Reflecting on Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation

SLEvA

Sri Lanka Evaluation Association

UN WOMEN

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
East and Southeast Asia Regional Office
United Nations Building, 5th Floor
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200 THAILAND
Tel: 66 2 288 2093
Fax: 66 2 280 6030
E-mail: info.th@unwomen.org

www.unwomen.org
www.unwomen.org/about-us/evaluation
www.unwomen-eseasia.org

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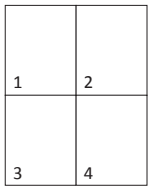

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Foreword

Under UN Women Evaluation Strategy for 2011-2013, UN Women Evaluation Office (EO) has been promoting accountability and knowledge of public policies for gender equality and women's human rights by supporting capacities of regional evaluation networks and national Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems.

As part of the networking and partnership activities, UN Women EO supported 2011 Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA) international conference by providing bursaries to four practitioners/researchers who have been working in the area of gender and evaluation. The UN Women bursaries recipients presented their research findings at the conference on 6-9 June, 2011 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

After presenting their research topics "Embedding Social Transformative Approach within Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)", "Evaluation of Partnerships: Approaches and models available to evaluators", "Case-based Gender Process Monitoring" and "Shared Measurement: A new frontier in learning based evaluation" in the conference, the bursaries recipients developed articles in their expertise areas. The Regional Evaluation Specialist (RES) of UN Women EO, Yumiko Kanemitsu, consulted the research process with the bursaries recipients and a peer review was undertaken by the group of the four practitioners/researchers in collaboration with M&E Unit of the Sub-Regional Office (SRO) for South Asia as well as the RES. The whole process took six months starting from mid-June to December 2011.

This evaluation publication is consisting of the four different topics written by the UN Women bursaries recipients for 2011 SLEvA international conference. The four topics are depicting the current situation challenging evaluation on gender equality and human rights.

UN Women EO believes that the practitioners supported have gained further insights of their research topics in gender and evaluation during the consultation and the peer-review process. We trust that this evaluation publication will contribute to a long-term network among the bursaries recipients and with UN Women and SLEvA, and to further evaluation capacities and knowledge in the Asian region.

We hope that this evaluation publication provides a basis for further research, exploration and discussions among evaluation and field practitioners on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and that it can contribute to building transparent and accountable national M&E systems.

Belen Sanz
Chief, Evaluation Office, UN Women
January 2012

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UN Women EO would like to express its deep gratitude to the four UN Women bursaries recipients, who presented their expertise in evaluation, gender equality and human rights by writing the articles for this journal: Pradeep Narayanan (Institute of Participatory Practice (Praxis)), Lalitha Vaidyanathan (FSG), Natalia Kosheleva (Process Consultancy), and Kyoko Kusakabe (Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)).

UN Women EO benefitted from excellent collaboration with the Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) for East and South East Asia and for South Asia and would like to thank Moni Pizani, Shoko Ishikawa, Montira Narkvichien, Anne Stenhammer, Sushma Kapoor, Shreyasi Jha and Rajat Khanna. Finally, the coordination and dedicated support of Yumiko Kanemitsu, UN Women regional evaluation specialist for Asia Pacific has been invaluable in this project bearing fruit.

Photo: UN Photo/Shehzad Noorani

Embedding Social Transformative Approach within Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Case story of evolving an M&E framework for a community mobilization programme that focuses on addressing issues of stigma and rights violations of female sex workers

By Pradeep Narayanan, Head, Research and Consultancies at Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices

By Pradeep Narayanan
Head, Research and Consultancies at
Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices

Email: pradeepn@praxisindia.org

ABSTRACT

The shift in development thinking towards a community mobilization approach has led to the burgeoning of several agencies and projects adopting it over the last decade. While attempts have been made to demystify community mobilization, it continues to be an abstract, immeasurable term, making monitoring and evaluation (M&E) a big challenge. This paper argues that the monitoring of community mobilization processes requires embedding the transformative aspects of community mobilization into the processes itself. Using the example of community mobilization among female sex workers and utilization of their intimate knowledge of vulnerability to overcome the barriers they face and realize reduced HIV risk and greater self-reliance through their collective action, the paper demonstrates how M&E can be governed by principles of participation and empowerment, which recognize power relationships at the micro- and macro-level. The key challenge was to evolve a usable framework, which did not create a blueprint for community mobilization, but instead provided space for multiple pathways of achieving an outcome and measured the processes as well. It shows how the M&E system can be made compatible with the objective of social transformation through collective action where processes are evolved in a way that the community themselves would proactively facilitate the agenda of social transformation.

Co-author: *Sowmyaa Bharadwaj Manager, Research and Consultancies, Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices*

Community participation in social development projects

By the late 1980s, people's participation in planning and implementation of projects became an integral part of most project proposals. "Empowerment of people" to be their own agents of development, also became a non-negotiable for most projects, although the feasibility of achieving success in that indicator remained in the domain of intangibility. As a result, a dichotomous understanding of development as "service provision to marginalized sections" and "as empowerment of marginalized sections" co-existed. Nevertheless, even when many service delivery programmes adopt "community mobilization" as an approach to create demands for services as well as to enhance service outreach, the programme invariably begins to look at many issues that the empowered community wants the programme to address.

In this paper, we are using an example of a straightforward HIV/AIDS prevention programme, which, owing to adoption of a community mobilization approach, has created spaces for different issues of the community members to be at the fore. These include addressing crises faced by community members, engagement on rights and entitlements of the community as well as mechanisms to address stigma associated with the community. Given the scenario of an expansion of the programme to address expressed needs of the community, a conventional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system might not do justice to the outcomes of the expanded programme unless it transforms itself to adapt to the principles of community participation. Based on the learnings from a project that mandated institutionalizing a monitoring system in a scaled community mobilization programme, this paper argues that the monitoring of community mobilization processes require such systems and processes which embed the transformative aspects of community mobilization in the processes itself. It is realized that M&E per se has to be recognized as an intervention in itself, and its processes as well as outcomes have to be governed by principles of participation and empowerment, that recognize power relationships both at the micro- and macro-level. Community participation in monitoring and evaluation provides space for the community to not only develop a comprehensive understanding about the programme but also to know the ways and means of overcoming challenges.

Background of the programme

The Avahan India AIDS Initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provides a large-scale model of community mobilization. Avahan is a targeted intervention[1] operating in 82 districts[2] across six Indian states (with a combined population of 300 million) where there is a high prevalence of HIV. The process of community mobilization began with the recruitment of community guides to map the high-risk population[3] in each district where Avahan was working. Many of these community guides became peer educators (PEs) responsible for sensitizing other community members about HIV prevention and imparting information and skills. The active recruitment of PEs in various project-related tasks strengthened the skills and confidence among a large number of community members. By promoting community participation at all of its service delivery points, such as clinics and drop-in centres,[4] community ownership of the programme was naturally fostered. Drop-in centres provided a space where community members could discuss common issues such as stigma (related both to HIV and to their membership in marginalized communities), violence inflicted by the police, and denial of entitlements such as ration cards.[5] Community members began to participate in the management of drop-in centres; and community-led programme committees and advocacy groups were formed to oversee and support the interventions. With a focus on sustainability, community-based groups (CBGs) are increasingly being recognized as crucial in scaling up and sustaining HIV prevention programmes.[6]

1 Targeted Interventions (TIs): "are a resource-effective way to implement HIV prevention and care services to specific populations within communities with low-level and concentrated HIV epidemics by providing them with the information, means and skills they need to minimize HIV transmission and improve their access to care, support and treatment service", National AIDS Program Management, Module 4, World Health Orgainization, 2007.
2 A district is an administrative subdivision of a state in India. An average district has an area of 2,000 square miles and a population of two million.
3 High-risk groups as defined by the National AIDS Control Policy, Government of India are female sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgenders, and injecting drug users.
4 Drop-in centres are spaces for high-risk group (HRG) members to gather: they are typically simply furnished rooms that can accommodate 50-150 people, with bathing facilities. They are often situated next door to the programme-managed medical clinic and have become the hub of community life.
5 Ration cards are issued by the government and permits such cardholders to procure essential goods at subsidized prices.
6 Policy Briefing No. 1: Supporting NGOs & CBOs responding to HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS Alliance, July 2002.

Praxis - Institute for Participatory Practices,[7] in consultation with representatives of community-based groups of sex workers, evolved a design to monitor the strengthening of community groups.

Evolving principles of participatory M&E

With the objective that the M&E system adheres to the principle of an enhanced role of communities in the programme, it was necessary that the M&E system itself become an instrument in the hands of the community to steer the process of community mobilization. The key challenge was that this required the community to be empowered as users of the information collected by the M&E system. It therefore became necessary to create and agree upon certain principles before embarking on the process:

a) It would be a framework of social rights and justice that looks at the community (the intended beneficiaries) not only as rights holders but also as agents of change.
b) Community participation is necessary at every stage—from evolving of the assessment design to data collection to analysis of information. There is a recognition, however, that participation might tend to become tokenistic at each level, if spaces are not actively created. It is recognized that there is a need for evolving community self-administrable tools.
c) Community members may not be able to arrive at a unanimous/single opinion on each issue and therefore the design needs to have scope to accommodate multiple opinions.
d) While there will be space for community members to deliberate on an issue and attempt consensus, the social justice framework[8] will continue to govern community participation, in the sense that, community voices may not necessarily be valued higher, just because they are from the community.
e) Participation of the primary user of the findings is also important to incorporate information about the real challenges they face, which can be located at the personal as well as professional domains.
f) The process needs to have embedded in it some mechanisms which facilitate the use of the findings for the community—so that they can reflect upon it and make amends in their programmes and plans. Community participation is not there only at the data collection stage, but also at the analysis stage.
g) The design as well as tools should gradually be transformed into community self-administrable tools to ensure complete transition of the system to the community.

It is therefore pre-acknowledged that the M&E system envisions social development as an empowerment process (not merely as a service delivery to beneficiaries); looks at community participation as transformative (not as instrumental); and sets objectives for improving (not just proving) social outcomes—thus implying that the M&E component has to run along with the programme. While a participatory M&E system can bring issues of local participation to the forefront, the "intervention" part of monitoring and evaluation is to:

a) Pave the way for the community to negotiate its space at the higher level of power contestations by making their voices heard at appropriate levels; and
b) Provide the requisite knowledge and awareness to the community to create its own path and demand the same from the programme.

Measuring, monitoring and evaluating community mobilization

(a) Community mobilization

"Community", defined in its widest and most inclusive sense, means a group of people who have something in common and will act together in their common interest.[9] For the purposes of this paper, "community" refers to the high-risk groups detailed above, but will focus largely on

7 Praxis is a knowledge-based not-for-profit development support organization, committed to mainstreaming the voices of the poor and marginalized sections of society in the process of development. It undertakes research in various thematic areas of development.
8 The social justice framework is one which "actively addresses the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and isms, and recognizes that society is the product of historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability among others" - Marilyn Cochran-Smith.
9 UNAIDS, technical update, 1997, Community Mobilization and AIDS.

female sex workers. The term "community mobilization" refers to the process of uniting these community members to "utilize their intimate knowledge of vulnerability to overcome the barriers they face and realize reduced HIV risk and greater self-reliance through their collective action".[10]

The rationale for adopting a community mobilization approach in HIV interventions has been that they will be more effective if the intervention works with community members to tackle issues of discrimination, stigma, exclusion and powerlessness.[11] As a result community-based groups (CBGs) are viewed as the basic unit to engage with and are a collective of community members who are mobilized to take action by one or more representatives, or by peer-educators.[12] CBGs may take the form of legally registered community-based organizations (CBOs), with a formalized, democratic process of choosing representatives.

Over the last decade, most HIV prevention projects in Asia have adopted community mobilization as an approach to address issues of vulnerability as well as to inform service delivery. The formation of CBGs has emerged as a key factor in ensuring that programmes accurately address the needs of high-risk groups, and in making programmes sustainable by developing the groups' capacity to advocate for the services they require.[13] Parallel to this was a move by the National AIDS Control Programme in India, which mandated (in 2007) the transition of intervention programmes to its "natural owners", which led to a mushrooming of CBGs.

(b) Measuring community mobilization and monitoring and evaluating it

The key challenge for Praxis was to create a framework to measure, monitor and evaluate this process of community mobilization. In a large-scale programme, the component of community mobilization involves multiple kinds of activities depending upon the local context as well as unique needs of the community that is being mobilized. Unlike the service delivery programme, a community mobilization programme generally would not have a standard package of activities.

Therefore, it is a challenge to evolve an M&E that does not create a blue-print for community mobilization, but instead provides space for multiple pathways of achieving an outcome—which is as broad as evolving an empowered community group. This was the most important challenge of this project, especially when an M&E system has to measure both process as well as outcome.

In this section, using the example of stigma reduction, the challenges are described. One of the important aspects that

Table 1. Snapshot of indicators evolved

EXAMPLES OF PROCESS INDICATORS	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOME INDICATORS
Are sex workers coming together?	Is there awareness on common issues and purposes?
Are they discussing issues beyond the project?	Does an organized group and leadership exist?
Are they engaging on collective action?	What is the regularity of the group meeting?
What is the nature of participation and collective action?	What is the functionality of the group?
	Are there demonstrable actions by groups on different issue?

10 Avahan—The India AIDs Initiative: The business of HIV prevention at scale. New Delhi: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2008.
11 Cooke and Kothari (eds.) Participation: the New Tyranny? London: Zed Books, 2001.
12 Peer educators are representative HRG members who implements an HIV prevention intervention on the ground through outreach, serving a population with whom they have a similar occupational, behavioural, social, or environmental experience and among whom there is trust and they are looked upon as a role model.
13 For example, the Sonagachi Project, begun in 1992 to address the vulnerabilities of FSWs in the Indian state of West Bengal, was handed over to a CBG, Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Samiti (DMSC), in 1999. Within two years, DMSC was able to expand to 15 red light districts in the West Bengal, increasing the coverage of the FSW population in the state to a level of 75%-80%.

Sex workers in Andhra Pradesh doing a causal loop process to identify crisis situations and perpetrators, 2010.

were studied was the response of community groups, in terms of collective actions, to address issues of stigma faced by the community members. The monitoring framework adopted a two-pronged approach of understanding the issue, thus creating process and outcome indicators. (See table 1)

Using the principles described above as the guide for the process, the M&E framework evolved using these indicators and wanted to ensure there was space to influence the programme to focus on social transformation, provided the process itself be made one owned and governed by the interests of the marginalized community; and the governed by the frame of rights and social justice.

Measuring collective responses to stigma and discrimination

(a) Capturing the community's understanding of stigma[14]

While evolving the design for measuring the response by community groups to issues of stigma, one important challenge for the research team was to understand how the community groups associate the term "stigma" with their problems. Owing to their association with HIV sector projects, the term stigma has been in their vocabulary for a while, but defining it was difficult. The research team tried to unpack this understanding by doing a problem tree analysis on this with the participating community group.[15]

The tool involves participants using a drawing of the trunk, roots and branches of a tree to identify problems relating to stigma, and the causes and effects of the problem. The participants are encouraged to draw the main causes of the problem along the roots of the tree, indicating that they are "root" problems. The secondary causes are also discussed and drawn as smaller roots emerging from the main roots. Similarly, main and secondary effects are discussed and drawn as the branches of the tree, thus forming a complete problem tree for stigma.

However, the researchers found that defining the term stigma was not easy and instead of defining the term, they asked the community to illustrate examples of stigma they face, through examples, some of which are below:

14 The images and explanations of tools, used in this section are from this and related projects of Praxis and are also adapted from Tools Together Now, HIV AIDS Alliance, 2006.

15 The participants/respondents of all the activities, includes two community members from six states in India—a CBG leader and member.

- "The child of sex worker had to drop-out from the school because she was treated badly by teachers."
- "One of the fellow IDU (injecting drug user), who died, was not allowed the funeral ritual."
- "We are not able to get a rented place for DIC." (drop in centre)
- "One member having done something wrong means entire community is like that."
- "En velayaye kevalama parkirangal… customer regulara kadaikeerangal- naangal eppavum irrupom- annal madippu illamal! (My work is seen as an undignified work, but clients regularly come to us. That means this community [FSW] will always be there. However, we will never be valued in society!)
- "I am a drug user. I have read that drug users are beaten up and socially boycotted. I realize that drugs are a menace. People used to shout at me… now they do not shout, their glance itself looks like an insult."
- "They make fun of me. They not only not understand me, but not even make a try." (Men who have Sex with Men)
- "Now with Targeted programme—we have additional HIV stigma."

For the community members, the lack of even minimal efforts by the larger society in trying to understand the real problems of these community members is what they feel truly stigmatizes them. Society has evolved a social norm for itself which has no place for the problems faced by these community members. According to them, larger society makes a statement that these people deserve this treatment as they have deviated from the acceptable moral norms of society. For the community, this is the practice of stigmatizing a community.

(b) Identifying nature and causes of stigma

What emerged from the problem tree analyses were some common trends of causes, sets of perpetrators and sets of actions. In order to elicit a better understanding of these, cause and effect diagrams and causal loops (as illustrated below) were also facilitated.

Both these sets of tools, as their name suggests, try to trace the key causes of why the communities are stigmatized, the nature of the stigma caused and the effect that it has on the individual community members as well as the CBGs themselves. This helps to raise concerns about a specific problem and helps the group begin to brainstorm ways to address the problem at hand. These tools help highlight differences of opinions, even conflicts, within communities as well as the range of different views.

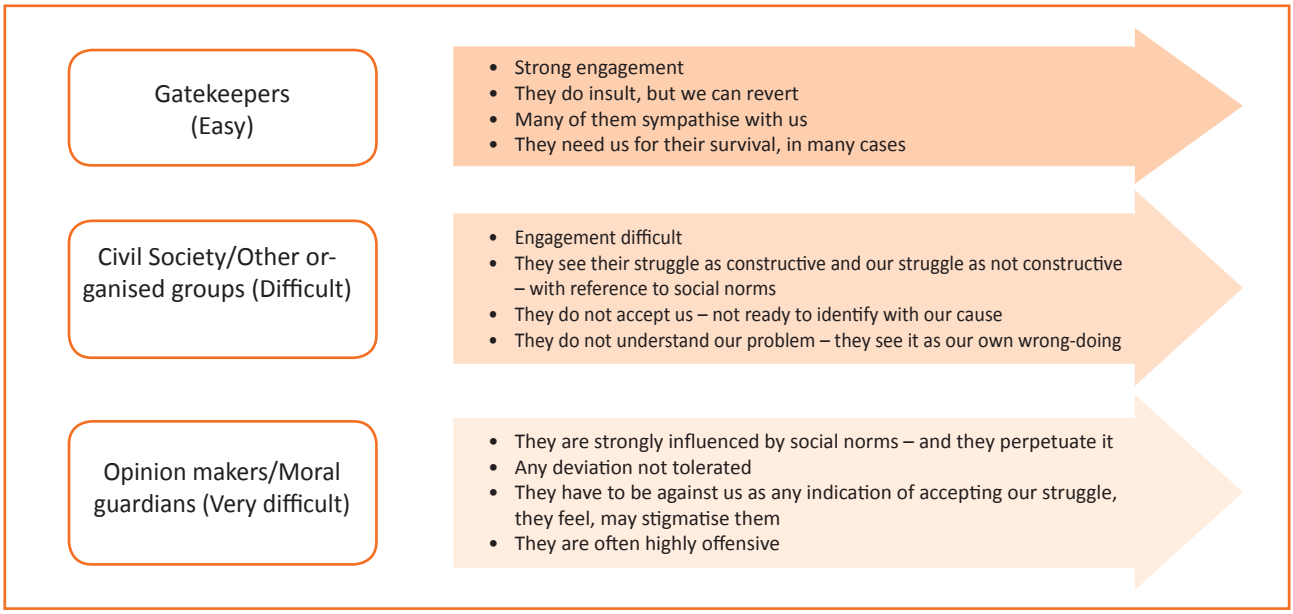
Table 2. Levels of stigma and vulnerability from stakeholders

	STAKEHOLDERS	STIGMA	VULNERABILITY/ HARASSMENT
1	Friends	L	M
2	Hospital doctors/ team	M	M
3	Guru's community	L	M
4	Students	L	L
5	Politicians	-	-
7	Auto drivers/Drivers	M	H
8	Family members	L	-
9	Colony	M	-
10	Colleagues	L	-
11	Rowdies	M	H
12	Partners	L	H
12	Clients	L	H
13	Lawyers	L	-
14	Police	M	-
15	Religious	L	-

The above exercises brought to light some key stakeholders who were involved in causing stigma. In order to understand the level of stigma they faced from each of the stakeholders identified above and the kind of harassment they faced from each the group was asked to list these in

Sex workers in Andhra Pradesh doing a process of ranking of stigma and vulnerability among stakeholders indentified.

Chart 1. Summary of stakeholder analysis



a table and then distribute 100 seeds among these stakeholders. The table 2 and the photograph show the distribution they arrived at.

To establish linkages and relationships of various stakeholders, circle/Venn diagrams were also created. This tool involves drawing circles in order to show the relationships between different people, places, organizations or services involved in the lives of community members. It helps compare things about those different stakeholders, such as how important, effective or accessible they are and also explore the relationships between them.

Venn diagrams can be used to demonstrate different types of information. For example, the length of lines can represent physical distance and the thickness of lines the strength of existing relationships. Distance between circles or sizes of circles can demonstrate the strength of relationships between different people, places, organizations or services. In this context, it helped arrive at a list of perpetrators and the ease of engagement with them. This understanding and categorization helped the facilitators to do a more comprehensive stakeholder analysis in chart 1.

Once the stakeholder analysis was done, this established the three key categories of stakeholders that female sex workers (FSWs) have to interact with, the ease of interaction with them and the quality of engagement with each of these stakeholders. This initial understanding required further unpacking by establishing the level of importance of each of these stakeholders in their lives and the kind of discrimination they face from them. While this was done for the exhaustive list of stakeholders identified by the group, the table below presents a snapshot of the responses for three stakeholders from each of the three categories identified in table 3.

(c) Developing indicators

After facilitating above discussions on issues related to stigma and discrimination, a set of indicators on the community group's capacity to address their stigma issues was finalized. A strong community-based group would perform well in the following indicators:

1. Community members have evolved a collective understanding on issues of stigma and discrimination.
2. Community groups are able to demonstrate collective actions and engagement with larger society on issues of stigma.
3. Community groups are able to engagement with the state in realizing rights and entitlements for their members.
4. Community groups are able to visibilize themselves to

Table 3. Nature of harm/discrimination faced by FSWs

	Important Stakeholders	Why are they important to you?	How they harm you?	Directly/ Openly harm you or indirectly?	Do you feel that they discriminate against you because of you being a Sex Worker?*	What is the ease with which you can engage with them?
Category A: Gatekeepers						
1	Goondas	Smooth business	Physical violence	Openly	No	Easy
2	Lodge owners/ Shopkeeper	Smooth business	Physical violence, verbal abuse, insult	Openly	No	Easy
3	Pimps/brothel owners/Drug peddlers	Smooth business	Physical violence, verbal abuse, insult	Openly	No	Easy
Category B: Civil Society/Other organized groups						
1	Social security	Social security	Insult	Openly	Yes	Difficult
2	Dalit groups/ NGOs	Social security	Insult, Ignore	Indirectly (behind our back)	Yes	Difficult
3	Political Parties/ Politicians	Social standing/ Social security	Insult, Ignore	Indirectly (behind our back)	No	Easy**
Category C: Opinion Makers/ Moral Guardians						
1	Faith-Leaders	Social standing	Insult	Openly	Yes	Very Difficult
2	Neighbourhood Community	Social standing	Verbal abuse, Insult, Ignore	Indirectly (behind our back)	Yes	Very Difficult
3	Local Clubs/ Association	Social standing	Verbal abuse, insult, ignore	Indirectly (behind our back)	Yes	Very Difficult

** Community members generally come from poorer sections, and often from socially excluded sections as well. They might face multiple discrimination based on class, caste, gender, HIV infected, etc. This question specifically tried to find out the impact of the identity of the sex work.*

*** It was a surprise to find them listing politicians among "easy engagement" stakeholder. But communities felt that it has been easy for them to access politicians for two reasons: (1) there is always a fear of losing their vote-base for they are membership-based organizations; and (2) they can be of significant use to them for elections and other political processes.*

larger society as community of sex workers, and have shown capacity to assert their interests.

5. Community leadership is able to mobilize their group members, whenever required, to assert the identity or in support of their demands.

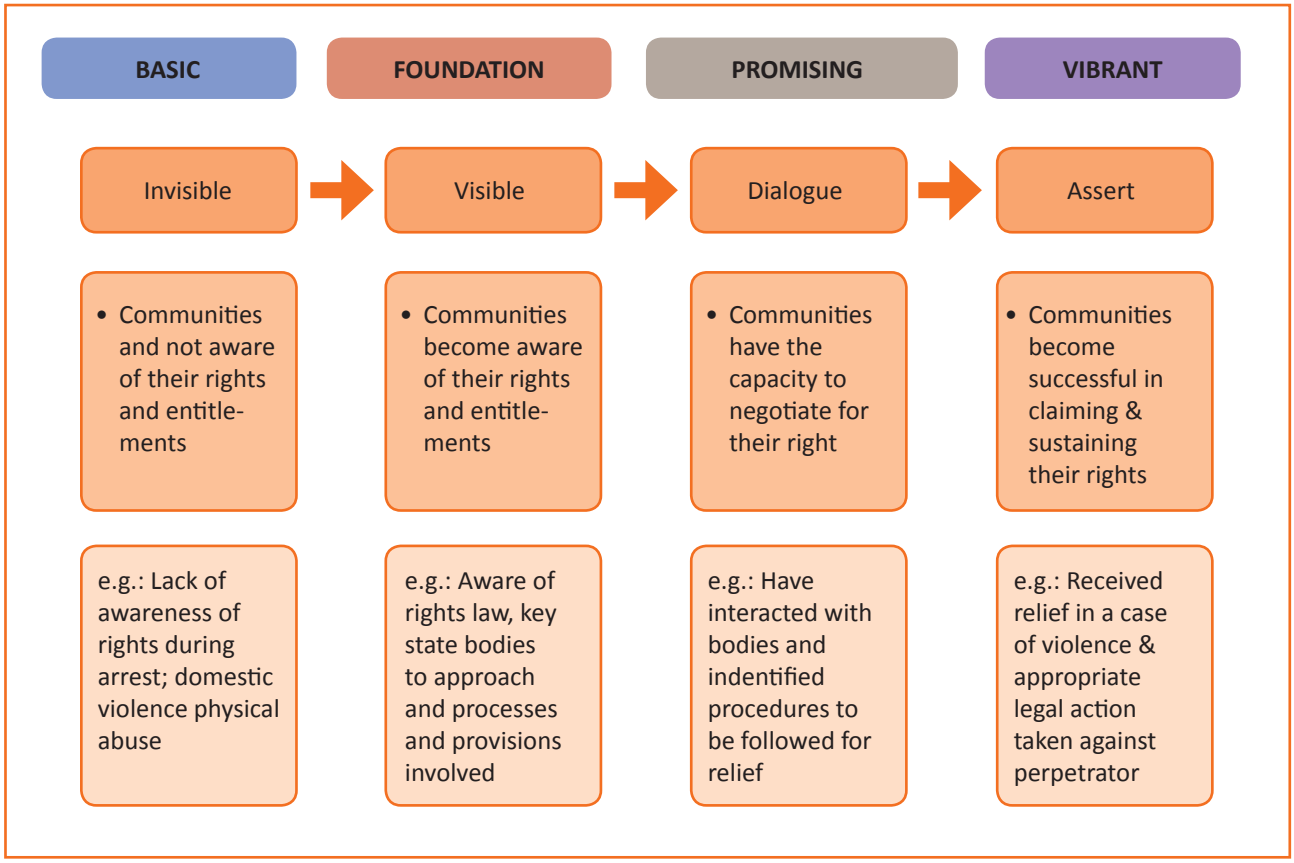
Measuring collective action

The "power" of a high-risk community derives from the collective strength of its members. Community members are not isolated from wider society, and in their interactions with it they may experience stigmatization because of their sexual identities or their occupations. These are additional areas of vulnerability apart from HIV/AIDS. Even without the project driving them to form a CBG as a part of the intervention, the community's need for collective action to address stigma and vulnerability may lead it to develop such a group on its own impetus.

To be effective, CBGs must be able to negotiate with external stakeholders as well as address internal issues among community members. Understanding the different ways in which power is experienced, and the avenues in which it is exercised, is therefore important in assessing community mobilization. The "powercube" model developed in part by John Gaventa[16] focuses on power relations among different stakeholders to assess the strength of communities and has been applied to understand citizen engagement with the state in diverse contexts. Based on Praxis's discussions with community members, using tools like journeys and change pathways, a continuum was established in different stages to illuminate power relations for CBGs. These four stages along the continuum are what led to the creation of bands against which collective action could be measured—basic, foundation, promising and vibrant.

The initial set of discussions helped the community arrive

Chart 2. Transition in levels of engagement with larger society on stigma



16 See www.powercube.net.

at a measure for the first indicator, which looks at Developing and evolving a collective understanding on issues of stigma and discrimination. Having arrived at a list of perpetrators and the stakeholder analysis detailed in the section above, the lens of the powercube was superimposed onto that understanding to evolve the nature of collective action of dialoguing with influential players to place them on the continuum of stages to help arrive at a measure for the second indicator: Demonstrable collective action and engagement with larger society on issues of stigma. A summary of the discussions are presented in chart 2.

The ability to engage with society moved from being invisible to visible to dialoguing to asserting.

A similar framework was used to measure the third indicator on Engagement with the state in realizing rights and entitlements. Community members located violation of rights and categorized rights and entitlements as below where awareness of rights and entitlements moved to negotiation and then claiming them. Another continuum moved along redress being claimable, available and finally accessible. This is presented in chart 3.

In order to understand the fourth indicator on streamlining effective crisis response systems, discussions helped categorize crisis and their response in different bands on the basis of who took the lead role and what method of response was adopted. The lead role increased along the bands from the non-governmental organization (NGO) to the peer educator to the CBG leadership team, and the methods from seeking immediate relief, seeking accountability and seeking policy-level changes. A snapshot of examples placed along the continuum is in table 4.

A similar thought process went into understanding and measuring the last indicator on Ability to mobilize masses

Chart 3. Transition in engagement with the state in realizing rights and entitlements

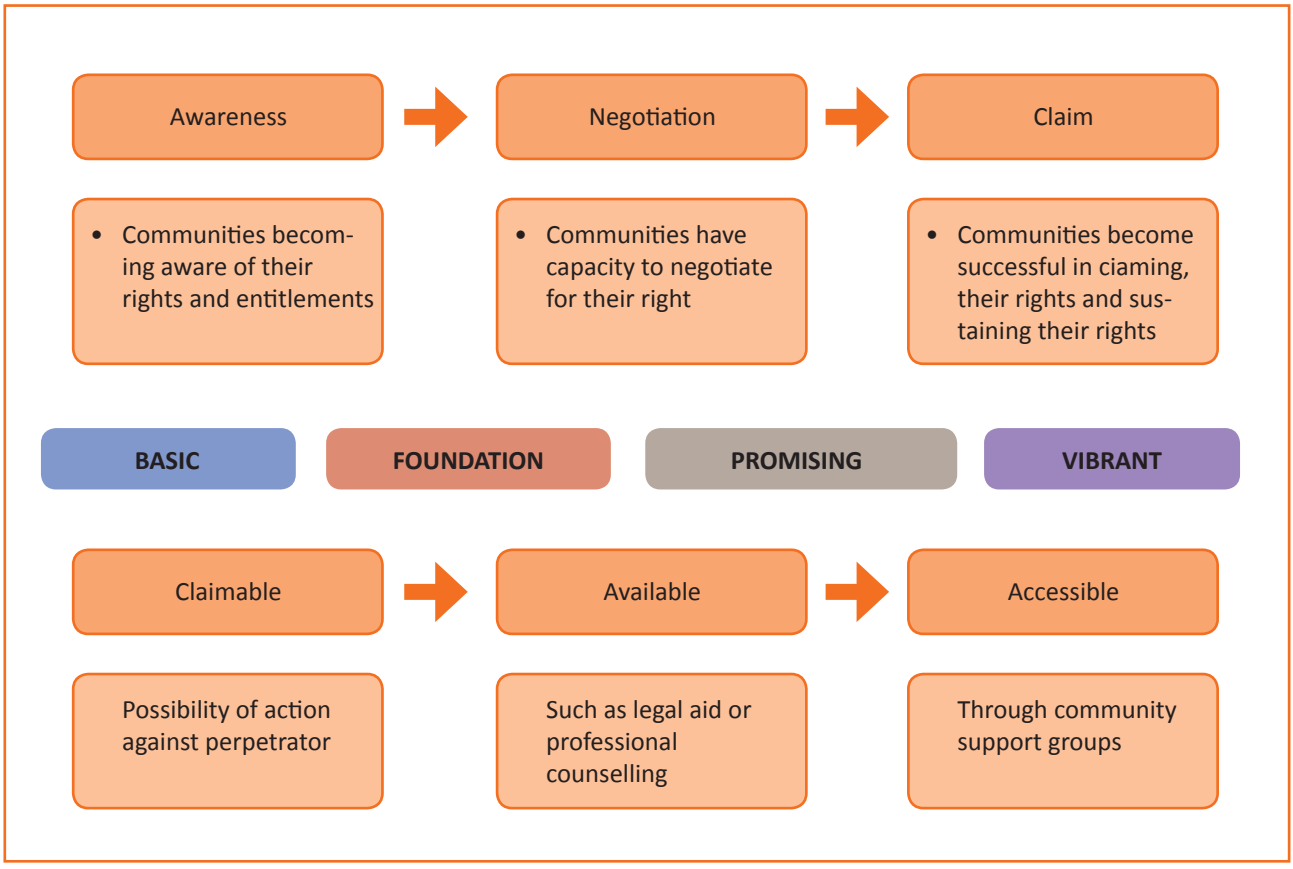


Table 4. Examples of transition based on leadership roles and methods adopted for crises faced by FSWs

STAGES	CRISIS	LEAD ROLE	METHOD
BASIC	Arrest of a FSW on account of theft	NGO	Meetings with appropriate officials
FOUNDATION	Act of violence by a partner, faced by the sex worker	Peer educator	Filing a first information report with the police
PROMISING	Denial of free public health care services by a Government hospital functionary	Peer educator	Filing a Right to Information (RTI) application
VIBRANT	Denial of election identity cards to transgender community members	Leadership team of the CBG	Organizing a mass protest to pressurize Government

Table 5. Examples of transition based on category, leadership roles, ownership and incentives to participate in events of CBGs of FSWs[17]

STAGES	EVENT	CATEGORY	LEAD ROLE	OWNERSHIP	INCENTIVE TO PARTICIPATE
BASIC	Celebration of Ganesh Festival for the community, in a DIC	Celebration of a festival	NGO	NGO	Yes
FOUNDATION	Demonstration by the NGO about the use of female condoms, on Women's Day	Sensitization	NGO	NGO	Yes
PROMISING	A fair held during the Navratri festival where the CBG had set up stalls essentially to raise resources	Resource mobilization	CBO	NGO	No
VIBRANT	Mass protest by the CBO outside a media office, against the incorrect depiction of FSWs as carriers of HIV	Purposeful action	CBO	CBO	No

17 There are many likely permutations and combinations of the four criteria above which could lead the same event to moving from basic to vibrant. The table above only states a few examples for clarity.

to assert the identity of the community. Here, besides the lead role in organizing the event, the category of event, and incentive to participate, it also established where the action stood on the continuum. The event categories ranged from celebration of festivals to sensitization events to those for resource mobilization and purposeful action. The events for which participants were paid incentives were scored lower than the ones for which they were not. The table 5 has some examples.

Learning emerging out of research

As this example shows, the M&E system can be made compatible with the objective of social transformation through collective action. The M&E processes are evolved in a way that they themselves would proactively facilitate the agenda of social transformation. Monitoring studies can be recognized as an intervention by itself, and its processes as well as outcomes have to be governed by principles of participation and empowerment, that recognize power relationships both at the micro- and macro-level. Community participation in M&E provides space for the community to not only develop awareness and a comprehensive understanding about the programme but also to know the ways and means of overcoming challenges.

Secondly, even the qualitative aspects of community mobilization can be collected and analysed in such a way that one can assign quantitative values to them so that they are made measureable and located in a continuum scale (in this case, a scale of Basic, Foundation, Promising and Vibrant). The assigning of values needs to be done in a transparent way so that the provider and user of information know very clearly the rationale for the value so assigned. Over time or context, if the rationale changes, there should be space in the M&E design so that information can be re-analysed.

While this helped transcend boundaries of the programme this needs to be led by the intended-beneficiary community, who again need to be seen as agents of change, rather than recipients of services. The boundaries have to be set within the social rights and justice framework in the context of the community the project is concerned with. It is necessary to evolve core principles of rights and social justice in discussion with the community, and this process itself is an intervention.

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Photo: UNDP/Eugene Zelenko

Evaluation of Partnerships: Approaches and models available to evaluators

By Natalia Kosheleva, Evaluation Consultant, Process Consulting Company

By Natalia Kosheleva
Evaluation Consultant,
Process Consulting Company

Email: natalia@processconsulting.ru

ABSTRACT

The growing understanding of the complex nature of social problems and the need for coordinated efforts of multiple actors to solve them has led to a wide use of partnership programme designs. This paper presents a "menu" of approaches and models that can be used by evaluators to evaluate partnerships.

The field of social programming has moved a long way from "cookbook recipe" design to collaborative approaches that involve multiple actors working together across organizational, sectoral and geographic boundaries. Evaluators and social scientists have developed a number of approaches and models that can be used to evaluate partnerships. Some of these approaches and model assume that partnership is a single entity with one goal, others argue that collaborative efforts are more accurately described as networks of many agencies working on multiple objectives (Cross et al., 2009).

"Key factors influencing the collaborative process" framework

Borden and Perkins (1999) summarized previous research on specific features of successful partnerships and produced a Collaboration Checklist as a self-assessment tool for partnerships. The list includes 12 key factors necessary for an effective collaborative process:

1. Communication: The collaboration has open and clear communication. There is an established process for communication between meetings.
2. Sustainability: The collaboration has a plan for sustaining membership and resources. This involves membership guidelines relating to terms of office and replacement of members.
3. Research and Evaluation: The collaboration has conducted a needs assessment or has obtained information to establish its goals and the collaboration continues to collect data to measure goal achievement.
4. Political Climate: The history and environment surrounding power and decision-making is positive. Political climate may be within the community as a whole, systems within the community or networks of people.
5. Resources: The collaboration has access to needed resources. Resources refer to four types of capital: environmental, in-kind, financial, and human.
6. Catalyst: The collaboration was started because of existing problem(s) or the reason(s) for collaboration to exist required a comprehensive approach.

Figure 1. A collaboration progress checklist

A COLLABORATION PROGRESS CHECKLIST					
Factors	**Strongly Agree 1**	**Somewhat Agree 2**	**Neither Agree or Disagree 3**	**Somewhat Disagree 4**	**Strongly Disagree 5**
Goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sustainability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Research and Evaluation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Political Climate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Resources	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Catalysts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Policies/Laws/Regulations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
History	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Connectedness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Community Development	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Understanding Community	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grand Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Source: Borden & Perkins (1999).

Table 1. Interpreting results of self-evaluation

SCORE	COMMENTARY
0-30	The collaboration has many components that comprise a successful collaboration. There are goals, working members, and strong leadership.
31-48	The collaboration has some of the factors; however, there is some need to develop the inter-workings of the group.
49-65	The collaboration may wish to refocus their goals and leadership.

Adapted from Borden & Perkins (1999).

7. Policies/Laws/Regulations: The collaboration has changed policies, laws, and/or regulations that allow the collaboration to function effectively.
8. History: The community has a history of working co-operatively and solving problems.
9. Connectedness: Members of this collaboration are connected and have established informal and formal communication networks at all levels.
10. Leadership: The leadership facilitates and supports team building, and capitalizes upon diversity and individual, group and organizational strengths.
11. Community Development: This community was mobilized to address important issues. There is a communication system and formal information channels that permit the exploration of issues, goals and objectives.
12. Understanding Community: The collaboration understands the community, including its people, cultures, values and habits.

To do the self-evaluation, partners have to use a five-point Likert scale to rate each of these 12 statements. Each point of the scale is given a numerical value from 1 to 5 (see figure 1). The resulting ratings are added together and the resulting score is used as a measure of success (see table 1).

The list of key factors also may be used as a conceptual framework for external evaluation and to guide the formulation of evaluation questions.

Hot Spots model

The Hot Spots model was developed by Lynda Gratton, Professor of Management Practice at London Business School. The model explains why some intra- and inter-organizational teams are successful and some are not. The model can be used as a conceptual framework for evaluation of network and partnerships.

> ***You always know when you are in a Hot Spot. You feel energized and vibrantly alive. Your brain is buzzing with ideas, and the people around you share your joy and excitement. The energy is palpable, bright, shining. These are times when what you and others have always known becomes clearer, when adding value becomes more possible. Times when the ideas and insights from others miraculously combine with your own in a process of synthesis from which spring novelty, new ideas, and innovation.***
> *– Lynda Gratton, 2008*

To me this sounds like a perfect qualitative description of a successful partnership.

The model defines conditions necessary for creation of a Hot Spot. The first condition is a cooperative mindset. To achieve it organizations and partnership should establish mechanisms that reward team work. Senior managers should model a cooperative approach. Formal and informal mechanisms that promote cooperation should be established.

The second condition is boundary spanning that helps to lower the barriers to cooperation between people working in different partner organizations. It can be achieved by setting formal inter-organizational teams and promoting communication between staff members of partner organizations. Igniting purpose, the third condition, is necessary to bring people together and motivate them to work.

Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park

The fourth condition is the development of the productive capacity of staff members. Programme managers should recognize the talent of staff working in partner organizations. Partnership should have a clear division of responsibilities. When conflict arises, management should carefully use the disagreement to facilitate the creation of new knowledge. Partners should also address the issue of time differences if appropriate and ensure comfortable work rhythm to prevent people from burning out.

Evaluators can use the Hot Spots model as a conceptual framework to formulate evaluation questions, for example: "Did all staff at partnership organizations feel motivated by the partnership goal?"; "What mechanisms were established by partners to lower the barriers between organizations?"

Network analysis

If evaluators choose to describe partnership as networks of many agencies working on multiple objectives, they have to assume a role of a network mapper (Benjamin & Greene, 2009). To implement this role, evaluators can draw on systems thinking concepts (Benjamin & Greene, 2009) and social network analysis methodology. In Russian-language literature systems thinking (or systems approach) is defined as a methodology based on studying objects as systems, where system is defined as a group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole.

Systems approach is based on five core principles:

- Holism – a system is greater than the sum of its elements.
- Structure – behavior of the system is determined by its structure and relations between elements.
- Interdependence of system and its environment – properties of system are formed and revealed in the process of its interaction with its environment.
- Hierarchy – any system is an element of some larger system, and any element is a system itself.
- Multiple descriptions – no single model can give an exhaustive description of a system, so a multitude of models should be developed.

Table 2. Levels of linkage between actors

LEVEL	PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	PROCESS
Networking	• Communicate for a common understanding • Clearinghouse for information • Create a base of support	• Nonhierarchical • Loose/flexible link • Roles loosely defined • Community action is primary link among members	• Low key leadership • Minimal decision-making • Little conflict • Informal communication
Alliance	• Match needs and provide information • Limit duplication of services • Ensure tasks are done • Increase cooperation	• Central body of people as communication hub • Semiformal links • Roles somewhat defined • Links are advisory • Group leverages/raises money	• Facilitative readers • Complex decision-making • Some conflict • Formal communication within the central group
Partnership	• Coordinate and share resources to address common issues • Merge resources base to create something new	• Central body of people consists of decision makers • Formalized links • Defined roles • Group develops new resources and joint budget	• Autonomous leadership but focus is on issues • Group decision making in central and subgroup • Communication is frequent and clear
Coalition	• Share ideas and be willing to pull resources from existing systems • Develop commitment for a minimum of 3 years	• All members involved in decision-making • Roles and time defined • Links formal with written agreements • Group develops new resources and joint budget	• Shared leadership • Decision-making formal with all members • Communication is formal and prioritized
Collaboration	• Accomplish shared vision and impact benchmarks • Build independent system to address issues and opportunities	• Consensus used in shared decision-making • Roles, time and evaluation formalized • Links are formal and written in work assignments	• Leadership high, trust level high, productivity high • Ideas and decisions are equally shared • Highly developed communication

Source: Cross et al. (2009).

Social network analyses (SNA) that is used in sociology and organizational studies is a more narrow approach that looks only on the patterns of relationships between actors within the context of social situations, but not on the individual characteristics of those actors (Fredericks & Durland, 2005). SNA provides a graphical presentation of networks and has developed special measures for relations between actors.

Two features of networks—network structure (who is directly linked with whom) and the strength of ties between actors—have distinct effects on outcomes of social interventions like knowledge transfer, organizational change, improved productivity, innovation and provision of services (Cross et al., 2009). So these two features can be the main focus of an evaluation.

Application of network lenses in evaluation always starts with the questions: "Who are the actors in the network?" Actors could be organizations, their divisions and individuals. In practice you usually end with a combination of all of these types. In my work I define actors as "functional units" that play distinct roles in the network.

Links are what makes a group of actors network. Every network participant is linked with all other participants—either directly or indirectly through other participants. Once we have identified network participants we should find out the presence of direct links between them and the strength of these links.

Table 2 presents five levels of strengths of relationships between partner organizations. Each level is defined by characteristics of partnership purpose, structure and process. The lowest level is networking, the highest is collaboration.

Collection of network data

Collection of network data starts with the review of project/programme documents. This will allow making a preliminary list of network participants. It is worth keeping in mind that even if the project has a group of official partners, the actual number of actors involved in joint efforts to attain the project goal may be larger.

The next step is to collect information from network partners to finalize the list of actors, identify functional units with unique identities and functions that should be treated as separate network participants (nodes) and assess the strength of relations between them.

Usually every organization has a group of people involved in project activities. To get a correct idea of interaction with other project partners it is important to involve all of these people in the data collection process. Information can be collected through a survey or group interviews (discussions), or a combination of both.

Respondents should be given the list of network participants developed in the process of review of project documentation and asked to add all missing partners who are involved in project implementation. For every partner in the list ask respondents to give names of their contact in this organization. Next, ask people to rate the strength of relations with every partner (e.g., using the scale presented in table 1). The scale is ordinal. To do the analysis of the date you will assign a number to every level, from 1 for "Networking" to 5 for "Collaboration". If two organizations are not linked directly, the strength of relationship is assigned a value of zero.

I strongly advise against using numbers for levels in surveys and even in group discussions. People should have a detailed description of the scale in front of them all the time when they do the rating and select between descriptive labels. Otherwise—at least in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries where the scale of 1 to 5 is strongly associated with school grades—you will get overrated numbers. Respondents are often resistant to use numbers below 3, as these are "bad" grades. If you need to assign the numbers to do the analysis later, this should be done by a member of the evaluation team. It is also useful to allow respondents to say that the relationship is between two adjacent levels.

Though group interviews are more time consuming and require more resources than surveys, they produce more accurate information, because the evaluator can explain the scale and ensure that people understand it. Group interviews also allow collecting qualitative information about the relations between network partners.

Data collected from each network partner can be summarized in the following format (table 3).

If using a survey to collect network data, use the median value of individual ratings as a group rating.

Table 3. Relations of one network partner to other partners

Name of the network partner: ABC			
Number of people involved in implementation of partner project: **Total:** **Female:** **Male:**			
PARTNERS	**CONTACT PERSON(S) AT ABC**	**CONTACT PERSON(S) AT PARTNER ORGANIZATION**	**LEVEL OF LINKAGE**

Network mapping

Group interview or discussion can include a development of a network map using a Net-Map methodology (http://netmap.wordpress.com/about/). Net-Map is an interview-based mapping tool developed by Eva Schiffer. The tool is low-tech and low-cost. It can be used when working with people with low formal education, but works well will highly educated people also.

Eva Schiffer has developed a special Net-Map tool box, but it is easy to prepare all necessary materials yourself. For every group discussion an evaluator would need:

- A large sheet of paper for network map (at least A3, better A2).
- Pens for drawing links (different colors).
- Adhesive paper for actor cards ("post-it", possibly different colors for different kinds of actors).

Photo: UN Photo/C Pannatier

- Flat round stackable discs for building influence towers (e.g., checker's pieces, bicycle spare parts).
- Actor figurines (different board game figures, optional but especially useful when working with illiterate interviewees).

The process starts with doing the list of network partners and making adhesive paper cards for each. Then these cards are placed on a sheet of paper. A card for organization members who are involved in a group discussion should be placed in the middle of this sheet. As people discuss the relations with other partners, they should draw arrows to show the flow of information and resources. Discussion participants can also access the relative "weight" of each participant in the network by putting stacks of disks next to each name card. After the exercise evaluators can record this information on the network map created by the group and include it in the form shown in table 2.

The next stage is to bring individual maps created by individual network partners into one map for the whole network. Evaluators can fulfil this task by herself or himself. Another option is to ask each group to assign a person to represent them at the joint mapping exercise involving all network partners.

The Net-Map exercise can be done in one step with representatives of all network partners brought together. But the two-step process allows minimizing the possible individual bias if only one person represents a group (Frey et al., 2006).

If the evaluation timeframe and resources permit, data on links between network participants can be analysed using specialized software (e.g., Pajek, that can be downloaded for free for non-commercial use at http://pajek.imfm.si/doku.php?id=download). Software calculates the network parameters and produces network maps, like the one shown in figure 2.

If resources and time are limited, information about levels of links can be put into Excel for calculation of simple statistics (e.g., the number of links per partner, the median strength of links). The Net-Map technique (adhesive paper cards put on a large sheet of paper) can be used to create a network map to see how network partners are related to each other.

Figure 2. Example of network map

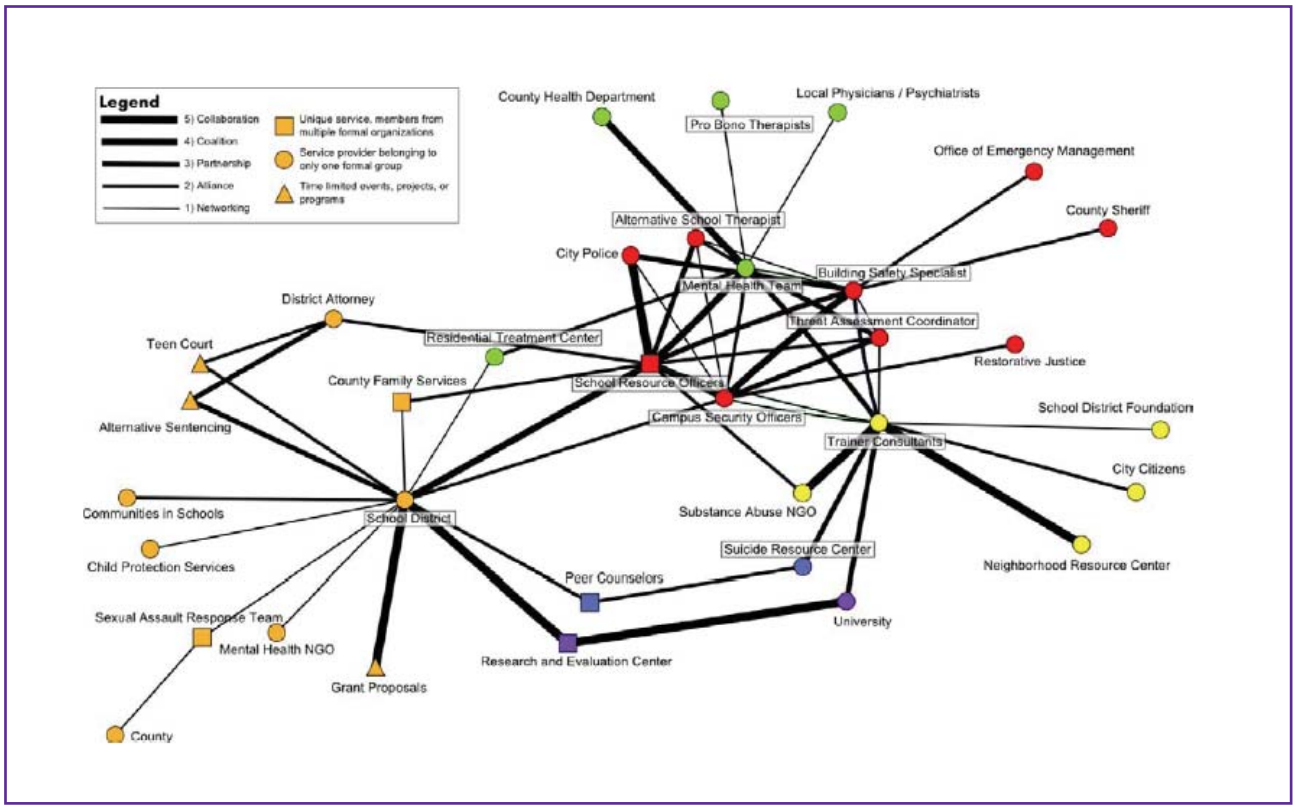

Photo: UN Women/Ashutosh Negi

Using network maps in evaluation

Once the network map is ready, it can serve as a basis for a number of evaluation questions, for example:

- Is (was) the existing network structure adequate and optimum for attaining project goals?
- What is the desired network structure?
- Are there any partners missing form the network?

Answers to these questions can be collected through interviews with representatives of network partners. Group discussions similar to ones that were used to collect network data are useful as they minimize individual biases. If the time for evaluation is limited, the use of the Net-Map tool will allow collecting network data and answering the above mention evaluation questions within the framework of a single group discussion.

Longitudinal vs. end of project evaluation designs

Networks are dynamic systems that evolve over time. Longitudinal evaluation designs allow tracking changes in the network structure and strengths of ties between partners over time when evaluator works with a programme or project from conception phase through all stages of implementation. For example, the team evaluating the project funded by the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative in USA measured interagency relationships at four points of time between November 2000 and May 2003 (Cross et al., 2009).

In the CIS regions evaluators are usually called at the end of the project. In this case the evolution of the network in the course of the project can be captured by asking participants of group interviews to recall at

what stage contacts with existing project partners were established: before the project started or during some selected periods of project implementation, and if some partners were lost in the course of the project.

Applying gender lens to evaluation of partnerships

From the point of view of the systems approach, partnerships are social systems that are elements of broader social systems. Partnerships are usually created to address some effects produced by broader social systems that are perceived as negative or to change the way these systems work to prevent undesirable results. At the same time networks are affected by processes in the broader social systems which can create barriers for effective social betterment.

Gender is one of social constructs that may lead to social inequality. Gender-blind policies and programmes that do not distinguish between men and women incorporate existing biases and tend to exclude women (International Labour Organization [ILO]/South-East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory Team's [SEAPAT] OnLine Gender Learning & Information Module, 1998).

Processes by which gender inequalities are socially constructed are reproduced across a range of institutions, including those that work to address the different forms of social exclusion and inequality. "Gender relations do not operate in a social vacuum but are products of the ways in which institutions are organized and reconstituted over time" (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996). Naila Kabeer at the Institute of Development Studies, UK, has developed the social relations framework that focuses on the institutional construction of gender relations. The framework "is intended to direct attention to the existence of gender inequalities in the prevailing distribution of resources, responsibilities and power and to analyse how they are thrown up by the operations of the institutions which govern social life" (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996). Kabeer uses the definition of an institution as a framework of rules for achieving certain social or economic goals. Institutions can take specific structural forms of organizations or networks.

Kabeer has identified five dimensions of institutional social relationships that are especially relevant for gender analysis (ILO/SEAPAT's OnLine Gender Learning & Information Module, 1998):

- Rules, or how things get done; do they enable or constrain? Rules may be written or unwritten, formal or informal.
- Activities, or who does what, who gets what, and who can claim what. Activities may be productive, regulative, or distributive.
- Resources, or what is used and what is produced, including human (labour, education), material (food, assets, capital), or intangible resources (goodwill, information, networks).
- People, or who is in, who is out and who does what. Institutions are selective in the way they include or exclude people, assign them resources and responsibilities, and position them in the hierarchy.
- Power, or who decides, and whose interests are served.

This framework can be used to develop specific evaluation questions related to network operation and outcomes.

Group discussions used in the process of collecting network data give evaluators an opportunity to observe the power dynamics between staff members of a network partner. It is important to make sure that every person has an opportunity to give her or his opinion. The combination of an anonymous survey and a group discussion enables evaluators to collect the full range of opinions and gain a deeper understanding of the situation.

Combining gender lens with other approaches

The systems thinking principle of multiple descriptions says that no single model can give an exhaustive description of a system, so a multitude of models should be developed. This means that the different approaches described in this paper can be used to compliment each other.

The gender lens can be combined with any of the above approaches. For example, if we choose to combine the "Key Factors" framework with the gender lens, the statement "The collaboration understands the community, including its people, cultures, values and habits"

Photo: UN Women/Ashutosh Negi

can be formulated as follows: "The collaboration understands the gender structure of the community, experiences and perspectives of women and men". And the evaluator can ask respondents to discuss if they agree or disagree with this statement.

If the gender lens is combined with the Hot Spot model, one que stion to respondents can be re-formulated as follows: "Do male staff members recognize knowledge and skills that female staff members have?"

Separating inputs of different partners to partnership outcomes

Sometimes donors that provide financial support to partnerships ask partners to identify the share of the joint outcomes that can be attributed to a specific partner. This question is illegitimate. The system is always greater than the sum of its elements. The combined effort of the partnership is greater than the sum of individual partners. When partners join their efforts and resources, they are able to achieve outcomes that never would be possible if each partner was working on its own.

Meeting time and resources constraints

When we evaluate partnerships, the credibility of findings comes from gaining a multi-organizational perspective (Benjamin & Greene, 2009). This means that evaluators would need to involve many people in the data collection process. At the same time, in the CIS countries, resources and timeframes available for evaluation are usually limited. The example below of the final evaluation of "Community Service School Program" illustrates how these constraints can be met.

The programme was implemented in six regions of Russia by a partnership of six non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The goal of the programme was to create local networks of schools that would build partnerships with community actors to identify and ad-

dress social problems. By the end of the programme these networks included many actors. At the end of the programme each participating school was to send one representative to a two-day programme retreat. The delegation from each region also included one representative of a lead NGO and one representative of a partner state agency. The programme had no money to send evaluators to the regions. But, during the course of the programme, schools were trained and gained experience in the organization of group discussions with community members.

The final evaluation of the programme used a three-level design. The evaluator helped programme management to formulate three evaluation questions related to programme outcomes:

1. What impact did the programme have on individual level?
2. What impact did the programme have on the level of a school?
3. What impact did the programme have on the level of a city?

Participating schools were asked to arrange meeting with their community partners to discuss these questions. One day of the final programme retreat was used for evaluation. Three sessions were conducted. At the first session, delegations from the regions worked as separate groups. Each group was asked to discuss all three evaluation questions and record the answers on separate flip chart sheets. For the second session, participants were divided into three groups—one for each question. Each group included representatives from all regions who had to present results from the first session and participate in the interregional discussion. At the third session, representatives of the three groups presented results of the second session. This design allowed integrating perspectives of multiple programme participants within a very short time framework. The evaluator served as a moderator of the process: prepared instructions for group discussions on the regions, gave instructions to people at the beginning of the sessions at the retreat, and moderated the discussion during the final session.

Conclusions

The growing understanding of the complex nature of social problems and the need for coordinated efforts of multiple actors to solve them has led to a wide use of partnership programme designs and consequently to the need to evaluate them. At present, evaluators can use two ways to conceptualize inter-organizational partnerships—as single entities and as networks. These approaches complement each other, help to raise the level of understanding of evaluation and increase the quality of evaluation. Within each of these two approaches evaluators can choose from a “menu” of different instruments, techniques and conceptual frameworks that allows them to conduct high quality evaluation even when time and resources are restricted.

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Photo: UN Women

Case-based Gender Process Monitoring

By Kyoko Kusakabe, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Gender and Development Studies, School of Environment, Resource and Development at Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

By Kyoko Kusakabe,
Associate Professor and Coordinator of Gender and Development Studies,
School of Environment, Resource and Development, Asian Institute of Technology

Email: kyokok@ait.ac.th

ABSTRACT

Gender monitoring is difficult to implement, either because of the lack of gender analysis technical capacity in the field, and/or because of lack of time and budget, and/or because of lack of commitment. However, the recent closer attention paid to monitoring has provided an opportunity to mainstream gender monitoring into the whole project monitoring scheme. This paper introduces one approach to overcome some of the difficulties faced while highlighting gender aspects in monitoring and maximize the benefit gained through monitoring. The paper first discusses why gender monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is needed, and what constitutes gender M&E. Subsequently, the proposed case-based gender process monitoring scheme is introduced, as well as its advantages and disadvantages. The suggested case-based gender process monitoring builds on Mosse's (2001) process monitoring and the "most significant change" technique of Davies and Dart (2005). It relies on stories that are collected in the field, and through discussion of the cases, is aimed not only to collect information for monitoring but also to improve the gender analysis capacity of the project staff.

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Resources for development are becoming scarcer, and calls for improved results have resulted in stricter accountability. This, however, should be seen as an opportunity for gender and development to utilize monitoring as a means of highlighting the importance and relevance of gender perspectives in projects as well as to demonstrate the progress and challenges faced in the field. However, there are various obstacles both technically and institutionally to efficiently highlighting gender aspects during monitoring. This paper introduces one approach to overcome some of the difficulties faced while highlighting gender aspects in monitoring and maximize the benefit gained through monitoring. I will first discuss why gender monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is needed, and what constitutes gender M&E. After this, I will introduce the proposed scheme, and then discuss the pros and cons of establishing the suggested case-based gender process monitoring.

The need for gender perspectives in monitoring

Over the preceding decades, a number of gender analysis frameworks have been introduced, starting with the Harvard Analytical Framework[1] in the 1970s, Moser's Framework[2] (Moser, 1992) in the 1980s, Longwe's Empowerment Framework[3] and Gender Analysis Matrix,[4] as well as the social relations approach[5] (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1999) in the 1990s. All these helped highlight gender issues that should be focused on and incorporated into development planning during project planning and implementation. In addition to these analysis frameworks, discussions on women's participation (Cornwall, 2003) and empowerment also developed. With the Platform of Action for Gender Equality, the importance of gender indicators has been underlined, and there are conscious efforts to reflect gender relations and inequality in quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Simultaneously, monitoring approaches have also changed and their frameworks diversified. International organizations still largely base their monitoring schemes on the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), because it is simple and clear. Lately, bilateral donors are turning to results-based management which emphasizes tracking the output, outcome and impact of the intervention (Kusek and Rist, 2004). These monitoring frameworks focus clearly on the implementation and follow up of the intervention, but would have problems in identifying the attribution of the intervention. In that sense, the outcome mapping[6] developed by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) provides a useful tool in identifying the change actors and how the intervention has to work to enable changes.

The developments in gender analysis frameworks and in monitoring frameworks described above have benefitted gender monitoring. However, the limitations inherent to these two types of frameworks also hinder the effective establishment of a gender monitoring system. The general monitoring does not have the capacity to automatically give sufficient attention to gender aspects, and gender analysis is too complicated and sophisticated now to fit into a routinely conducted monitoring.

What is gender monitoring?

Gender monitoring is needed to achieve the gender objectives of the project. It is based on gender analysis and focuses on changes in gender relations, and differential changes in the outcome for women and men. As with gender planning, gender monitoring needs the participation of women in the process. In this sense, gender analysis and gender planning is essential for effective gender monitoring. It would need gender indicators to follow up on the gender outcomes. Brambilla (2001:2) noted that gender-sensitive monitoring needs to be designed to: (1) identify gender differences in perceptions, attitudes, opportunities and access to resources and decision-making; and (2) assess the impact of projects, programmes and policies on social understanding of gender relations in the household, community, economy and beyond.

1 Harvard Analytical Framework consists of four tools including Tool 1: The Activity Profile (which captures gender division of labour); Tool 2: Access and Control Profile (which captures access and control over resources and benefits); Tool 3: Influencing Factors (identifying factors that determine the gender division of labour and access/ control over resources); and Tool 4: The Project Cycle Analysis.

2 Moser's Framework consists of gender roles identification, gender needs assessment (practical and strategic gender needs), disaggregating control and decision-making in the household, and distinguishing different aims for interventions (gender policy matrix).

3 Longwe's Empowerment Framework shows the degree of empowerment by distinguishing the level of empowerment into welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control.

4 The Gender Analysis Matrix is a participatory tool that analyses changes in labour, time, resources and cultural factors for women, men, household and community.

5 The social relations approach analyses from the perspective that poverty is caused by unequal social relations. It composes of analysing five dimensions of social relations, institutional analysis and structural causes.

6 Outcome mapping is assesses changes in behavior, relations and actions of people rather than the product of the program. It assesses the influence of the programme to people with whom they are working. This can be used both for planning and M&E.
See http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/32807/1/118176_e.pdf.
In Cambodia, this approach has been successfully used in planning for a gender strategy and action plan for the Ministry of Planning.

Photo: UN Women

At the same time, it needs to be noted that it is often difficult to capture women's needs and voices especially where women are traditionally not allowed to speak out. Further, the methods used in the planning stage (either standard questionnaire or participatory rapid appraisal carried out in very short visits) are usually insufficient to record women's voices, since many women's needs cannot be counted or drawn, and are not readily expressed. Intra-household issues are especially notorious for the difficultly of their capture. Often, the same question elicits different answers from the husband and wife for almost every issue except for the number of children (Kusakabe and Vongphakdy, forthcoming).

The reason for such difference is threefold: (1) because of the gender division of labour and they do not inform each other of what they are doing; (2) because they use different kinds of measurement/conceptualization to assess the productivity; and (3) because they have different perceptions about activities that each of them do. Furthermore, it is often overlooked that there are differences among women and their experiences. Not all female-headed households are poor or destitute, although the most destitute households are predominantly female-headed.

Many of the monitoring methods above also overlook that monitoring is a political process. What is asked, what is recorded, what is followed up and how these are analysed (either as a problem that needs attention or not) are all decisions that the monitors, evaluators and project managers make based on their own perceptions as well as with subtle negotiation between them and the donors, the implementers and the community, including both women and men. These are decisions that will decide whose voices are to be considered authoritative and who will benefit more than others.

Therefore, gender monitoring needs to be able to capture these subtle differences and relations as well as be open to gender issues and women's needs that might not have been captured during the planning stage and is not being addressed in the project. Asking critical questions from the perspective of women as well as facilitating discussions throughout the monitoring process to deepen understanding and foster confidence among women to analyse their own situation is important.

Challenges in institutionalizing gender monitoring

Institutionalizing gender monitoring is difficult because of various factors. First of all, despite all the gender analysis frameworks and discussions on gender planning since the 1980s, gender perspective is yet to be fully integrated into project planning. Often, gender indicators are not included at the beginning of a project. Without a gender objective, it is difficult to set up gender-sensitive

monitoring. If there is no gender objective in an initial project document, it should be possible for it to be added on or to have the objectives changed during the course of the project's implementation. Often, differences among women are not sufficiently acknowledged and all the problems women face and all the needs of women are not included because of the short time that is spent in developing the project plan. Therefore, it is important that the project have some flexibility in adapting to new findings in the course of implementation. That is, it should be possible to change the approach or add new components into the project framework during the implementation of the project.

Some development projects do retain such flexibility, and some keep a portion of their budget for additional activities to be planned each year. But whether such flexibility is taken advantage of during a project is another question. There are instances of project staff not wanting to make the extra effort to change the planning document, especially since any change in project documents involves a long and strenuous bureaucratic procedure. Also, the capacity of project staff to devise relevant activities that make use of a flexible budget is sometimes limited.

The second problem is related to measurement. Gender relations are extremely difficult to quantify. It takes a long time to change gender relations, so it is difficult to produce an indicator that would capture the subtle potential that might lead to changes in the future.

It is especially difficult to quantify such subtle changes, and the figures might not show changes in gender relations within the life of the project, which would be reflected badly in the project report and also discourage those who are working on gender equality issues. The only way to capture these subtleties is through qualitative descriptions, but how to handle qualitative information is a challenge. Included in the Rural Poverty Reduction Program (RPRP)[7], an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported project in Cambodia, was a gender monitoring form that collected both qualitative and quantitative information. However, despite this the organizers left the qualitative information out of the report, primarily because it was difficult to summarize.

Measuring empowerment is also a problem. Empowerment is a process rather than a goal. Therefore, it is difficult to have a fixed indicator that needs to be achieved. Often, it is descriptions that depict the process. Such fluid indicators are difficult to include in logical frameworks, and thus are not taken as seriously as quantitative indicators.

The third problem is related to the capacity of the project staff. In regards to gender monitoring, it is important that the project staff be skilled in gender analysis. It is also important that they have good facilitation skills to encourage women to express their voices. However, this is often a luxury in the field. Hence, institutionalization of gender monitoring needs a capacity building component so that gender analysis skills can be fostered along the way.

Fourthly, important gender issues might lie outside a project's framework. As discussed earlier, women's needs might not manifest clearly in the initial stage of the project. Coverage for monitoring must be kept wide in order to capture needs that might have been overlooked. For example, in an area where an agricultural development project is being implemented, domestic violence might be an issue. Often the issue is dismissed with the charge that "this is an agricultural project and not a domestic violence project", but without attending to such threats within the household, women are significantly hampered in their participation in such agricultural projects. Gender monitoring would raise such issues and a more holistic approach to achieving the stated goal of the project would be achieved.

Case-based gender process monitoring

In order to overcome the above-mentioned challenges in institutionalizing gender monitoring, I would like to propose here a case-based gender process monitoring. This monitoring starts with the recognition that: (1) it is important to build capacity of gender analysis among all the field-level staff; (2) a wide coverage of different issues in the monitoring is essential and not to be limited to existing monitoring indicators; and (3) participation, discussion, and reflection are the most important processes in capturing the unspoken needs of women and subtle changes that are taking place.

This case-based gender process monitoring scheme further develops Mosse's (2001) process monitoring, and it closely follows the "Most Significant Change" (MSC) technique developed by Davies and Dart (2005). Mosse argued that looking at a project as a "process" provides

7 This project has been given a gender mainstreaming award by IFAD, for its initiative in gender mainstreaming, which included modifying Terms of Reference (TOR) of staff to clarify people responsible for tasks related to gender mainstreaming and the introduction of gender monitoring form.

several advantages: (1) it gives the project design flexibility and an attitude of learning from implementation; (2) relationships and contexts become central; and (3) it accommodates dynamism and unpredictability in development projects. Such process orientation can address many of the issues in gender M&E discussed above, such as the need for flexibility and openness as well as capturing relationships and contexts.

Mosse's process monitoring selects several topics, which he calls "key domains of change", and makes a descriptive and explanatory account of the stories of change. It is open-ended and expresses diversity. The key domains of change and collection of change stories are useful in gathering a wide variety of information. However, since the collection and analysis of these stories would need capacity building in gender analysis, so the process needs to have an embedded capacity building component.

A similar story-based monitoring was piloted by Oxfam Novib.[8] Here, consultants were assigned as story collectors of change, and collected stories and brought them back to the project for discussion. One advantage of using consultants is that gender analysis capacity is no longer of major concern. However, it would also be difficult for external consultants to build enough trust to discuss sensitive subjects with village women. It also has the problem of sustainability, in that if there is no budget for consultants, the project needs to stop the whole monitoring process.

The MSC Technique is also a story-based monitoring technique. Unlike the example above, stories are collected by field-level staff and not by external consultants. Respondents are asked "what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?" and are asked to give reasons for their assessment. It is an excellent tool for intermediate outcome and impact assessment, and stresses organizational learning.

Stories are analysed and filtered up the levels of authority, and the most significant stories are selected. This selection process is important in the scheme to communicate the values and goals of the program. However, as Davies and Dart also acknowledge, the technique itself does not automatically capture gendered impacts. Conscious effort and procedures are needed to ensure that monitoring gendered effects are not lost during the monitoring process.

Founded on successful story-based process monitoring carried out elsewhere, we have modified the techniques to develop a gender monitoring scheme that will not only be used to collect data, but which also contributes to improving gender analysis skills at the field level. In many developing countries, gender analysis skills at the field level are weak, and that becomes a problem when attempting to put in place an effective gender monitoring scheme. We suggest the following process to introduce and institutionalize case-based gender process monitoring.[9]

Selection of key domains of change

Project staff members discuss and agree on some key domains of change that are important from a gender perspective. These are basically large categories of issues where potential gender inequality can occur. Some examples of key domains are: women's participation, women's confidence level, decision-making patterns in the household, decision-making patterns in the community, gender division of labour, violence against women, women's access to knowledge, women's networks and mutual help. Having too many domains will make it difficult to collect stories, so it is better to initially select and focus on three to five domains. Since the assumption of this monitoring is that women's needs are more difficult to capture, the key domains of change here reflect the issues related to women, and since women are often the weaker partner in negotiation, power relations can be better captured by focusing on women's situation. Depending on the context, key domains more focused on men's situation (e.g., on their experience of migration) can be included, but then the power relations analysis is vis-à-vis the state and market, rather than gender relations within the household and community. In this sense, to establish the initial focus on gender monitoring, it is better to focus on women's situation first. It also needs to be noted that stories from different types of women need to be collected (by generation, class, marital status, ethnicity, race, caste, occupation, etc).

Meetings at the sub-district level to discuss the key domains of change

The stories will be collected by field-level (sub-district level) staff, either by the gender focal point of the sub-district or by the field worker assigned to the target sub-district. The added advantage of involving the field-level

8 See AWID's monitoring and evaluation wiki, Pilot Test Oxfam Novib http://awidme.pbworks.com/w/page/41435538/Pilot%20Test%20Oxfam%20Novib.

9 We are currently piloting this approach in an IFAD project in Cambodia. Please see appendix for a step-by-step manual that has been developed for the Rural Livelihood Improvement Project (RuLIP), an IFAD supported project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Cambodia.

staff or the community-level people as story collectors is that they will have a better rapport with the local community and will most likely stay there beyond the life of the project, enabling the institutionalizing of memories. However, a difficulty is that the gender analysis skills of local people might be insufficient. Nevertheless, the discussion of the stories will provide the story collectors with an opportunity to improve their gender analysis skills as well as increase their gender awareness and sensitivities. It is expected that these qualities will improve as the scheme is continued, and the standard of the stories will increase. In the first meeting, the key domains of change will be introduced and the methodology to be used in collecting stories will be explained and discussed.

Collection of stories

Stories will be collected by field-level staff and/or community focal points. One "happy" story (a successful story from the viewpoint of the story collectors) and one "sad" story (a not so successful story from the viewpoint of the story collectors) for each of the key domains of focus. Here, the definition of "happy", "sad" and "successful" will be left to the story collectors, and such definition/perceptions will be discussed later. The collection can be done two to four times a year, but needs to be more frequent in the first year to build capacity. It is emphasized here that the stories need not be "happy" or "sad" because of the project intervention. That is, any change in women's lives regardless of its attribution to the project is recorded in order to capture a holistic picture of women's situation in the community and household.

Sharing of the stories

The stories will be brought together at the district level for sharing and discussion. Such meetings can be combined with the regular project meetings. Selected stories will be shared by the story collectors (it would be better if all the stories can be discussed, but in order not to overburden the meeting, two or three stories can be included in one meeting), and the group will discuss the followings:

> What is "happy" (or "sad") about this story? Why do we feel that this is "happy" (or "sad")?
> Why did it happen like this?
> Have you seen similar stories in your area?
> What are the desired changes?
> How can we bring about that change? Can the project play a role in changing the situation? How?

The role of a facilitator at the meeting is to pose the questions and explore the participants/story collectors with the purpose of analysing the stories from a gender perspective. Therefore, district-level facilitators need to be well trained in gender analysis and facilitation. If such capacity is not yet available, a provincial-level staff can facilitate the meeting. This discussion is a significant part of the capacity building process at the implementation level. Thus, the story collection and the discussion/reflection are not only an information collection tool but also a capacity building opportunity. It is also important that the capacity of field-level staff and the community focal points is strengthened, since this will enable them to highlight gender issues much more strongly in future projects.

Reporting the stories and discussions

The stories and the discussion will be reported to the project. The summary of the discussion highlights the following:

(a) List of stories with one line summary of each
(b) Meeting minutes (that describes the discussion following the points in (4))
(c) Issues of concern for the project
(d) Signs of the project's achievements
(e) Recommendations for change/strengthening of approach

Item (d) should be incorporated in the log-frame or result-based management form as a qualitative indicator. Items (c) and (e) need to be included during the mid-term/regular review of the project to introduce necessary revisions into the project framework.

Advantages of and challenges facing case-based gender process monitoring

There are a number of advantages in introducing case-based gender process monitoring:

(1) It is based on the use of qualitative data collection and analysis that is an established technique in the social sciences including gender and development studies.
(2) It capitalizes on the community people's ability to tell stories. Community women and men are generally good story-tellers if asked to tell about people they know freely. Since they will be talking about people that they know in the community, there is no need for

Photo: UN Photo/John Isaac

an interview, and there is no need for training in story collection. The story collectors only need to be made aware of the necessity to be alert regarding certain changes, and are required to be attentive to changes.

(3) Since it is open-ended and hovers around broad themes but records individual specific experiences, it is able to capture differences between and among women and men, and is better able to capture intra-household and intra-community relations, as well as subtle and small changes, and changes that are not quantifiable.

(4) It achieves the double objective of collecting information for monitoring and building capacity for gender analysis at the field level. The approach also comes from the realization that formal training does not improve capacity, but it is on the job training and coaching that has a better result in capacity building. It is also often the case that when new schemes are introduced, lack of capacity is cited as the reason for not being able to implement the initiative. In this case-based gender process monitoring, there is basically no need for training to start up, and thus no need for a large extra budget, and it is easier to start up alongside the routine activity of the project.

(5) It demystifies gender analysis indicators, which are usually too technical and difficult for field-level staff to grasp. With this story-based approach, even someone with a basic education can learn the key indicators of gender and then incorporate them into the project. For example, it can be difficult for field-level staff to develop mobility indicators. But if we talk of a woman who goes to the market herself because the bus is frequent and thus earns more money, it is easy to grasp the mobility indicator.

(6) Since this is an on-going process, which would be incorporated in regular project meetings, it allows fast feedback. That is, there is no need to wait for a mid-term review to detect something that might not be going well.

(7) Institutionalizing this approach might initially require outside help to build capacity, especially during the district meeting where participants need to discuss cases and make gender analyses. The scheme is intended for integration into the regular project meeting, so eventually the monitoring cost should be smaller than if outsourced to consultants. It should be initially expected that the cases and their analysis will not be of high quality, since this is part of the capacity building. However, as more cases are gone through, and with external support from time to time, eventually the quality of cases and their analysis should improve to an acceptable level.

At the same time, there are a number of challenges to institutionalization of this approach.

(1) The assumption that the local people (field workers and community focal points) are closer to the community women and men and that they will have a better rapport is not necessarily correct. The quality of the story will totally depend on the story collector. If they are biased or not sensitive enough to change and

women's feelings, quality stories will not be collected. Thus there should be a continuous discussion and reflection with these story collectors. Also, in order to offset any possible dependency upon one person, it would be desirable to have several story collectors in one commune.

(2) If there is a lack of commitment from the project and the field staff to make this monitoring scheme work, it will not succeed. To make the most out of this scheme, the process needs to be on going. That is, a one time only collection of stories might be interesting, but it will not serve the purpose of monitoring and capacity building. Hence a commitment by the project to continue the story collection and discussion, as well as the willingness of the staff to take the results into consideration regarding the improvement of their project is necessary.

(3) Acceptability of the data collected by the project managers and the donors can be problematic. As discussed above, most projects are accustomed to collecting quantitative indicators, and there is less capacity in how to deal with qualitative indicators and information. Although case-based monitoring is able to capture and explain the causality and contribution of the project to the situation, it is not able to show the extent of change. If there is no agreed upon appreciation for such qualitative information, it can be easily dismissed or ignored at the review stage. Again it is important that the project leadership expresses understanding and appreciation of such qualitative information.

These challenges relate to the problem of validity of the data and how gender monitoring is situated in the overall project monitoring so that it will not further burden the already heavily encumbered monitoring requirements.

As for the question of how to validate the findings, this can be done in two ways:

(1) Through "thick description". What Geertz (1973) calls "thick description" is a textured account of local contexts that also reflects the observer's role in the description. The thick description supplies coherent information that provides validity to the data. Although it is not possible to expect the field-level staff to suddenly produce an in-depth description, more information can be added and a coherent picture provided through questions and discussions during the meeting as well as through further discussion with the respondent.

(2) Through triangulation. The stories are discussed in the meetings, where other participants are encouraged to share similar cases in their villages. This will verify the occurrence of such stories.

Situating gender monitoring in the overall project is important, since this will greatly influence the willingness of the project staff to take up gender monitoring. In many development projects, the monitoring scheme follows pre-set indicators based on the logical framework. The advantage of process monitoring like all the story-based monitoring is that it is not based on pre-set indicators, hence will be more holistic and will be able to capture unexpected outcomes better. However, the field-level staff may not accept it if this is considered an additional burden.

Therefore, in our pilot project in Cambodia, we have recommended to combine this exercise with the monthly project meeting, so that they can spend some time during the meeting on the discussion of the cases. By this means, no additional meetings need to be held for the sake of monitoring, and very little will be added to the workload.

The monitoring outcome from gender monitoring will be reported alongside the other monitoring scheme, and will be reported during the annual planning process. It would not replace the existing regular monitoring, but will supplement the information so that what might have been left out from a pre-determined set of indicators will be captured.

Concluding remarks

This monitoring scheme was designed to overcome the problem of lack of gender expertise at the field level by integrating the needs of capacity building for gender analysis and for monitoring of gender equality achievement and challenges. It is based on the already proven successful story-based monitoring techniques, but with gender perspective and gender analysis capacity building as a central concern.

This gender monitoring has been introduced and is currently being piloted in the Rural Livelihood Improvement Project (RuLIP), supported by IFAD in Cambodia, with involvement of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in building project management capacity. It is expected that once it is institutionalized, it would create a sustainable gender analysis mechanism that will benefit not only this particular project, but all future projects introduced in the area.

Steps to Implement Case-based Gender Process Monitoring for Rural Livelihood Improvement Programme (RuLIP)

Selection of key domains of change

a. Review the logframe. Check whether gender objectives and indicators are included in the logframe.
b. Based on the gender indicators that we need to collect, select three key domains of change from the list below. You can add more key domains of change if necessary. Key domains of change need to be set broadly as below, in order to capture factors that might influence gender equality and its changes. Some of the possible key domains of change for Rural Livelihood Improvement Programme (RuLIP) can be:

    - Women's participation
    - Women's confidence level
    - Gendered patterns in decision making in the household and community
    - Women's access to knowledge and resources
    - Women's network and mutual help
    - Changes in gender division of labor.

c. This selection of key domains of change can be done at the provincial level with the support from the national level and participation from the district (and if possible commune) level.

Discuss the key domains of change

This needs to be done at the provincial level with participation from district and commune level.

Each key domains of change that were selected in step 1 would be discussed so that we can have the same understanding. Questions that can be asked under each domains of change will also be discussed.

Participants will give examples for each domains of change.

Assign story collectors and story collecting schedule

Story collectors are the commune extension workers (CEWs) and women and children focal points (WCFPs).

Basically, we do not need elaborate training in how to interview or write a case. Actually, they do not even have to write the case, but to bring the case to the district meeting. During the meeting, the presented cases will be recorded.

The story collector needs to collect cases where:

- It falls in one of the key domains of change (it might be better to assign a key domains of change to be collected for the next meeting)
- Either a "happy" case (case where things went as we wanted them to be) or a "sad" case (case where things did not go as we wanted them to be)
- Mainly from project beneficiary, but in order to capture indirect effects from the project, cases from non-beneficiaries can also be collected.

The case should contain the following information:

- Name of commune where the case was collected
- Whether this case is about project beneficiary or non-beneficiary
- When this case has happened (since it is not an interview, and the case is about an incidence, it needs to note when it happened—at least year and month)
- Background of the case (sex, age and ethnicity of the person in the case)
- Describe what has happened.

During the district monthly meeting, one case will be discussed.

Case collection form

COMMUNE NAME	
Name of story collector	
Year and month that this story took place	
Status of project beneficiary or non-beneficiary?	
Sex of the person in this case	
Age of the person in this case	
Ethnicity of the person in this case	
Is this a "happy" story or a "sad" story?	
Key domains of change that this story addresses	
Description of the case	

A "happy" case and "sad" case needs to be discussed alternately whenever possible (that is, if we discuss a happy case this month, next month, we need to discuss a sad case).

Sharing of stories

During the monthly meeting at the district, one of the story collectors from one of the communes will share the case. It can be a verbal presentation. The meeting will be organized in the following order:

The story collector presents the story.

Open question session: Participants (of the district monthly meeting) ask questions to clarify or acquire more details of the case.

Discuss the following points with the participants as a whole:

- Why is this story "happy" (or "sad")?
- Why did it happen like this? Did the project have any impact on this story? If so, how?
- Have you seen similar stories in your area? If so, please describe the story.
- Do you want more such stories in your area? Why? If not, what is the desired change that needs to happen? Discuss this in relation to the key domains of change that the story is about. That is, if one of the key domains of change is about women's participation, the desired change that we want to see is the increase in quality participation by women. How can we change the situation so that the participation of women will improve?
- How can we bring about that change? What is the role of the project in bringing about change?

The purpose of this discussion is for all the participants to reflect on gender equality issues in the project area, improving their understanding in identifying gender issues and how gender inequality can be created/perpetuated, and how gender relations can be changed. There will be a note taker for the meeting, who will take notes about: (1) the completed story (with the original write up adding the clarifications made and details added during the meeting), and (2) summary of the discussion.

At the end of the meeting, assign the next story collector for the following month's meeting.

Reporting

The discussion in (4) would be included in the monthly report from the district. The discussion can be summarized in the report as:

- Summary of the story
- Signs of the project's achievements
- Issues of concern for the project
- Potential solutions from the project

These can further be included for:

- Qualitative indicator of logframe
- Explanation and analysis of change (after showing the changes in indicators, we can use the information here to explain why certain indicators were achieve and some were not achieved, not only for gender indicators, but also for other indicators.)

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Shared Measurement: A new frontier in learning based evaluation

By Lalitha Vaidyanathan, Managing Director, FSG Social Impact Consultants
FSG is a nonprofit consulting firm that specializes in research, strategy, and evaluation for the social sector.

By Lalitha Vaidyanathan
Managing Director of FSG,
Social Impact Consultants.

Email: Lalitha.Vaidyanathan@fsg.org

ABSTRACT

The traditional approach to solving problems in the social sector has been oriented to finding and funding isolated solutions embodied within a single organization with the hope that if the intervention or organization is successful it will grow or replicate to extend the impact more widely. However, the toughest problems society faces are complex and require an adaptive rather than the linear approach to problem solving described above. It requires an approach that is oriented to building broad, cross-sector collaboration amongst the interdependent organizations. Current evaluation approaches are not well suited for such collaborative, adaptive problem solving. This paper presents an emerging alternative approach for evaluating such complex problems called Shared Measurement. The paper first briefly describes the concept, gives examples of such systems in practice, discusses when and for whom it is relevant, and the costs involved in developing such systems. The paper then attempts to give a glimpse of such a system in operation through a detailed case study.

The traditional approach to solving problems in the social sector has been oriented to finding and funding isolated solutions embodied within a single organization with the hope that if the intervention or organization is successful it will grow or replicate to extend the impact more widely. This approach assumes that problems in the sector are simple in nature or complicated (see figure 1).

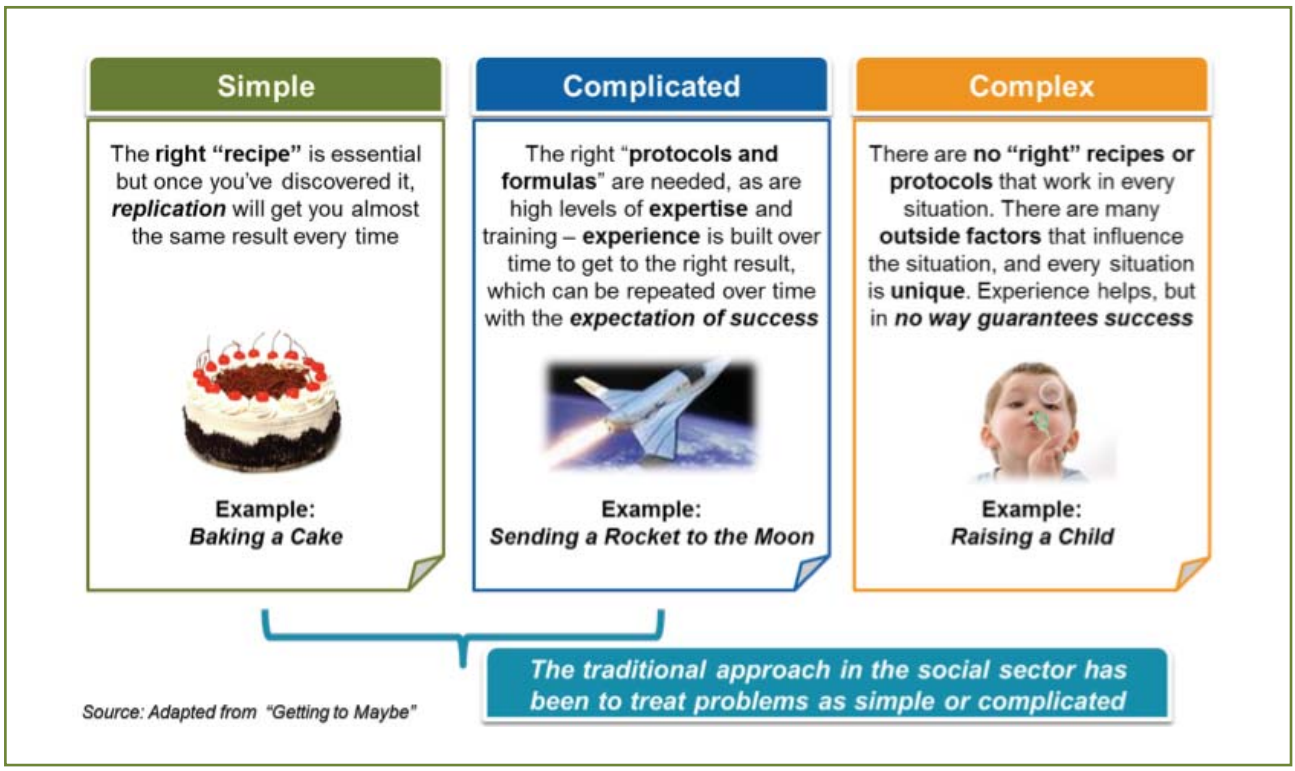
In reality, however, the toughest problems society faces—education, poverty, climate change and health—are influenced by a complex set of interdependent factors and organizations (including government, non-profit and corporations). These problems are complex and cannot be solved by any single organization or intervention. Effecting change in these situations requires a fundamentally different approach—one that is oriented to building broad, cross-sector coordination amongst the interdependent organizations and that sees the problem solving path as adaptive rather than linear.

The implications for evaluation are immense. The traditional approach of finding and funding isolated interventions gave rise to the currently predominant approach of evaluating impact controlled for externalities through experimental or quasi-experimental methods. This evaluation approach, however, does not work for complex problems. While the current approach has certainly helped inform the field about interventions that need to be part of a larger solution (e.g., that deworming is an important intervention in improving student learning outcomes), this approach is not well suited to evaluating complex problems that require a more adaptive approach. Assembling a set of interventions that have been proven to work in isolation is not sufficient to solve complex social problems. Luckily, the social sector is already beginning to see alternative approaches to solving these problems emerge. And associated with it, alternative approaches to evaluating complex problems are also emerging. This is the topic of focus for this paper.

Collective impact

The social sector is witnessing the emergence of a few exceptional cases where broad, cross-sector collaborations are successfully making progress towards solving complex social problems. Collaborations are nothing new. The social sector is filled with examples of partnerships, networks, and other types of joint efforts. However, only a small subset of these is actually effective in making

Figure 1. The social sector has traditionally treated problems as simple or complicated. Complex problems require a different approach



real progress towards solving complex problems. We call these collective impact initiatives (see figure 2). FSG first coined the term "collective impact" in an article of the same name published in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in December, 2011.

Unlike most collaborations, collective impact initiatives involve a set of unique characteristics that are the key determinants of the effectiveness of these collaborations. In the above-mentioned article, the authors John Kania and Mark Kramer of FSG describe how successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results:

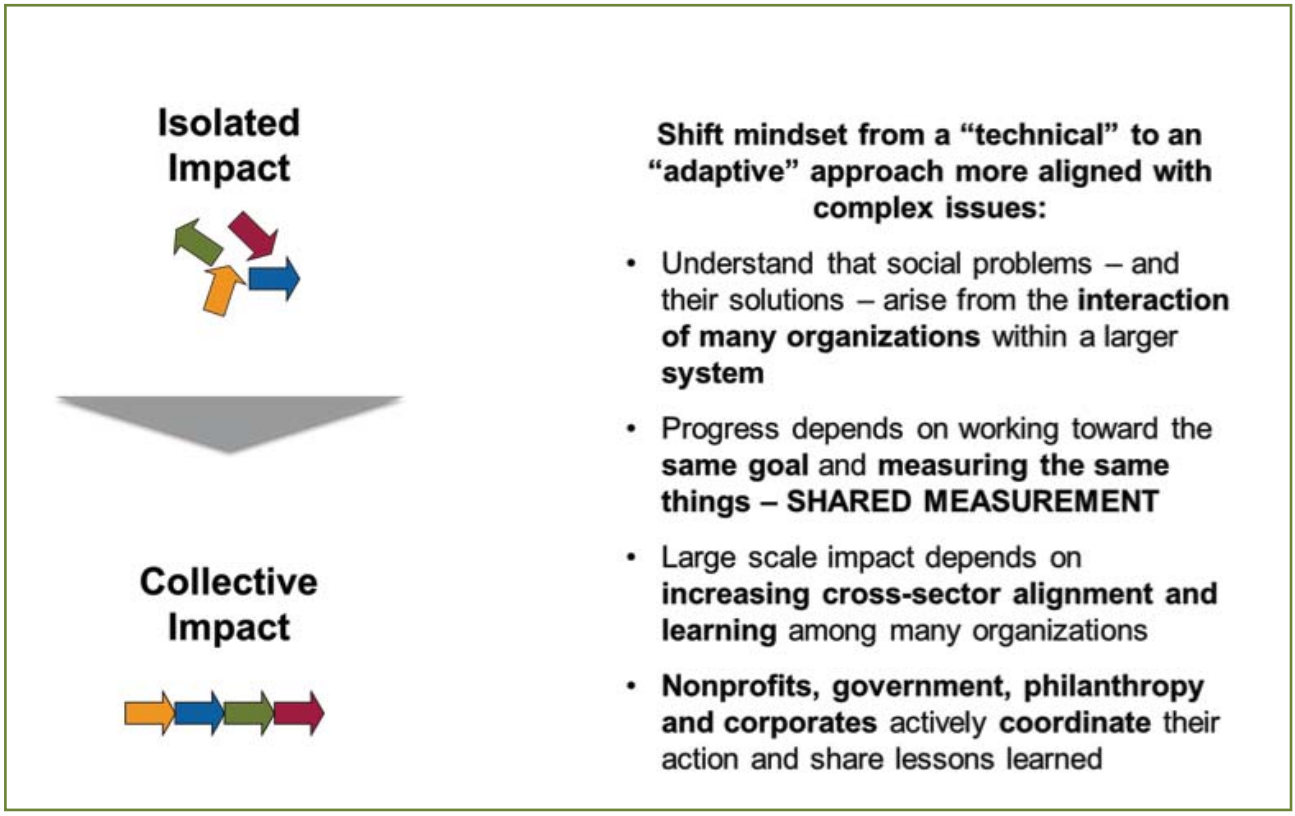
1. Common agenda. Shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions
2. Shared measurement systems. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations
3. Mutually reinforcing activities. Participants undertake the specific set of activities at which they excel in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others.
4. Continuous communication. Regular meetings to understand interventions of other participants and trust their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem
5. Backbone support organization. Organization with dedicated staff to plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting.

The report mentioned above profiles a number of collective impact initiatives that have these key characteristics and that are making progress towards solving social problems in the areas of education, environment and health.

Shared Measurement Systems

Complex problems and associated collaborative approaches to solving them require an alternative approach to evaluation. It requires a method that promotes a systemic and adaptive approach to solving complex problems. Shared Measurement Systems offer such an

Figure 2. From isolated impact to collective impact



alternative approach. Shared Measurement Systems are platforms, usually Web-based, that collect data and measure results consistently based on a short list of common indicators across multiple organizations involved in addressing the complex issue at hand. In 2009, FSG was funded by the Hewlett Foundation to study Shared Measurement Systems. Through six months of research, FSG examined 20 efforts that were adopting shared approaches to performance, outcome or impact measurement. The results of this study were published in a white paper entitled "Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement and Social Impact". This report found three emerging examples of Shared Measurement Systems (see figure 3). The three systems were actually Shared Measurement Systems that were at different stages of evolution.

The first stage, simply called Shared Measurement Platforms, are platforms that allow participating organizations to choose from a set of common measures within their issue area or field, and use Web-based tools to collect, analyze, and report on their performance or outcomes. Participating organizations pick and choose indicators from the menu that they feel are best suited to measure the performance and outcome of the work of their organization. As a result, different organizations may choose to report on different indicators on the menu. Even though not all participating organizations measure their efforts against an identical set of indicators, Shared Measurement Platforms benefit participating organizations by increasing efficiency through avoidance of each organization in such a platform having to independently determine the right set of outcomes relevant for their work. Such platforms also set the stage for encouraging participating organizations to share results and learn from each other. When organizations in Shared Measurement Platforms become comfortable measuring and sharing results, they can then evolve into the second stage, what we call Comparative Performance Systems. These are systems that require all participants within a field to report on the same measures, using identical definitions and methodologies. As a result, participants have a better ability to compare the outcome of different organizations, and the learning across organizations also deepens. In addition, the field as a whole can also more accurately document its scale and influence. The third and final stage of evolution is what we called Adaptive Learning Systems. These systems take the identical measures defined in the second stage and use that to engage participants in a facilitated process to coordinate their efforts, and implement a common agenda. All three

Figure 3. Emerging examples of Shared Measurement Systems at three different stages of evolution

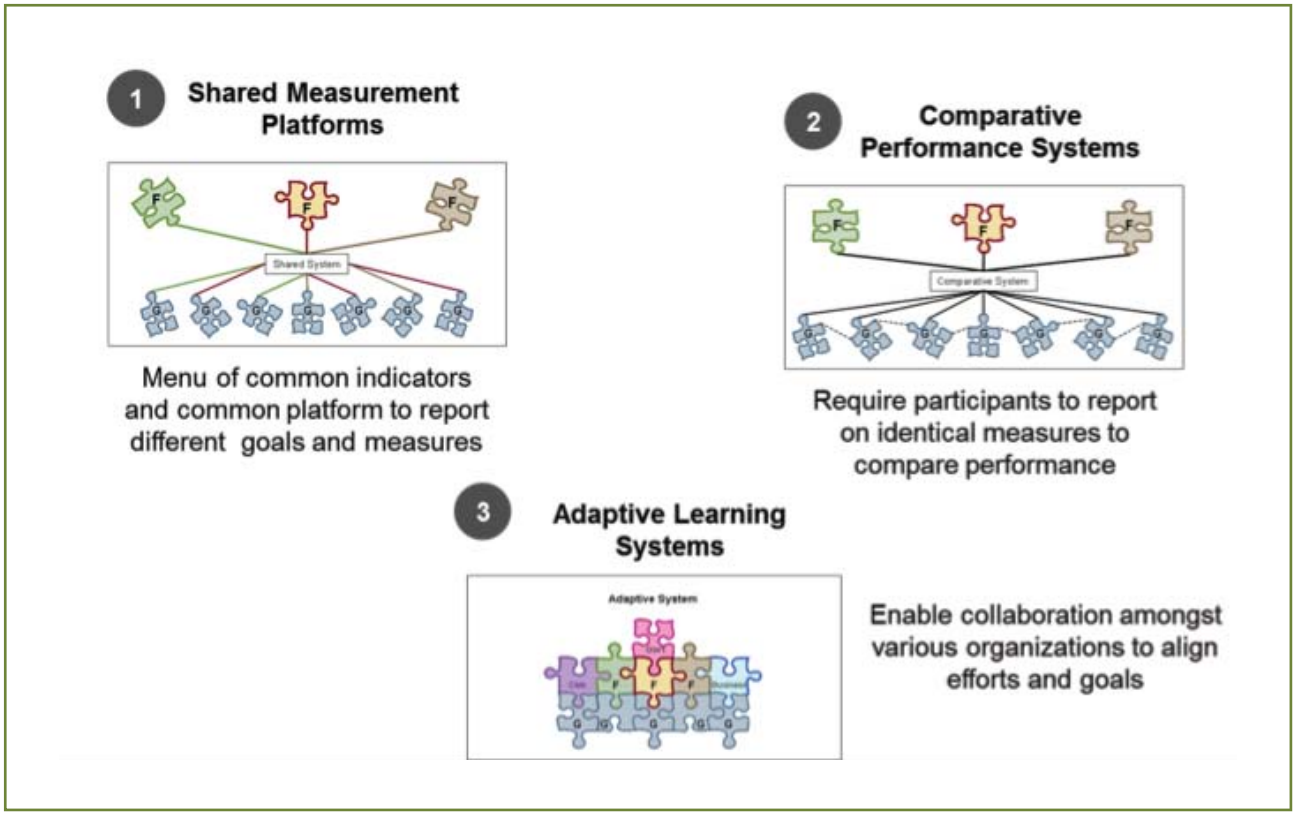
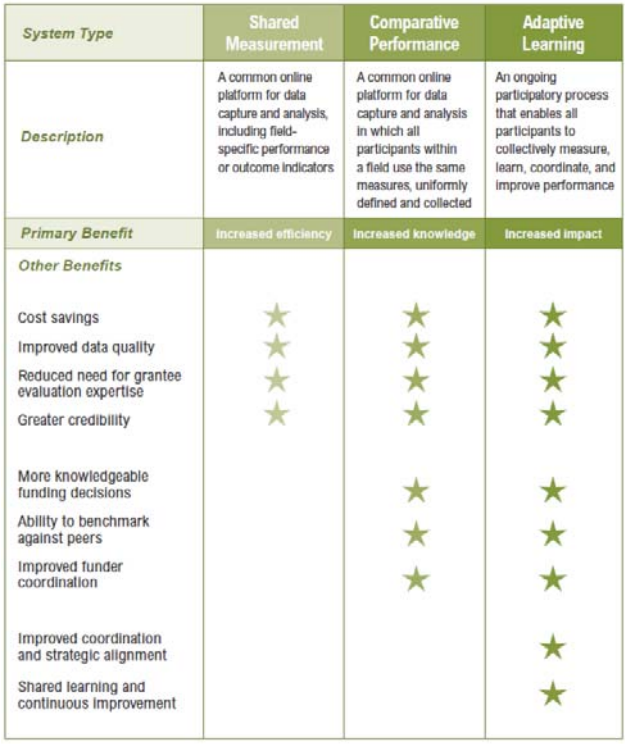


Figure 4. Three stages of evolution of Shared Measurement Systems



System Type	Shared Measurement	Comparative Performance	Adaptive Learning
Description	A common online platform for data capture and analysis, including field-specific performance or outcome indicators	A common online platform for data capture and analysis in which all participants within a field use the same measures, uniformly defined and collected	An ongoing participatory process that enables all participants to collectively measure, learn, coordinate, and improve performance
Primary Benefit	Increased efficiency	Increased knowledge	Increased impact
Other Benefits			
Cost savings	★	★	★
Improved data quality	★	★	★
Reduced need for grantee evaluation expertise	★	★	★
Greater credibility	★	★	★
More knowledgeable funding decisions		★	★
Ability to benchmark against peers		★	★
Improved funder coordination		★	★
Improved coordination and strategic alignment			★
Shared learning and continuous improvement			★

types of Shared Measurement Systems increase efficiency and reduce costs. They also improve the quality and credibility of the data collected, increase effectiveness by enabling participating organizations to learn from each other's performance, and document the progress of the field as a whole.

Shared Measurement Systems in practice

Shared Measurement Systems are an emerging trend. They are not yet commonplace in the social sector and only a limited number of examples of such systems currently exist. Amongst the examples that do exist, Shared Measurement Systems seem to be most effective and useful when applied to a field or sector where a manageable set of actors (a few hundreds at most) are involved in addressing a common social issue.

The case studies FSG has researched cut across fields or issues—public education (Strive, CCER), childhood obesity (ShapeUp Somerville), and environmental protection (Elizabeth River Project)—however, they have largely tended to be geographically bounded. For example, Strive involved three school districts in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, CCER is Seattle-based, ShapeUp Somerville involves the city of Somerville in Massachussetts, and the Elizabeth River Project was centered around south-eastern Virginia. This is perhaps the case because geographic boundaries limit the set of actors involved to a manageable number and as such makes it easier to find agreement to working collectively and to find agreement on a common set of indicators.

Exceptions to this seem to occur when the field in question, even if national, is small enough that the number of actors is limited. The case study given in the next section on Success Measures Data System (SMDS) is an example where the "field" in question is community development. While the geographic scope of SMDS is national (US), the key actors in this field are community development corporations (CDCs) who are, relatively speaking, a well-defined group of actors who are manageable in number. The most effective Shared Measurement Systems typically include all types of organizations in that field working on the issue including funders, non-government organizations (NGOs), government and the private sector. The size of organizations involved in these efforts seems to be irrelevant, though the most successful systems tend to include the largest and most influential organizations in that field.

In fact, one of the key success factors in the formation of Shared Measurement Systems seem to be that the participation of key actors drives widespread participation. Thus, we see that successful systems involve (though are not driven by) participation of key funders, critical government agencies (school districts and university systems in the case of public education), and the largest NGOs working on the issue. In some of the shared measurement examples FSG has studied such as Strive, we see the emergence of funding models that encourage participation in such systems. In the example of Strive, many funders require participation in the Strive collaborative in order to receive funding. Strive funders are also experimenting with funding of an entire sub-set of organizations working on a sub-issue (e.g., early childhood education) to promote collaboration rather than competition amongst NGOs working on the issue.

Most importantly, organizations seem to come together to take collective action and form Shared Measurement Systems driven by their recognition that the entire collective of actors is necessary for the issue at hand to be effectively addressed. These organizations recognize that even if the process of finding agreement across multiple actors

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can be extraordinarily challenging, that it is perhaps the only way in which the field is going to make significant progress on solving the complex problem at hand.

Shared Measurement Systems take many years and millions of dollars to develop. The SMDS case study below, for example, took five years and close to USD 1 million to develop. However, at an annual subscription cost of USD 2,500 per participating organization, the ongoing cost of evaluation for individual organizations is vastly reduced—and this does even begin to quantify the value of quality data collection and reporting as well as the value sharing and learning that are gained from these systems.

Case study: Success Measures Data System

SMDS was originally conceived in 1997 by a group of executive directors of leading CDCs in the US. CDCs are not-for-profit organizations that promote and support community development efforts focused on lower income populations in a geographic location such as a neighbourhood or a town. The most common activities include economic development, affordable housing and community building. This group of executive directors was independently experiencing an increase in demand for outcome reporting and accountability from their funders. To avoid reporting different outcomes to different funders, the group decided to initiate an effort to develop their own outcome measurement system that would enable them to meet funders' requirements while providing valuable information for programmatic planning and management. Through a process that engaged more than 300 practitioners, researchers, organizations, and other experts in the field, they attempted to answer the question: "If we're all in the same field, what menu of indicators can we collectively draw from?" Ultimately, these experts selected 44 indicators in the fields of affordable housing, economic development, and community building. Next, they pilot-tested the approach and indicators with about 50 community development organizations.

The feedback was overwhelmingly that the organizations wanted a way to collect and use the data and needed additional help in building the tools. So they assembled more than 120 data collection tools to correspond to the 44 indicators, and then developed a Web-based platform to support data collection and reporting on these indicators. The result was SMDS, which enables participants to measure the impact of their work by providing outcome indicators, a broad range of tested qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments to measure the indicators, a reporting function to tabulate data, and a secure place for organizations to enter and manage their data. Developed over a five-year period and launched in 2005, SMDS now boasts more than 200 active participants including Habitat for Humanity International.

Figure 5. Success Measures Data System menu of common indicators

The Success Measures Data System (SMDS) offers 44 indicators to measure the impact of housing, economic development, and community-building programmes at the individual, organization, and community level. There are currently over 120 data collection instruments, in English and Spanish, corresponding to these indicators on SMDS. These data collection instruments include surveys, interviews, observational protocols, focus groups and formats for analyzing programme administrative data or public records and data sources.

I. AFFORDABLE HOUSING INDICATORS

Set 1. Measuring benefits to residents of new and rehabitated housing

- H1. Monthly housing cost and affordability
- H2. Quality of housing
- H3. Wealth creation through homeownership
- H4. Enviornmentally sustainable design and construction
- H5. Personal effectiveness and stability

Set 2. Measuring benefits to community

- H6. Sense of community
- H7. Visual attractiveness of the neighbourhood
- H9. Neighbourhood security
- H10. Property values – residential
- H11. Share of owner – occupied homes

Set 3. Measuring benefits to municipality and society

- H12. Local economic impact
- H13. Duration of residency and resident stability
- H14. Diversity of incomes and of housing values and types

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Set 1. Measuring benefits of neighbourhood-based business support programmes

- E1. Business size, type and profitability
- E2. Job creation and preservation

Set 2. Measuring benefits of job training programmes

- E3. Employment and income from job training
- E4. Trainee evaluation of job training and placement
- E5. Skills acquisition –basic job readiness

Set 3. Measuring contributions to community

- E6. Attractiveness of business district
- E7. Extent to which basic community needs are met by local businesses
- E8. Local business support of and participation in community

III. COMMUNITY BUILDING INDICATORS

Set 1. Community and organizational capacity

- C1. Awareness of community and organization's effort
- C2. Participation in community organizations
- C3. Organizational capacity for development community leaders
- C4 Organizations involved in community building initiatives and resources committed
- C5. Accoutability to the community
- C6. Awareness and understanding of community issues
- C7 Capacity for collective action
- C8. Collaboration achieving economies of scale and scope

Set 2. Social relationships and networks

- C9. Resident satisfaction with neighbourhood
- C10. Sense of social cohesion
- C11. Personal and social networks
- C12. Links across race and ethnicity
- C13 Constructive working relationships among individuals/organizations in community building
- C14 Collaboration promoting shared values

Set 3. Community economic and political influence

- C15. Evidence of community power
- C16. Voting rates
- C17. Leadership for change: extent of leadership
- C18. External perception of neighbourhood
- C19. Public services
- C20. Private investment
- C21. Healthy environment
- C22. Racial equity

Figure 5 shows the full menu of 44 indicators in the SMDS. These indicators are mostly outcome indicators (vs. output indicators). While Shared Measurement Systems differ in this respect (some systems also collect output information), the key benefit of Shared Measurement Systems seem to be in the learning that comes from sharing results to common outcome measures. In more sophisticated collective systems such as Strive, impact indicators are also tracked—but this is typically done in the aggregate, across the entire collective—rather than at an individual organization level. Participants in SMDS can pick and choose to measure as many of the indicators as is relevant for their work. As a result, most participating organizations collect data and report on only a subset of these indicators. Participants use the tools made available by SMDS to collect the data. As is evident from the menu in figure 5, some of the indicators are more easily measured than others. For example, indicator H1, monthly housing cost and affordability, is defined objectively and easily measured. Cost is defined as total monthly housing costs including rent, mortgage payment, utilities, fees and property taxes. Similarly, affordability is assessed by dividing total cost by household income. A worksheet tool in SMDS helps participants easily collect and compute this data. Participants in the system can now readily compare the outcome of their programmes on these two fronts and learn from programmes that are able to create more affordable housing. It is important to note that comparison of common measures is useful only when accompanied by associated qualitative information. For example, the affordability of housing is very much dependent on the value of land in a particular geography and without such qualifying information comparison of common metrics could be misleading.

There are other common indicators on the menu that are more difficult to measure. For example, sense of community (H6), capacity for collective action (C7), sense of social cohesion (C10), and evidence of community power (C15). The way in which SMDS has approached defining these indicators and developing tools for data collection might offer some lessons for other fields that need to measure similarly nebulous outcomes and are interested in developing Shared Measurement Systems. At a high level, these outcomes are typically measured using qualitative data collection tools such as surveys, interviews or focus groups. Even though these are qualitative data collection methods, by asking the same questions in the

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survey, interview or focus groups, the results are more comparable across participating organizations and result in more meaningful discussions, sharing and learning.

H6: Sense of community

- Definition: Extent to which residents know and communicate with their neighbours and participate in community activities
- Data Collection Method: Survey of residents and community members

- **C7: Capacity for collective action**
  - Definition: Evidence that, over time, community residents and community-based organizations are able to act together, to resolve issues of concern or achieve desired change
  - Data Collection Method: Focus group and survey of residents and community-based organization
- **C10: Sense of social cohesion**
  - Definition: Degree to which residents have a sense of belonging and trust in their communities and can count on their neighbours to intervene or help each other
  - Data Collection Method: Survey or interview
- **C15: Evidence of community power**
  - Definition: Degree to which community stakeholders are able to influence local institutions and broader political and economic forces
  - Data Collection Methods: Survey to measure individual efficacy, focus group to assess influence and advocacy abilities of community-based organizations, interview of local decision makers, survey/ focus group of resident perception of most important issues, media tracking worksheet

Data collection is done by the participating organizations themselves using the tools made available to them by SMDS. The data collected is entered into a Web-based system that is managed and operated by SMDS. SMDS's dedicated staff is responsible for quality checking the data that is entered into the system and for providing technical assistance to participating organizations so that users do not need a high level of sophistication to use the system. Quality checking ensures that the data collected is of high integrity and is comparable across organizations.

At the present moment, sharing and learning from the data collected in a voluntary exercise and a subset of the 200 subscribing organizations come together for this purpose. As participants in the system come to understand and appreciate the power of learning from each other using shared measures, and become less fearful of the punitive implications of comparing results, SMDS expects to see an increase in sharing and learning activities. By making such activity voluntary, systems such as SMDS allow participants to come to this realization themselves.

Conclusion

Shared Measurement Systems offer an alternative approach to evaluating complex social problems. By defining measures in a common manner across organizations working on an issue area or field, and then providing the associated data collection tools, data capture and reporting mechanisms, organizations in the field can have more meaningful discussions about the outcomes they are achieving and sharing lessons. Shared measurement provides a mid-point between the extreme evaluation approaches of experimental design and anecdotal case studies. Developing and implementing these systems is not trivial but our research conclusively shows that the benefits far outweigh the costs of developing such systems. We take this opportunity to encourage readers to learn more about the other examples studied in FSG's Shared Measurement report and begin experiments of their own.

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