficult to develop shared meaning. In particular he mentioned that it is culturally not easy to criticise colleagues openly.

2. Heidi Schaeffer presented an 'open systems learning' which is used by her in groups of 8-20. This approach is not published yet. It starts with "meaning questions" to ensure that peoples' reflections are coming from their core beliefs and values. The next steps are asking a series of open questions with drawings and then getting the group to move through the questions and share their responses. Then someone should bravely share his picture with the group and describe it. For this process a facilitator is needed who should not be a member of the team.

3. Murray E. Millar introduced the approach 'process drama' and named several references. In this approach, the group members interact together in and out of role playing without any script. By putting themselves into the actual roles of the imaginary persons the full faculties of the mind are brought to bear. Difficult questions can be explored without personal shame. Honest feelings come to the surface and can be evaluated openly.

4. Wilson Magaya presented a process called 'dare' (not documented and published, derived from African traditional process) which is a place of meeting not only in the physical plane but also socially and spiritually. There are a facilitator, discussants, chairman etc. A meeting is both real and imaginary. At a meeting there are those who are on stage and will get away with anything, the 'mutsondori' who have the opportunity to say the unspeakable which is accepted because it is agreed before hand that this is their role. Not everyone has to participate; there are those participating through others.

5. Pinimidzai Sithole commented on the contribution Wilson Magaye had made. At a 'dare', the respect of officialdom (office bearers) is valued by the majority. His question however is if we would have the nerve and space to have a 'sahwira' / 'mutsondori' who is allowed to say the unspeakable in an organisational context or institutional culture.

6. Andre Ling described a book called 'Action Science: Concepts, Methods and Skills for Research and Intervention' by Chris Argyris, Robert Putnam and Diana McLain Smith. The book might be able to provide with some profound insights into the way that communication between individuals fails to achieve its potential because of deeply held mental constructs that control our communication.

7. Tom Gryson wrote about an approach from the field of social research called 'appreciative inquiry'. It is a process that searches for what is best in people and organizations. It is a

participative, collaborative, and systematic approach to inquiry that seeks what is right in an organization in order to create a desired future. Participants and respondents identify what has been successful, and from these successes, begin to create a future filled with more of these successes. As a result, problems and issues are still addressed as they are in conventional evaluation, but in a very different way.

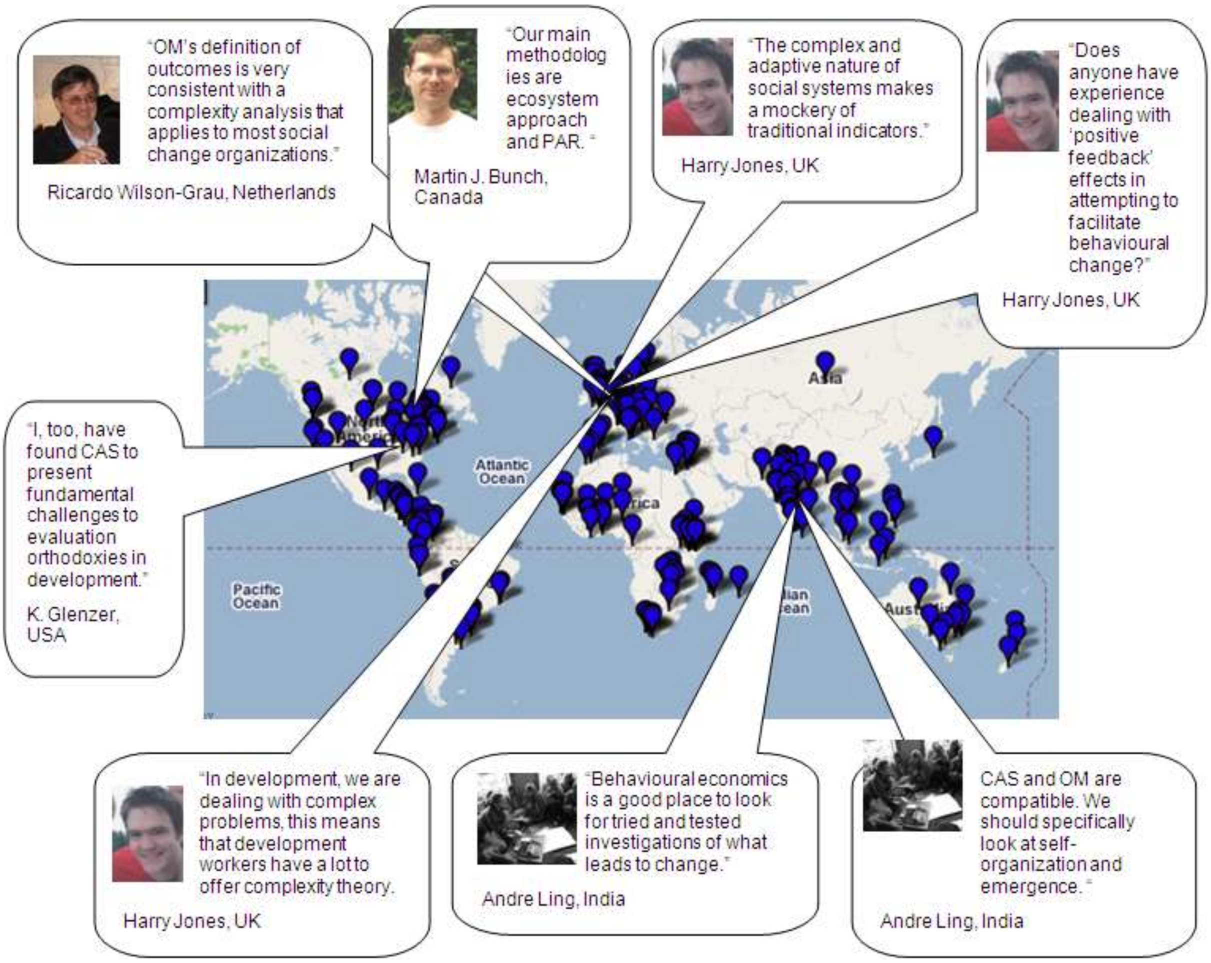
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Introduction of various techniques and methods for action learning and reflection on sensitive issues or for participatory and collective exercises, which could possibly be enumerated in an additional section of the OM website providing links to more detailed explanations of the respective technique / method

3.10 Complexity and OM

Prepared by Bernhard Hack

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=121



Original Email

Ricardo Wilson Grau, Netherlands, 24th April 2007

I write in reference to messages in mid March for Martin Bunch and Harry Jones (see first two messages in thread below).

I too am interested in exploring in more depth the relationship between complexity theories and Outcome Mapping. My own experience to date is limited to monitoring and evaluating outcomes in international networks of social change organisations. I have posted an article just published on evaluating international networks in which I explain how we used OM in the light of the complex, open and dynamic nature of networks and the environment in which they operate. You can access it at: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=117

As you will see, I find that OM, or at least the alternative definition of outcomes that it offers, is very consistent with a complexity analysis, which I personally believes applies not to networks and their environments, but to most, if not all, social change organisations.

Hope this contributes to this incipient discussion. I am glad to communicate off this listserv with Martin, Harry and anyone else interested in the topic.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Harry Jones, UK (3 contributions)
Martin J. Bunch, Canada (2 contributions)
K Glenzer, USA
Ricardo Wilson Grau, Netherlands
Andre Ling, India (2 contributions)

Summary of individual responses

1. Harry Jones shared two lessons from an ongoing ODI review of the implications of complexity theory for international development. First, the complex and adaptive nature of social systems makes a mockery of traditional indicators, which in turn means OM's focus on measuring success through behavioural change is more likely to capture the multiple dimensions of problems facing people in developing countries. Second, OM shifts the focus towards the processes behind development, which again is likely to be more productive than a results-based approach due to the continual flux and perpetual novelty in complex social systems.

2. Martin J. Bunch replied to Harry Jones that the approach they explored in this project was rooted in systems thinking, particularly complexity science. The main methodologies they drew upon were ecosystem approach and the "action research" part of PAR.

3. K Glenzer recommended an unpublished paper called "Evaluation in Complex Systems by Glenda H. Eoyang and Thomas H. Berkas, 1998". CAS present fundamental challenges to evaluation orthodoxies in development.

4. Martin J. Bunch recommend the York University PhD dissertation from Mark Hostetler that looks at complex adaptive systems and OM that is posted in the OM community resources.

5. Ricardo Wilson Grau stated that Hostetler's thesis does not break new ground as it does not mention CAS and its reference to complex situations is straight from the IDRC book.

6. Andre Ling shared a resource and pointed out several key points why he thinks OM is compatible with CAS such as its holism, non-linear change models, focus on agents' behaviour and emerging properties among others. He suggested to look specifically at self-organization and emergence.

7. Harry Jones asked if anyone had experience dealing with 'positive feedback' effects in attempting to facilitate behavioural change? He said that behavioural change in a community was complex and that many different types of behaviour are 'self-reinforcing'. He suggested that emerging change related to tipping points, critical mass and was based on feedback mechanisms. Development practitioners experience the uncertainty of planning; the value of including the actor-perspective and helping them find their own solutions; the importance of holism; and the danger of incoherence. Complexity promises a scientific framework that could embrace these messy realities of working on the ground and help communicate them.

8. Andre Ling suggested that behavioural economics was a good place to look for tried and tested investigations of what leads to change. He recommended d a paper by the New Economics Foundation

9. Harry Jones urged practitioners to use complexity theory as a way to contribute their strategies and insights of how to deal with non-linear, complex situations. Analogous to the many concepts from eco-systems science that were incorporated into complexity, people on

the ground level in development have important insights to contribute. He restated his earlier questions (s.7) and gave several examples of positive feedback effects.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Action: Create resource space / thematic section for CAS on OM community website
- Deserving further discussion: Exploring the linkages between OM and CAS
- Insight: CAS has the potential to offer a solid theoretical framework for OM that can also integrate development practitioners' experience with 'messy' realities.

3.11 OM for Organisational Restructuring

Prepared by Sharon Low

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=135

Original Email

Roberto Duarte, Peru, 11th July 2007

> I would like to know if there are experiences in applying OM for organizational restructuring or consolidation of different independent units (projects) into one program. I assume that the vision and mission exercise could be well placed to create consensus and a feeling of common interest and mutual accountability for accomplishing intended goals.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Henning M. Baur, Kenya
John Young, UK
Jim Anderson, Mauritius
Ciru Mukoma, South Africa
Roberto Duarte, Peru
Sarah Earl, Canada

Ngagne Mbao, Senegal

Summary of individual responses

1. Henning M. Baur responded that he had been involved in ECAPAPA of ASARECA where OM was used to strengthen impact orientation of members (National Agriculture Research Institutes). He invited Roberto to contact him at ASARECA.
2. John Young from the RAPID Group at ODI shared that he had used OM to refine the organisation's strategy for promoting greater use of research-based evidence in development policy. OM was helpful in identifying the different boundary partner groups and the kind of behavioural change needed to contribute to a specific change. For example, researchers to focus on real policy problems rather than academic questions; governments to set up systems to "force" bureaucrats to review evidence before making policies; research-donors to fund the research itself as well as communication and engagement processes. John informed that Harry Jones [h.jones@odi.org.uk] was writing a case study based on the examples.
3. Jim Anderson from an EU-supported ICZM programme in the Western Indian Ocean region, characterised the constraints relating to the provision of 'evidence' to policy-makers/advisors (either local or national) as 'Data Availability', 'Information Pathways' and 'Knowledge Communication'. He indicated interest to follow-up on John's work at ODI and the case-study.
4. Sarah Earl cited another example from the West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF/FRAO) in Dakar, Senegal. The organisation used an early OM framework to define and manage an organisational reorganisation. She informed that the experiences are documented in writing by Thierry Barretto, Adama Ndaye, and Ngagne Mbao.
5. Ngagne Mbao explained that his team had used OM to help an African institution, which comprises various sections, in their reorganisation process. The introduction of OM, the team laid emphasis on the organisational practices and strategy map, empowering the Director to take decisions and the various sections to collaborate as boundary partners.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Members were interested in case studies on OM applications in organisational restructuring (i.e. ODI and WARF/FRAO)

3.12 Network Mapping as a Diagnostic Tool

Prepared by Laxmi Prasad Pant

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=137

Original Email

Sarah Earl, Canada, 16th July 2007

> FYI I've often thought this type of social network analysis might be useful for stakeholder and/or boundary partner planning and evaluation.
>
> Sarah forwarded an email about the announcement of a new manual titled, "Network Mapping as a Diagnostic Tool by Louise Clark:
>
> Louise Clark has produced a very useful 32 page manual (in Spanish and English), called "Network Mapping as a Diagnostic Tool".
> Go to: http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/networkmapping_LC06.pdfand
> http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Mapeo_redes_LC06.pdf

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Sarah Earl, Canada

Enrique Mendizabal, UK
Rick Davies, UK

Summary of individual responses

Enrique Mendizabal considers that the Value Network would complement the SNA (http://www.vernaallee.com/value_networks/A_ValueNetwork_Approach.pdf).

Referring to the value network approach, Quique writes that networks as complex living systems characterized by pattern, structure and process connecting the former two. In addition to these characteristics, a living system learns through feedback loops, generates tangible and intangible values and survives on the edge of chaos.

When talking about networks, Enrique always asks questions as, “What is a good network? Or what is the right structure?”

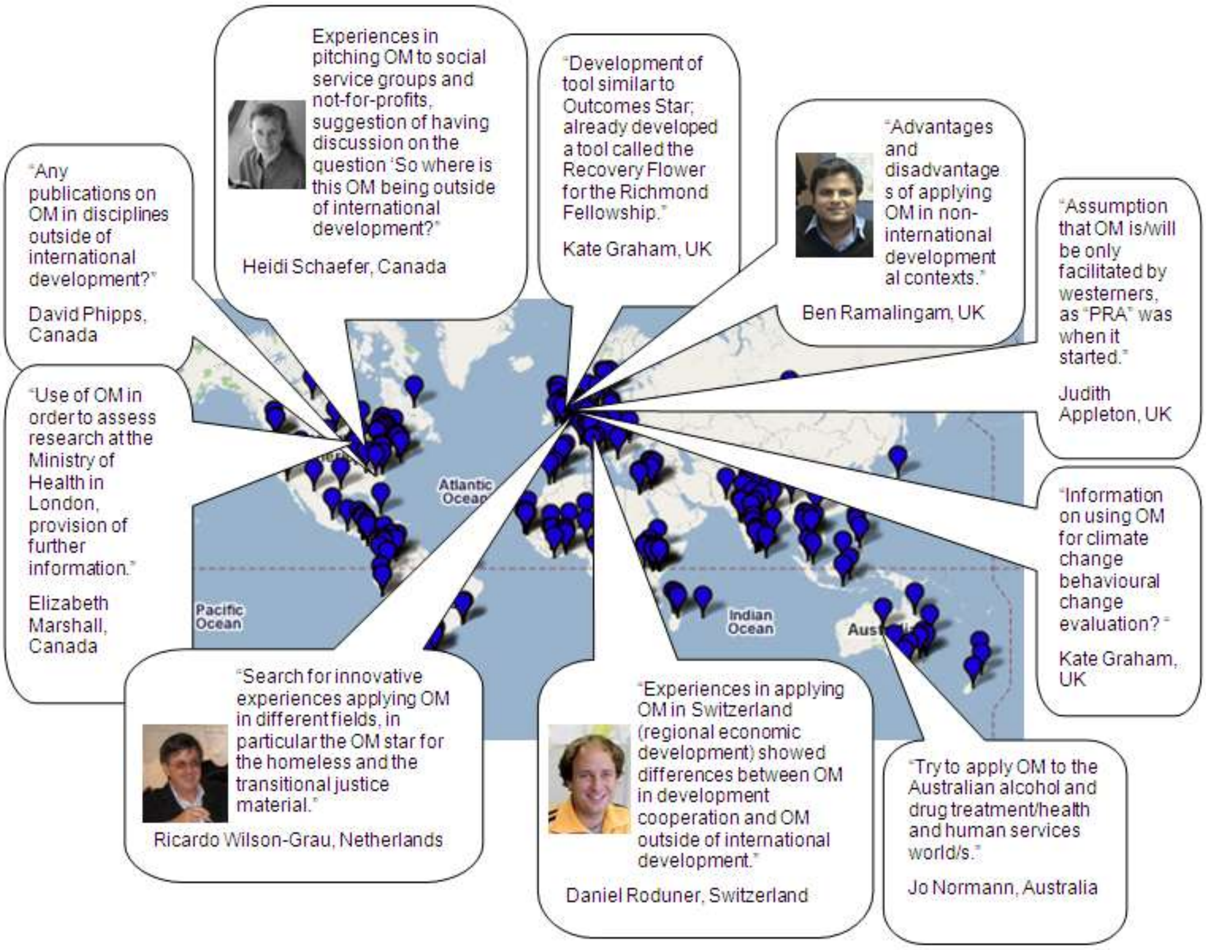
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

Social network analysis is a powerful tool to map network structure, but this tool requires reducing interactions and linkages in a living system into binary numbers (01). Otherwise, the matrices get much more involved and less meaningful to the stakeholders and boundary partners that OM is getting popular.

3.13 OM outside of international development

Prepared by Stefan Dofel

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=138



Original Email

David Phipps, Canada, 22nd July 2007

> Fred Carden (IDRC) suggested I post the following. Does anyone know of any published (journal, book or on line) references to the use of OM in disciplines outside of International Development.
> Please post any references you know of or feel free to e mail me directly at dphipps@yorku.ca.
>
> I am assisting a faculty member prepare a large scale CIHR application for KT (knowledge translation) in mental health and I am considering Outcome Mapping as an evaluation methodology (as well I appreciate its application to planning and monitoring).
>
> The program will seek to change behaviours of youth (16-24) who are making decisions about help seeking around mental health. I am well read and practised in knowledge mobilization and research use strategies and we are constructing the grant around non-linear research utilization theories anticipating that research will find its way into decision making via numerous, unanticipated routes.

I have already recommended against logic models that seek to make a linear cause and effect relationship between research and impacts. Rather I have recommended the team considers monitoring changes in behaviour.

Hence my interest in Outcome Mapping.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

David Phipps, Canada
Kate Graham, UK
Elizabeth Marshall, Canada
Kathryn M. Clinton, Canada
Jo Norman, Australia
Ben Ramalingam, UK
Bol, UK
Samira Smirat, Jordan
Judith Appleton, UK
Olufemi Oludare Aluko, Nigeria
Daniel Roduner, Switzerland
Charity Kyomugisha Nuwagaba, Uganda
Colleen Duggan, Canada
Julius Nyangaga, Kenya
Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Netherlands
Heidi Schaeffer, Canada

Summary of individual responses

1. David Phipps asked if anyone knew of any published references to the use of OM in disciplines outside of international development.
2. Kate Graham forwarded the homepage where a tool similar to the Outcomes Star has been developed. She also introduced a tool called the Recovery Flower for the Richmond Fellowship without going into details.
3. Elizabeth Marshall mentioned that she could provide information on OM especially in relation to research at the Ministry of Health in London, UK. Several participants showed interest in getting further information from her.
4. Jo Norman said that she would try to apply OM to the Australian alcohol and drug treatment/health and human services world/s. She was working on a paper on this issue and showed intention to provide it to the community for further discussion.
5. Ben Ramalingam thought about the advantages and disadvantages of applying OM in non-international developmental contexts and presented them to the forum. Needing a facilitator with a high cultural and social awareness in general, the advantage of applying OM in non-international contexts would be that the facilitator could work in his/her own national context. However, the disadvantage would be that the focus on numbers and targets is entrenched and is so strongly linked to political accountability.
6. Judith Appleton asked if OM is/will be only facilitated by westerners, as “PRA” was when it started. If so, the question from her perspective would be what exploration and training plans are in place for training in OM and facilitation in local contexts and for local staff. If not, she would like to know about experiences others have made.
7. Olufemi Oludare Aluko would like to know more on M&E for a water supply and sanitation sector reform programme in Nigeria, and to what extend OM would be a suitable tool.

8. Daniel Roduner shared his experiences he made in applying OM in Switzerland (regional economic development). He stated that there was no primary focus on numbers and targets but all project partners agreed that they should change their way of working against each other and seek joint projects. The main challenges were at the behavioural level, but the entrepreneurs didn't show much interest in elaborating outcome challenges and progress markers and a "time consuming" monitoring tool. He saw clearly the difference in the following: in development cooperation partners seek funding through the project and therefore participate in OM, whereas the partners in Switzerland had to pay for consultancy services and didn't want a PME (Planning Monitoring Evaluation) tool.
9. Charity Nuwagaba asked for OM details in order to learn how to possibly apply it in Emergency, Relief and Crisis recovery programmes in Northern Uganda.
10. Colleen Duggan responded to Charity's request and recommended to her a homepage where she could get further information on OM to transitional justice and reconciliation.
11. Julius Nyangaga provided further information on concepts to support diffusion and adoption of several new administrative practices (Finance and Human Resources departments).
12. Ricardo Wilson-Grau asked for information on applying OM in different fields, especially on evaluations which are similar to his current evaluation of a European donor's art and culture programme in Latin America.
13. Kate Graham mentioned a similar approach to that in the Outcomes Star to organizational capacity building and asked if anyone has made experiences in using OM for climate change / behavioural change evaluation.
14. Heidi Schaeffer reported on pitching OM to social service groups and not profit organisations. From her point of view it would make sense to move organizations towards progress markers for Boundary Partners because of two factors: many granting foundations need to aggregate results upward due to accountability for public funds etc., and many social service groups only monitor ultimate beneficiaries and do not have a culture of evaluation that includes monitoring their mode of service delivery. Yet, her experience also showed that foundations do not always see social change as their role and only wish to respond to community needs. Hence, many foundations use some kind of local review process to make decisions and not a "theory of change" approach.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Action: compilation of examples / links to websites of OM applications outside of development cooperation to be availed on OM community website
- Action: compilation of further information on OM application(s) in Emergency, Relief and Crisis recovery programmes on OM community website
- Action: compilation of further information on OM application(s) in art and cultural programmes
- Suggestion: introduce thematic section on OM community website, i.e. OM applications by theme; thematic areas such as sectors (water & sanitation, poverty reduction, disability, HIV-AIDS, Emergency, etc.) could then be introduced
- Insight:
- Willingness to apply a tool like OM is greater in the field of development cooperation, where the effort can lead to additional /continuous funding of the project / programme; in the

corporate world, however, willingness to develop and apply a tool like OM seems less prominent, since no additional funding can be tapped through the effort.

- Thesis deserving further discussion:
- Theory of change as underlying motivation for social interventions a pre-requisite to apply OM. Interventions without aspiration to contribute to social change might opt for “lighter” revision methods to account for the funds spent.

3.14 OM and Education Projects

Prepared by Sharon Low

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=146

Original Email

Sarah Earl, Canada, 28th August 2007

> Does anybody know if OM has been used in any education projects? I know about Steep but I`m wondering if there are any other people with experience and/or documents that I could share with a colleague. Thanks for your help.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

- Sarah Earl, Canada
- Seemantinee Khot, India
- Roy Greenhalgh, UK
- Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
- Tech Chey, Cambodia

Summary of individual responses

1. Seemantinee Khot is interested in developing progress markers for tracking changes in corporate staff and implementers as her job involves policy planning and supporting NGOs and government departments to implement sustainable development projects.
2. Roy Greenhalgh enquired what Seema was attempting to track in terms of inputs and attributes of staff behaviour.
3. Jan Van Ongevalle shared that OM was used to plan for an education-related VVOB country programme in Zimbabwe (2008-2013). This programme aims to support teacher education with a main focus on addressing the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children. The positive learning experiences in Steep have helped mobilise VVOB support for spearheading OM fully. They were currently working on the 'M&E' and 'Organisational Learning' framework, as well as integrating LFA requirements in the OM design. He had attached an outline of the programme in the resource library, accessible by the following link: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=122
4. Tech Chey shared that she used OM in a project, called LWHE (Literacy for Women Health and Empowerment) for ADRA-Cambodia. This project had 4 boundary partners (i.e. literacy student, literacy teacher, reflect facilitator and reflect member). She had collected OM reports from all four boundary partners. Should Sarah be interested in this, she can contact Tech Chay at email: techc@adracambodia.org

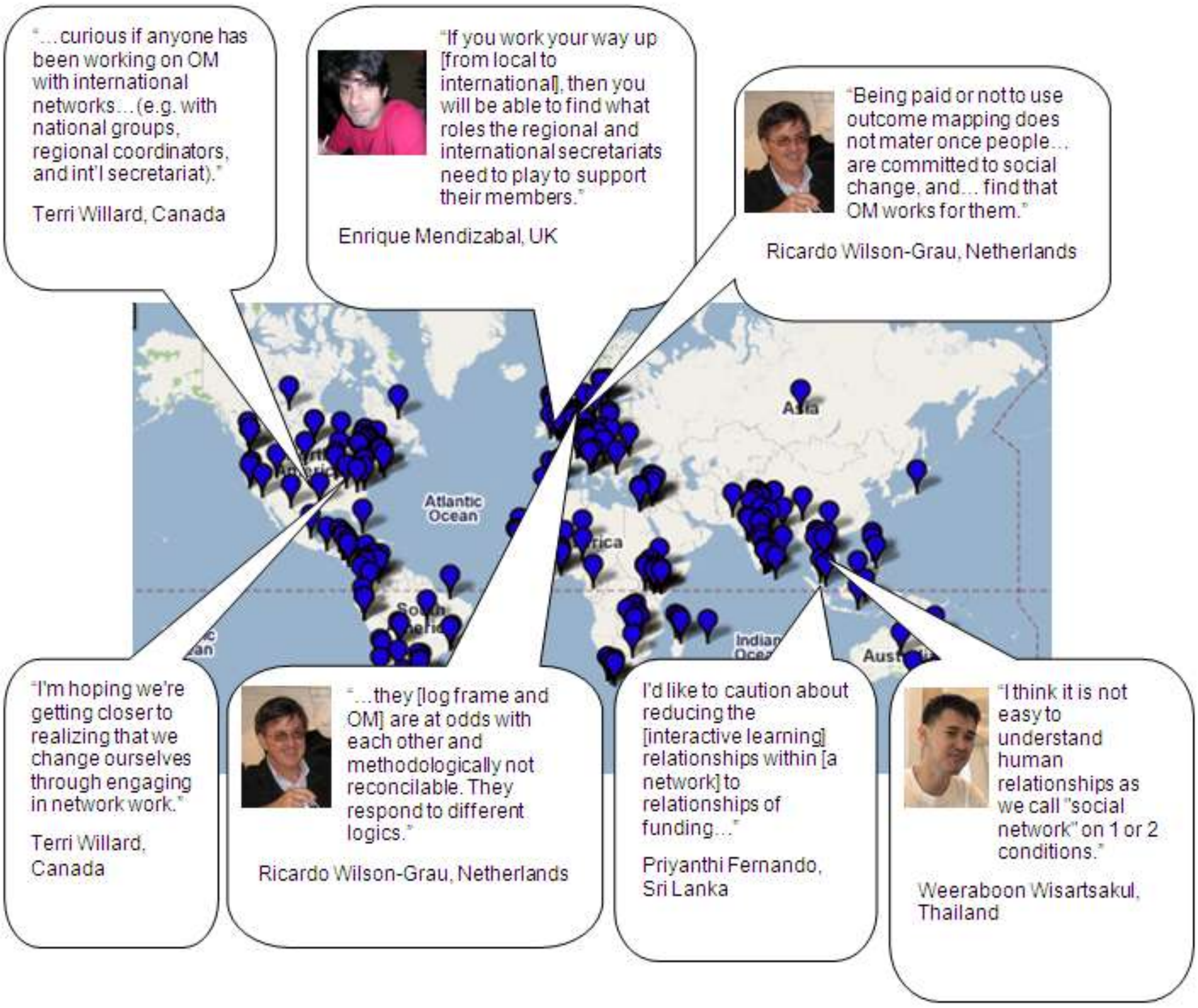
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- Action: Jan Van Ongevalle shared that he was planning to post documentation on the OM site. He could email Sarah documents that give an overview of the planning and the OM process outcomes of the VVOB country programme. He had attached an outline of the programme in the resource library, accessible by the following link: http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=122

3.15 OM in International Networks

Prepared by Laxmi Prasad Pant

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=147



Original Email

Terri Willard, Canada, 6th September 2007

Just popping by after a long absence (mat leave and a switch to the wonderful world of consulting) to get caught up on what everyone has been doing...

I'm also curious if anyone has been working on OM with international networks - particularly multi-level networks (e.g. with national groups, regional coordinators, and int'l secretariat).

I'm in the middle of doing a bit of work with the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development. We're trying to sort out how far down/out it possible to have an integrated M&E system within the network. My gut feeling is that there will have to be separate OM frameworks for the national groups (which receive little central funding) than for the intl secretariat (incl the regional coordinators). The national groups will simply be considered very important boundary partners of the intl secretariat...

Can anyone make an argument for expanding the OM framework BEYOND the people actually receiving $ from the network to do network work? Has anyone tried this? Can OM ever break free of the $ trail?

Similarly, has anyone had any success in marrying logframes with OM? I'm trying to wrap my head around how we might roll up OM indicators and observations into the Logframe indicators for annual reporting to multiple donors.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Enrique Mendizabal, UK
Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Netherlands
Priyanthi Fernando, Sri Lanka
Philip Penaflor, Phillipines
Gustavo Perochena, Argentinia
Simon Anderson, UK
Colleen Duggan, Canada
Jorgelina Loza, Argentina
Richard Carter, UK
Andre Ling, India
Weeraboon Wisartsakul, Thailand
Luis Miguel García Aragón, Ecuador
Jan Dereymaeker, Belgium
Randa Nubani, Jordan
Jesse D Lecy, USA
Jim Tarrant, USA
Simon Hearn, UK
Steve Song, Canada
Terri Willard, Canada

Summary of individual responses

1. Enrique Mendizabal brings experience from the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD). National groups need monetary support as well as non-monetary help, such as access to knowledge and experience from the regional and international levels. Unless core funding comes from the higher levels, the national groups do not necessarily work to meet the objectives of international and regional networks. However, objectives of networks at different levels are clearly relevant to each other. OM can help understand interventions, such as new policy initiatives, from the national to regional and international levels. This way, we can understand roles of the members at the higher levels to the betterment of members at the lower levels.

2. Ricardo Wilson-Grau states that once OM becomes a preferred tool, availability of funding would be a secondary issue. Since the logframe and OM respectively work under linear paradigm and systems paradigm, reconciliation of these two does not necessarily work. When causal relationships can be clearly established, logframe would be a choice, but in complex adaptive systems OM would better serve the purpose. Complexity science provides a theoretical foundation to OM. The logframe approach has been abused in its attempt to characterize complex adaptive systems (http://www.sida.se)

3. Priyanthi Fernando agrees with Ricardo that logframe and OM follow very different paradigms and argues that a donor's interest to apply logframe to networks is very much confusing given the nature of networks and networking as complex adaptive systems. Relationships within the IFRTD have gone beyond funding issues and involve networks of

collective learning and collective action. International secretariat, national groups and other members outside the national groups are independent to each other and at the same time contribute to the overall objectives of the IFRTD network. Supports for a constituent part can come from regional coordinators, national groups or member organizations.

4. Translation: Gustavo Perochena says: I am a new member of the OM community and have just started to receive these emails. I work in the Inter-American Development Bank in Argentina which is an organisation which uses and abuses the logic framework. I also think that other approaches should be used for better design, planning [and] M&E of the projects. I see that you are an expert in OM. I would like to become qualified in this methodology so have subscribed for this reason, but I don't see any courses offered anywhere in South America where I live (Argentina). Please could you let me know where there is an OM course available near me? Thanks for any advice you can offer.
5. Luis Miguel García Aragón was surprised that the discussion of OM in international networks does not mention anything about social network analysis (SNA). He argues that SNA is a very useful tool to monitoring and evaluation of the dynamics of a network including the flow of information and other resources. Computer software, such as ucinet and netdraw, is available for this purpose (http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/nettext, http://www.analytictech.com
6. Translation: Jorgelina Loza says: I am part of the Latin American Commercial Policy Network whose Coordination Department is located in FLACSO in Argentina. Last month I took part in OM training lead by Beatrice in Montevideo. This Wednesday I am coordinating an internal workshop in which I will share what I learnt with my colleagues on the team who are involved in the project and others within the FLACSO International Relations section. I saw your query here and was thinking that if you are interested I would like to invite you to the workshop so that you can become acquainted with the methodology and for networking purposes in Argentina.
7. Steve Song points to a list of recommended readings on complexity theory and organizations (http://www.cognitive-edge.com/recommended_reading.php)
8. Andre Ling states the in SNA, the diagrammatic representation of the observed and expected changes in relationships can be a major part of evaluation (information on network and evaluation available at http://mande.co.uk/)
9. Weeraboon Wisartsakul states that reducing human relationships into binary representation of 1 or 2 conditions is not an easy task.
10. Terri Willard questions, "Can OM ever break free of the $ trial?" She argues that OM begins when financial support dries up. People who get paid are part of the core group of implementers with us versus them mentality. In reality, most networks that Terri has seen involved unpaid volunteers as the core of its boundary partners and expected them to bring social change. Moreover, there is a third group who seldom become a part of the network but almost always expect to see changes in their community. Terri provides a cautionary note that we need to work towards network OM applying same progress markers for both them and us. She argues that we need to change ourselves engaging in learning networks.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- I would like to emphasize that OM in international networks should differentiate managerial functions and entrepreneurial functions. Managerial function refers to activities of a constituent part of a network to operate their organization and at the same time maintain anticipated relationships with other constituents at different levels – local, sub-regional, national, pan-regional and international. Entrepreneurial function, on the other hand, refers to a constituent part's capacity to respond to uncertainties that may arise in the network, whether it is paid or unpaid.

- One of the most emphasized discussions was on the linear paradigm of the logframe and systems paradigm of the OM. It is clear that these two approaches work under two distinct paradigms. What was missing in the discussion, however, was that a given intervention can involve simple causal relationships between inputs and outputs that would be appropriate to assess using linear logics as well as more complex relationships requiring systems approaches.
- Finally, there are a host of monitoring and evaluation tools including economic impact assessment techniques. I would argue that the available tools provides a basket of choice and needs to be used cautiously and complementarily in a given context. OM is definitely one of the most popular and user friendly tool impact assessment tools suitable for complex adaptive systems. Further information is available at http://www.prgaprogram.org/riw/

3.16 Comparative discussion of OM and LFA

Prepared by Eva Cardoso

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=149

Original Email

Terri Willard, Canada, 6th September 2007

> [...] has anyone had any success in marrying logframes with OM? I'm trying to wrap my head around how we might roll up OM indicators and observations into the Logframe indicators for annual reporting to multiple donors.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Ricardo Wilson-Grau, Netherlands
Daniel Roduner, Switzerland
Harry Jones, UK
Robert Duarte, Peru
Terry Smutylo, Canada
Andre Ling, India
Rick Davies, UK
Lyndon Voigt, Australia

Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Terri Willard, Canada (2 contributions)
Violeta Manoukian, Canada
Steff Deprez, Indonesia
Michel Philippart, Belgium

Summary of individual responses

1. Ricardo Wilson-Grau noted that in his experience logframes and OM are at odds with each other and methodologically not reconcilable as they respond to different logics. He suggests that if you know the cause and effect relationships of your development intervention, and thus can predict the outcomes, to use the logframe, pointing out that SIDA concluded in a 2005 study that "the LFA is not working and something new must be tried." For organisations that operate in complex, open and dynamic circumstances, their development interventions are immersed in uncertainty and unpredictability, he recommends Outcome Mapping as an alternative. He recommends complexity science for more theoretical insights, in particular the book 'Getting to Maybe' – on complexity and social change.

2. Daniel Roduner replied to Ricardo pointing out that many organisations do not want to change the LFA, even though many OM practitioners think, that OM is a valid alternative to LFA. The reservations against any new method are often so strong, that the strategy to present OM as an alternative does not always lead to success. For this reason he was seeking ways of combining the two methods. After coming across ST2eep, he visualised a model of which a presentation can be found here.

3. Harry Jones emphasised the importance to discuss OM and LFA and included a synthesis of what was said last year on the learning community about OM and LFA. It has been taken from 'Making Outcome Mapping Work: Evolving experiences from around the world' and the first paragraph talks about the differences in logic between OM and LFA that Ricardo alluded to, the second highlights some strategies members have used when introducing OM in reference to LFA, and the third paragraph suggests some ways that OM may be integrated with a log frame, as Daniel suggested.

4. Robert Duarte highlighted that GTZ abandoned the LFA in 2003 and has devoted itself to impact orientation, utilising the results chain as a planning tool. Despite its complexity, GTZ remained linear in its thinking, has internal discussions and has gained much more flexibility for planning and submitting projects and programs to their main funder BMZ. Robert finds OM very appealing because of the vision/mission exercise and the powerful humbleness of contribution. He has received enquiries for transmitting their concept of results based monitoring system with a strong impact orientation to partners. Robert welcomes community members to contact him for documents about GTZs approach, one can be found here.

5. Terry Smutylo praised Daniel's slideshow and would like Daniel to talk the community through it. It reinforces for him that a fundamental problem with LFA is that it is designed to speak to, and be understood by decision makers who are distant from the action. Hence the LFA cannot have the content to reflect realities at the operational levels. He states that the slides seem suggest that it can be useful to bring OM in at the operational stages to help explore and respond to the on-the-ground complexities.

6. Andre Ling argued that LFA can be adapted by basing the logic model on something more akin to OM, detailing his views on the LFA matrix inputs. He emphasised the fundamental bonus of the OM approach being founded on some key design principles that make it, effectively, model complexity. He states that OM is a logical framework, with its main

difference with regard to the LFA, being that is based on complexity rather than reductionism. He notes that while OM is founded on a fundamentally more sophisticated model of change, its tables continue to be populated by observable, measurable indicators, emphasising that it is up to the individual to rearrange the different sections of the tables. Important is to be concerned about the accuracy of the underlying model of change that is used to structure the interventions. He recommended a simple narrative accompanying a LFA that communicates the logic and reveals the underlying complexity to the donor, leading to the donor getting interested in, and ultimately adopting OM over LFA. Andrew contributed his views on complexity theory and would like to see how the adoption of OM based approaches can be used to spread the understanding of complexity theory.

7. Rick Davies replied to Roberto, asking whether there is much of a difference between the use of LFA and the use of a results chain, as LFA spells out a type of results chain. He states that the only radical alternative to LFA is one which does not have its focus on a temporal chain of events, which enables you to give more attention to other important dimensions.

8. Lyndon Voigt stressed that he approaches the issue pragmatically by, instead of convincing LFA users to purely use OM, introducing them to ideas that result in modifications to their log frames, reflective of the breakthrough thinking that underpins OM. He notes that he has troubles spotting the major differences between OM and LFA when the key underlying thinking from OM is applied to the log frame design process, giving some examples.

9. Jan Van Ongevalle initially elaborated on a VVOB programme that uses OM for the operational design of the programme and asked how to best assist the programme implementation team in translating the complex OM intentional design into practice without losing the integrated approach of working towards the vision. He noted that it would be difficult for all members in the implementation team to focus on all working areas and on all boundary partners and their relationships, however, breaking down responsibilities might be dangerous for losing the integrated OM approach. He posted some work in development, the OM intentional design document for the VVOB programme [1] and a document with example matrices that filter information from the OM intentional design document [2].

10. Terri Willard pointed out that she supports complexity theory and the need to understand how/why complex systems address global issues. However, she experienced in her work that networks often get so far into complexity that a good LFA can be useful to anchor them as they set off to achieve their goals. She also emphasised that a LFA misses a clear focus on boundary partners and praised Daniel's visual model.

11. Robert Duarte responded to Rick's question earlier on, agreeing with his comment. He explains that in case of GTZ the LFA based contracting procedure was very input oriented as projects were assessed in the light of previously defined inputs. By switching to results orientation, input specifications are no longer required and the orientation is towards long-term effects of GTZs interventions.

12. Terri Willard agreed with Andre that it is important to ensure that M&E frameworks understand and mirror real-world change processes. She states that he struggled with developing OM indicators until he mapped them onto the engagement strategies model used at IISD. She recommends this model of combining the engagement pyramid with the OM level for networks as it helps with planning and understanding the roles/responsibilities/expectations of a diverse set of boundary partners.

13. Daniel Roduner agreed with Andre, that the underlying principles are most important and reinforced Lyndon's approach to bring LFA users on the 'behavioural change' track. He emphasised the importance of clear goals and indicators (for decision makers) and hands-on

tools such as clear responsibilities and progress markers (for practitioners on the ground), suggesting the use of a model that applies at the operational level the OM perspective and synthesises on the strategic level into a LFA perspective; such as use by Jan.

14. Violeta Manoukian contributed her thoughts on the underlying tensions between the LFA and participation. She reconciled them via an approach known as TeamUP – an adaption of the LFA for shared use by a network of stakeholders. This may encompass policy/decision makers, communities as well as intermediaries, thus making the LFA more participatory.
15. Steff Deprez posted the new VECO Indonesia programme design, which is very much based on OM. As the programme proposal and the reporting format to the main donor need to be in LFA format, VECO decided to stick to OM for the internal programme planning and M&E but use LFA for accountability and reporting requirements. Steff then further elaborated on the two main differences of this model compared to the original OM framework. There are outcome challenges per boundary partner per specific objective, which turned out to be the key for translation to LFA. VECO has included themselves as boundary partner with respective OC, PMs and SMs, which turned out to be a useful exercise and logic.
16. Michel Philippart reflected on Steff's contribution stating that donors, who want quick and obvious impacts and using LFA without significant results, should consider new approaches as the OM.

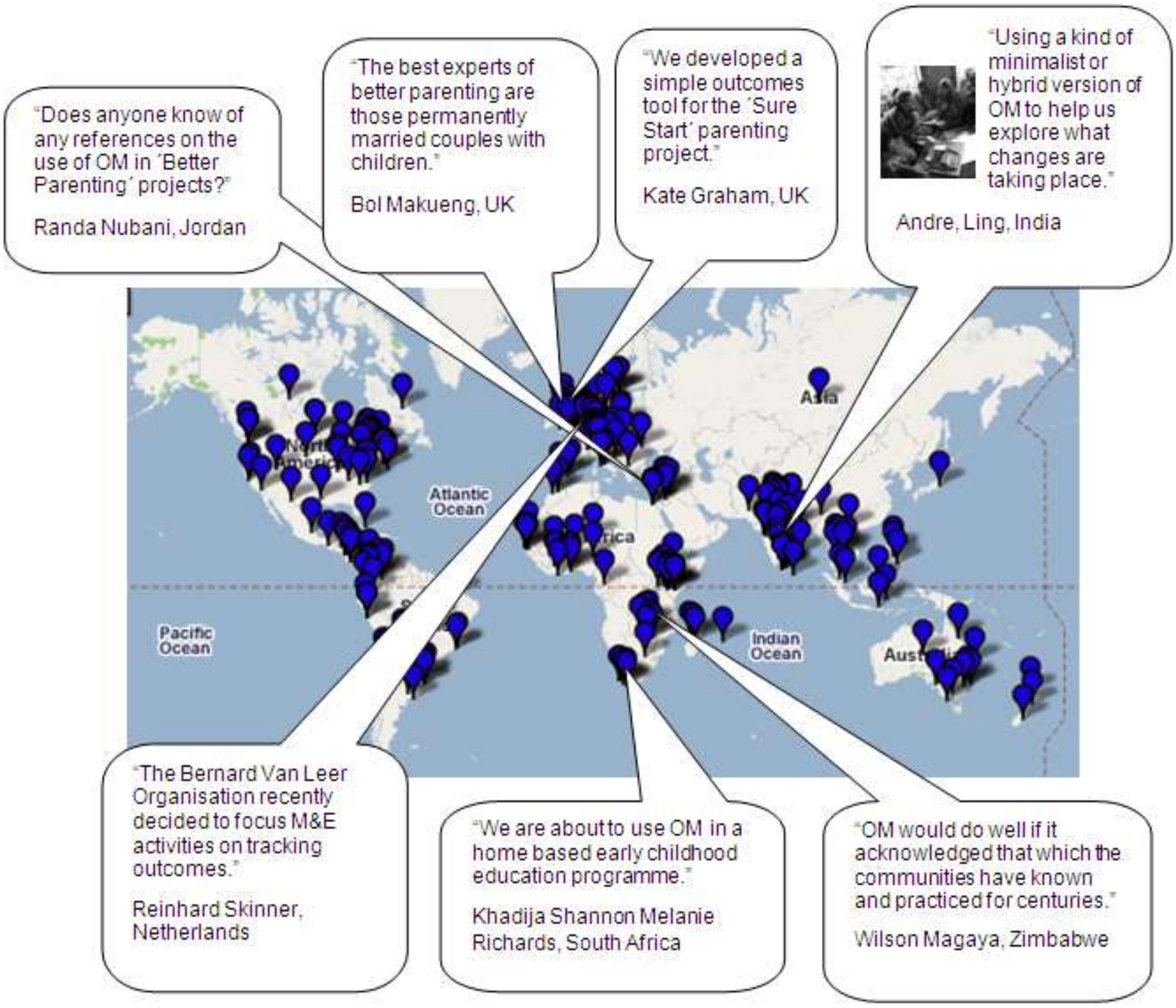
Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- This is obviously an important discussion as it comes up time and again. There seems to be a deep uneasiness with the log frame approach and practitioners are looking to other methods to help them understand what they are doing. The problems with the LFA stem from its lack of sensitivity to complexity theory and the fact that it's designed for actors who are relatively distant from the implementation team.
- The main recommendations shared involve replacing LFA with other approaches, notably OM in this case, or somehow modifying the log frame to make it more useful (for example by orienting it around partners or defining indicators as behaviour changes).
- There have been some very innovative suggestions and models on how to integrate OM and LFA. Some of these have now been compiled in a paper: A conceptual fusion of the logical framework approach and outcome mapping.

3.17 OM in better parenting projects

Prepared by Jan Van Ongevalle

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=164



Original Email

Randa Nubani, Jordan, 24th October 2007

> Does anyone know of any references to the use of OM in Better Parenting Projects? This project aims at providing parents and caregivers with skills and information to support the psychosocial, cognitive and physical development of children aged 0-8 years. The project takes a holistic approach to children´s growth and development within the context of family and the community.
>
> Please post any references you know.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Randa Nubani, Jordan
Bol Makueng, UK
Andre Ling, India
Wilson Magaya, Zimbabwe
Khadija Shannon Melanie Richards, South Africa

Reinhard Skinner, Netherlands
Kate Graham, UK

Summary of individual responses

1. Randa Nubani asked if there were any examples of outcome mapping being used in ´Better Parenting´ projects.

2. Andre Ling shared his experience with an early childhood education project in Rajasthan, India. The project uses a minimalist/hybrid version of outcome mapping to explore what changes are taking place as the project engages with parents, pre-school centres and village development committees. This forms part of an effort to build more structured action-learning cycles into the ongoing programme process. Andre also remarked that poverty in many parts of the world can have devastating implications on the quality of parenting and that parents might need support in such situations.

3. Wilson Magaya reminded OM users not to marginalise local knowledge and methodologies for taking on local challenges. Wilson mentioned two possible reasons for such marginalisation: 1) the assumption that there are more systematic methods available in the West and 2) associating poverty and lack of resources with a lack of local capacity for taking on challenges.

4. Kate Graham shared an outcomes tool that was developed for the ´Sure Start´ parenting project in the UK. The tool can be used as part of an informal participatory assessment and review process when working with families over a period of time. In this way outcomes for families will be monitored in an ongoing way. The tool can be accessed on http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/download.php?id=30&sid=2e2f1ebe11f0302bd62e8109217f07c7

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

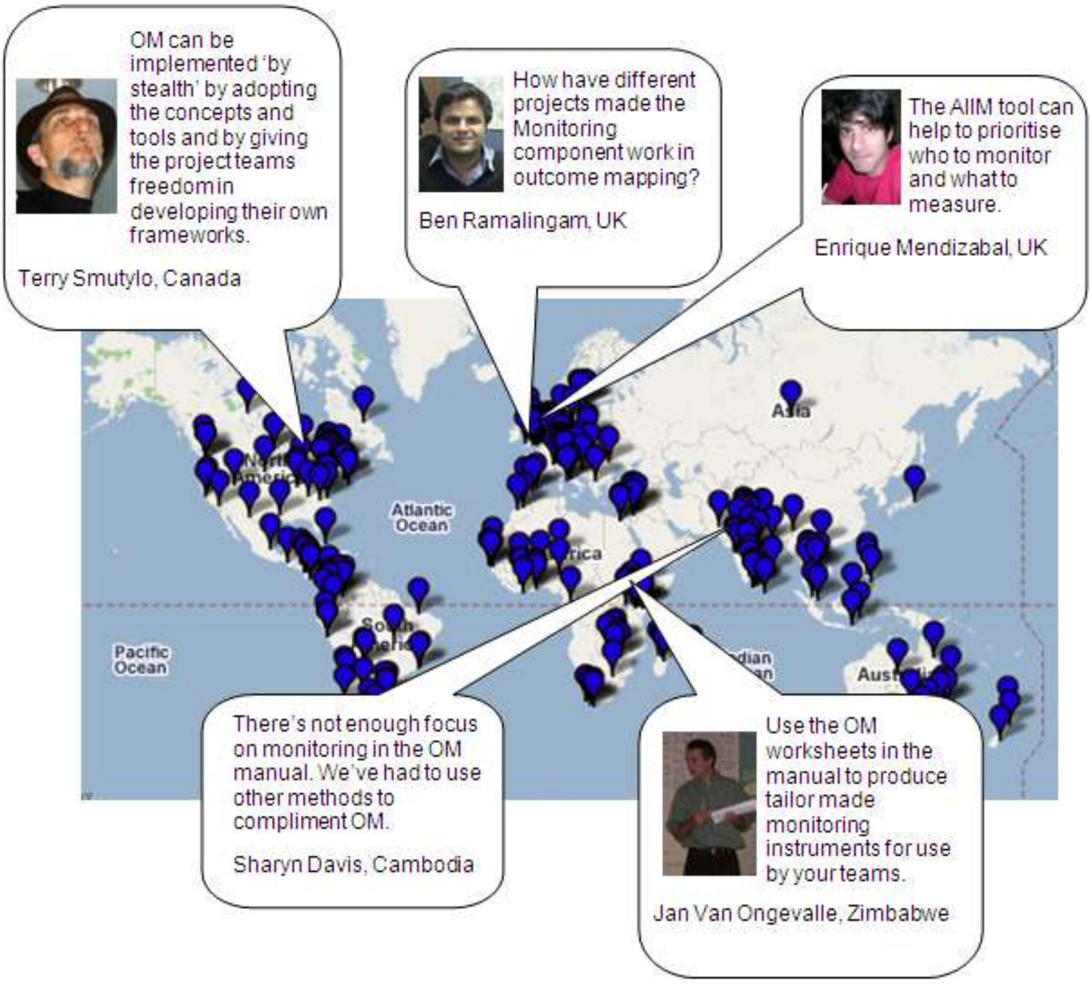
- Experiences from early childhood development projects show that outcome mapping combined with other outcome tracking tools (e.g. ´Sure Start´ outcomes tool) are helping such projects to learn and to identify areas of need.

- The observation that outcome mapping users tend to marginalise local capacity for taking on challenges would be an interesting topic for further discussion by the OM community.

3.18 How have you made the monitoring component work in Outcome Mapping?

Prepared by Simon Hearn

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=75



Original Email

Ben Ramalingam, UK, 15th November 2006

We have had two nice topics recently, one on engaging with powerful actors in the OM process, and the other on OM in Cambodia which took in various fascinating issues, from country-specific experiences to OM terminology, and the value of presenting OM in a linear, log-frame-like, manner. I am sure we will continue to touch upon these topics in the future.

So far on the Outcome Mapping community, we have had a lot of discussion about the first stage of Outcome Mapping, Intentional Design. [To remind you: this helps a programme establish consensus on the macro level changes it will help to bring about and plan the strategies it will use, by addressing 4 questions (Why, Who, What and How).]

But what about the second stage: Outcome and Performance Monitoring? [To remind you: this stage provides a framework for the ongoing monitoring of the program's actions and the boundary partners' progress toward the achievement of outcomes. Largely on systematised self-assessment, the monitoring stage provides a number of data collection tools for the elements identified in the Intentional Design stage: an Outcome Journal' (progress markers); a Strategy Journal' (strategy maps); and a 'Performance Journal' (organisational practices).]

I wanted to move the debate forward by posing a simple discussion question: how have different projects made the Monitoring component work in outcome mapping? What works? What doesn't?

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

Ben Ramalingam, UK
Sharyn Davis, Cambodia
Jan Van Ongevalle, Zimbabwe
Enrique Mendizabal, UK
Terry Smutylo, Canada
Friday Mwaba, Zambia

Summary of individual responses

1. Sharyn Davis shared her initial reaction to the OM manual; that the level of detail and time spent on intentional design was a lot more than on the monitoring aspects. For the project in Cambodia, they have had to use alternative approaches to compliment OM in this area. They have used Most Significant Change to collect stories of change and Lot Quality Assurance Sampling to collect simple KAP data about changes that are occurring. She also shared some experience about the need for specific skills in this area so that staff can be collecting information as part of their day to day work.

2. Jan Van Ongevalle described the process by which the St2eep team in Zimbabwe developed their monitoring system. Over two workshops they outlined the following steps:

   a. **Developing the monitoring plan** – they used the Monitoring Plan Worksheet in the OM manual which helped them to clarify some important questions including who, why, what, when and how.

   b. **Carry out the monitoring** – tailored monitoring instruments were developed for each of the actors involved in the monitoring process including checklists of behaviour changes and strategies and questions to guide deeper reflection.

   c. **Analysing and using the monitoring data** – the monitoring reports are fed into stakeholder meetings to feed into programme wide reflection, learning and future planning. The monitoring reports, together with the feedback from the meetings are compiled into one report which is circulated to the donors and fed into national level management meetings. These formal processes are complimented by informal spaces for discussion among national coordinators and facilitators.

3. Enrique Mendizabal added to Jan's comments with some experience from ODI. Monitoring and learning should be embedded into influencing and communication activities rather than kept as separate processes undertaken by a special unit. This is the only way to ensure programme wide learning. The Alignment-Interest matrix can help to prioritise whose behaviour to monitor.

4. Terry Smutylo shared with us another case story of how a particular programme has implemented its M&E component. The case presented wasn't applying OM systematically but used some of the concepts and tools while keeping away from the OM language. One of the distinctives of this approach was to encourage the individual projects to develop their own indicators and to use the most appropriate methods with central support from M&E experts. In practice though, only a third of projects took this opportunity to engage creatively

in the M&E process. Still, using this approach, there was a marked improvement in M&E capability, understanding and utilisation.

5. Friday Mwaba mentioned that they were planning to use Most Significant Change and was keen to hear about the experiences in Cambodia.
6. Sharyn Davis responded to this query. She has found it difficult to apply MSC in Cambodia due to the lack of storytelling culture and skills but hopes to persist.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

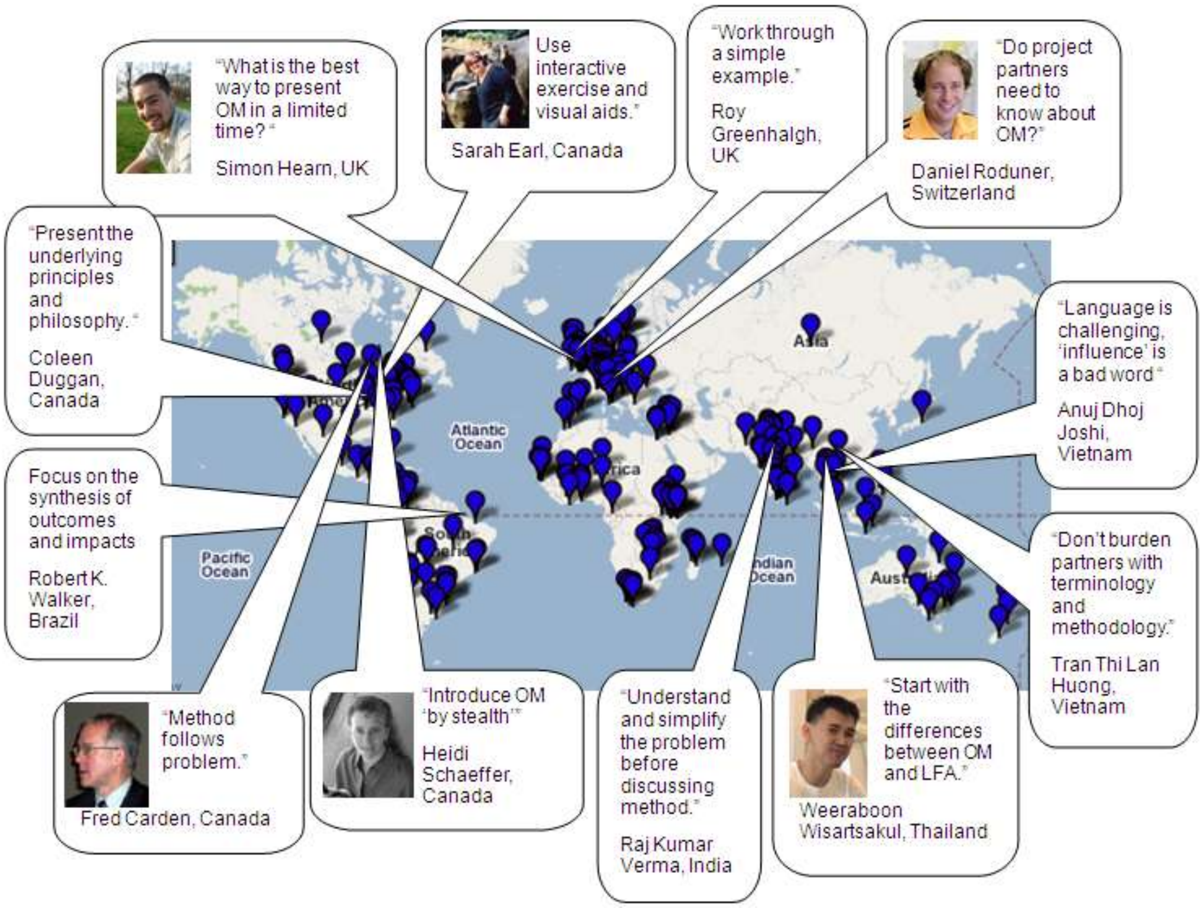
Ben presented his five take home points from the cases shared by Jan and Terry:

- Using Outcome Mapping means expressing performance indicators as changes in the behaviours of partners and target audiences with which we interact directly. Using such an OM-based approach can lead to greater accuracy in differentiating between outputs and outcomes.
- Reporting requirements need to be flexible enough to accommodate a diverse range of results, especially when moving from the project to the program level. While encouraging projects to set their own monitoring indicators and to use methods based on their usefulness for project management, reporting and learning can build ownership of M&E, there are associated costs.
- The OM monitoring plan worksheet can help to clarify some important questions including who, why, what, when, how, and leads to a monitoring scheme based on a clear overview of the whole monitoring system, involving the different boundary partners, implementing organisations, and other stakeholders. This can also help to clarify the different responsibilities during the monitoring process (i.e. who does the monitoring) and what happens with the data.
- Document templates can be developed which really help support and structure the monitoring work (e.g. the St2eep example provided by Jan).
- While in some situations it is possible for the formal monitoring system to be embedded in the management and planning structures of the overall programme, and in line with the reporting requirements of the boundary partners, in other situations we may need to take "stealth" approaches to incorporating OM monitoring tools. They take time to be trusted and properly implemented, but when they are, it can lead to a strong management case for change.

3.19 Presenting Outcome Mapping

Prepared by Simon Hearn

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=172



Original Email

Simon Hearn, UK, 21st November 2007

> Communicating OM to others is something I've struggled with. I've found it varies a lot with who you are trying to explain it to, the type of project/programme/organisation it's being applied to and how much time you have.
>
> I was wondering if anyone else out there has done a short presentation on OM. What's the best way to introduce OM if you only have a limited time? Is it best to just get the key concepts across rather than get bogged down in the detail of each step? What are the common stumbling blocks people have come across?
>
> It would be great to hear the experience of the community.

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

- Jeff Knezovich, UK
- Roy Greenhalgh, UK
- Coleen Duggan, Canada
- Sarah Earl, Canada
- Heidi Schaeffer, Canada
- Anuj Dhoj Joshi, Vietnam

Robert K. Walker, Brazil
Weeraboon Wisartsakul, Thailand
Daniel Roduner, Switzerland
Tran Thi Lan Huong, Vietnam
Fred Carden, Canada
Raj Kumar Verma, India

Summary of individual responses

1. The discussion was prompted by Jeff Knezovich when he shared a recent presentation given about OM by Enrique Mendizabal. Simon Hearn then asked the community for advice about presenting OM: What is the best way to introduce OM in limited time? What are the key concepts to cover? What are the common stumbling blocks?
2. Roy Greenhalgh shared that when he has presented methods in the past, he finds it most effective to work through a simple example from start to finish, highlighting the benefit of the method.
3. Coleen Duggan agreed in principle with Roy but because, in IDRCs experience, OM requires a mind shift, it is also important to present the underlying principles and philosophy. Coleen also shared IDRCs resources and presentations available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
4. Sarah Earl shared two ideas: (1) Interactive exercise help people to see the relevance of the concept, see http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-109104-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html for a good example. (2) Using images in the presentation helps people to remember the concepts.
5. Heidi Schaeffer made three points: (1) She often presents OM 'by stealth', calling it 'capturing the story of change' or 'capturing the influence of your work'. In a two hour session she tries to get the messages of outcomes as behaviour change and spheres of influence across. (2) She also recommends an interactive exercise, e.g. the boundary partner exercise from Beatrice Briggs and Terry Smutylo's workshop. (3) It is important to emphasise the need for a theory of change.
6. Anuj Dhoj Joshi described the challenge of VECO Indonesia in communicating OM, as well as their intentional design framework, to project partners and stakeholders. He agreed that influence change at the level of boundary partners was the key concept to get across. His main concern was with language, particularly with the word 'influence' in his culture. He asked for alternatives.
7. Robert K. Walker suggested that the emphasis not be completely on outcomes but on a synthesis of outcomes and impacts.
8. Weeraboon Wisartsakul said that, given limited time, he starts from the differences between OM and LFA.
9. Daniel Roduner shared a number of thoughts: (1) Remember that it is the project team that has chose OM, not the boundary partners. So think carefully before introducing OM to boundary partners: Do they need to the theory, terminology and steps? Or can the conversation centre on roles, responsibilities, mile stones and support strategies? (2) In 'influencing' is not suitable in your culture, use phrase such as "becoming more efficient", "doing things with less input", "work faster", etc. The words "change in behaviour" cannot even be used in Switzerland, here I use "change in practice".
10. Tran Thi Lan Huong agreed with Daniel and added that most of their partners don't read programme documents or understand what donors want to see in them, so burdening them

with any methodology is needless. Instead, just present some of OM's essences – especially those that are missing from other PCM methods.

11. Fred Carden reminded us that method follows problem. Prescribing a method before identifying the problem and the context will often lead to disaster.
12. Raj Kumar Verma strongly agreed with Fred's comment and contributed two examples of his own to illustrate. The first was when he was working with churches in India who wanted to address some of the social problems around the elections. They started by mapping out the problems and the linkages between them. They were able to slowly narrow the many problems down to a three causal factors that the church was able to influence directly or indirectly. The nature of the problem the dictated the strategies and the frameworks needed to manage the process.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

- It is clear that different audiences have different needs. Donors need to be convinced that OM provides something new; explain the key concepts such as outcomes as behaviour change and spheres of influence. Partners don't necessarily need to know anything about OM; introduce OM by stealth rather than explicitly 'teaching' the methodology. For people who need to know how to apply OM, use simple examples and interactive exercises.
- Terminology can be a stumbling block; make sure the process is contextualised and relevant to the culture it is being applied. Use locally relevant examples.
- But it is also clear that there needs to be a firm understanding of why OM is being used. Methodology choice must follow problem analysis.
- It would be good to collect presentations, exercises, language/terminology uses that people have developed for different audiences (potential project partners, donors, peers with an interest, others wanting to adopt the methodology etc), for different purposes (training, informing, advising) and in different regions.

3.20 Use of OM to assess community resilience to disasters

Prepared by Laxmi Prasad Pant

http://www.outcomemapping.ca/forum/viewtopic.php?t=83

Original Email

John Twigg, UK, 13th December 2006

> I am working on a project to identify indicators of community resilience to disasters and milestones by which progress in disaster risk reduction can be assessed. Does anyone know of any examples where outcome mapping has been used in this or related contexts?
>
> For more on the project, see its web page at:
>
> http://www.benfieldhrc.org/disaster_studies/projects/communitydrrindicators/community_drr_indicators_index.htm

Responses were received, with many thanks, from:

John Twigg, UK
Harry Jones, UK

Summary of individual responses

Harry Jones:

Human behaviour and other social processes including social change is complex. Since OM involves participatory and interactive processes towards a participatory and interactive method, it is ideal for improving governance of complex systems, generating learning lessons, planning for disaster preparedness, risk management including mitigation and adaptation strategies, and monitoring and evaluation of disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Characteristics of human communities resilient to disasters include understanding disasters as a way of life with autonomous, planned and anticipatory adaptation to disasters. While autonomous risk management within a community can work for relatively minor and recurrent disasters, coping with disasters of a greater impact require substantial development of operational and adaptive capacity through better governance and facilitated learning, actions and interactions.

Concluding remarks and actions to take forward

The available basket impact assessment methods acknowledges OM as one of the effective tools specifically when we are required to deal with complex adaptive systems or even to deal with chaotic systems. However, OM should not be used as a panacea as suitability of a method depends on a given context. Stakeholders should have every opportunity to choose among available tools in a basket.