

Initial mapping of approaches towards M&E of Capacity and Capacity Development¹

Introduction:

Because there are few approaches designed to monitor, evaluate and report on capacity and capacity development, development agencies have developed a variety of practices to deal with this issue. An unpublished document by PACT² classifies these practices into three separate groups:

1. Those which focus on documenting the initiatives and try to reduce expectations of obtaining credible evidence of project impact;
2. Those which force-fit capacity building initiatives into pre-existing and accepted evaluation methods (e.g. methods commonly used for measuring health interventions);
3. Those which delay evaluation of capacity building interventions until the initiatives are more mature and “ready” to be evaluated using existing strategies.

This document is the beginning of a mapping of approaches to monitoring, evaluating and reporting on capacity and capacity development. The document will be further developed during and after a workshop organised by the ECDPM on March 1-3 in Maastricht, the Netherlands. This workshop is one activity feeding into the ECDPM’s wider study on Capacity, Performance and Change. Please find more information on this study on the ECDPM website:

<http://www.ecdpm.org>

As a result of the analysis and dialogue carried out during this study, the ECDPM has come up with a definition of capacity which it will present during the workshop. It should be noted, however, that there are many other definitions of capacity which may be appropriate in other circumstances:

‘Capacity is that emergent combination of attributes, assets, capabilities and relationships that enables a human system to perform, to survive and self-renew.’

For a description of the three main elements of this definition, as well as a discussion of three purposes of capacity, please refer to Peter Morgan’s paper ‘Capacity: What is it?’ which has been circulated in draft for the workshop.

In this document, fourteen approaches towards monitoring, evaluation and reporting are described and compared using the following questions:

1. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?
2. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?
3. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?
4. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

We worked with a rather broad and inclusive definition of ‘approaches’, which resulted in this initial mapping of a rather heterogeneous set of techniques, guidelines, methodologies, resource books and organisational planning systems. We have chosen this definition so to be able to

¹ Draft document by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

² Pers. Communication, Chris Bennett (2005)

capture a range of approaches that are used by development actors, from informal networks to formal donor bureaucracies. Consequently, the approaches that are included in the mapping are used at differing levels of intervention (individual, organisational and system).

The mapping includes approaches that adhere to the Result Based Management (RBM) school, as well as ones that emphasise participation, inclusion of stakeholders and collaborative design (which is not necessarily based on the formulation of indicators). Whereas the former group of approaches is almost exclusively used by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, the latter group is used in particular by civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We have based ourselves almost exclusively on public documents that are available free of charge. As a result, the mapping gives relatively more attention to evaluation approaches. Further study and the inclusion of more grey literature in the analysis could even out this balance.

We have clustered the fourteen approaches into five different groups to enable the reader to compare both within and between these groups:

- A. Systems approaches;
- B. Approaches which focus on changes in behaviour;
- C. Performance-based approaches;
- D. Approaches which focus on strategic planning;
- E. Rights-based / Empowerment-based approaches.

Finally, we have created a table that provides brief answers on the four questions for each of the the fourteen approaches. The table also includes key references.

<i>(for WWW availability of documents, please refer to page 33)</i>	What is M&E'ed	Whose capacity	Why; purpose, use of the results	How	Remarks
A. Systems approaches					
1: Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (Engel, Salomon) Salomon, M.L. and Engel, P.G.H. (1997) 'Networking for Innovation: A participatory actor-oriented methodology.' Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute	the capacity of actors as innovators	Knowledge and information systems (a multitude of actors)	Improve generation, exchange and utilisation of knowledge and information for innovation	use of windows and tools to 'open up' problems by looking at them from different perspectives	
2: Participatory information systems appraisal, PISA (Pact) Bennett, C., Bloom, E., Kummer, B., Kwaterski, J., Rivero, G. (2004) 'Community-driven tools for Data Collection and Decision Making: The PISA Action Guide.' PACT Inc.	the system in which an entity functions	donors, trainers/facilitators and NGO's that implement multi-annual programs	Make well-informed evidence based decisions, and empowerment of local actors	continuous information collection through "stringers"	
B. Approaches which focus on changes in behaviour					
3: Outcome mapping (IDRC, Earl, Carden, Smutylo) Smutylo, T. (2005) 'Outcome Mapping: A method for tracking behavioural changes in development programs'. ILAC Brief 7	changes in behaviour of partners (=outcome)	organisations' own capacity to prompt behavioural changes in partners - individuals or organisations	learning	- internal - participatory workshops - methodology with 3 stages and 12 steps	Outcome Mapping defines all outcomes in terms of behavioural change. It starts from the premise that sustainable development is about changing capacities and behaviour of people and organisations.
4: Springboard stories (Society for storytelling, Steve Denning) Asif, M. (2005) 'Listening to the people in poverty - a manual for life history collection'	"how an organisation, community or complex system may change"	Individual focus, with the intent that this individual focus translates into organisational development	Emphasis on story-telling: building trust, unlocking passion, non-hierarchical	emphasis on oral communication, and open discussion of stories	the story uncovers the organisation's cornerstone, those powerful yet intangible qualities, values, philosophy and culture, which subtly determine the organisation's character
5: The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies, Dart) Davies, R. & Darts, J. (2005) 'The Most Significant Change Guide'	significant change stories	stakeholders, with the aim of both individual and organisational development.	MSC may be used in addition to more conventional evaluation approaches to identify unexpected changes to complete the picture	Domains of change, ranking of significant change stories	democratic: may be used without knowledge of the method or M&E in general

C. Performance-based approaches

<p>6: Results-Oriented Approach to Capacity development and Change' (ROACH) (Boesen & Therkildsen)</p> <p>Boesen, N. & Therkildsen, O. (2003) 'Draft Guidelines for Evaluation of Capacity Development Support in Danish Sector Programme Support.' DANIDA</p>	<p>capacity of organisations, especially the evaluation of potential constraints and options for changing organisational capacity</p>	<p>organisations (in relation to the wider context)</p>	<p>Understanding how the performance of the public sector may be increased</p>	<p>organising, collecting facts, analysing, concluding</p>	
<p>7: Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Capacity Development (Horton)</p> <p>Horton, D. (2002) 'Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Capacity Development'. ISNAR Briefing Paper 50</p>	<p>capacity development through monitoring activities, outputs and outcomes</p>	<p>organisational</p>	<p>improvement /learning</p>	<p>- participatory - some basic guidelines</p>	

D. Approaches which focus on strategic planning

<p>8: Strategic Planning: An Inquiry Approach Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)</p> <p>CEDPA (1999) 'Strategic Planning: An Inquiry Approach'</p>	<p>designed to expand and enhance the management and planning skills of women leaders</p>	<p>administrators and managers of NGO's conducting programmes in developing countries</p>	<p>Making strategic planning more accessible and enjoyable</p>	<p>Modelled after the appreciative inquiry approach, focus on best practices / positive aspects</p>	
<p>9: Organisation (self) assessment (IDRC, Lusthaus, et al)</p> <p>Lusthaus, C. Adrien, M.H., Anderson, G. Carden, F. and Montalván, G.P. (2002) 'Organizational Assessment A framework for improving performance.' IDRC/IDB</p>	<p>organisational strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>organisational</p>	<p>accountability</p>	<p>Internal and external assessment of organisations</p>	<p>The approach emphasises on the complementarities between internal and external organisational assessment.</p>
<p>10. District Based Poverty Profiling, Mapping and Pro Poor Planning (Wolfram Fischer)</p> <p>Unpublished document</p>	<p>poverty profiles, thematic maps and pro-poor programmes</p>	<p>district local governance actors</p>	<p>strengthening the capacity of district level actors for designing their own poverty reduction programmes through a bottom-up approach</p>	<p>combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting data.</p>	<p>focus on underlying causes of poverty and their interlinkages</p>

<p>11: Measuring while you manage: Planning, monitoring and evaluating knowledge networks. (Creech – IISD)</p> <p>Creech, H. (2001) Measuring while you manage: Planning, monitoring and evaluating knowledge networks. International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)</p>	<p>effectiveness and efficiency of networks</p>	<p>formal knowledge networks</p>	<p>meeting funder requirements, and to measure while managing.</p>	<p>- participatory meetings - detailed methodology</p>	<p>uses components from different methodologies, including Outcome Mapping</p>
<p>E. Rights-based / Empowerment-based approaches</p>					
<p>12: Critical Webs of Power and Change: A resource pack for planning, assessment and learning in people-centred advocacy (ActionAid)</p> <p>ActionAid. (2005) ‘Critical Webs of Power and change – Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection, and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy.’</p>	<p>“how change and advocacy happens”</p>	<p>programmes supported or implemented by ActionAid</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation for rights based development (action research)</p>	<p>- “resource pack”, though not prescriptive - participatory - qualitative - no pre-set indicators - situations with no tangible outcomes - changing goals - long and unpredictable time frames</p>	<p>Context: Rights-based development</p>
<p>13: The PRA/PLA/RRA school (Chambers)</p> <p>Chambers, R. (2004) ‘Notes for Participants in PRA-PLA Familiarisation Workshops in 2004.’ Institute for Development Studies (IDS)</p>	<p>most known and used for evaluating development programmes</p>	<p>emphasis on learning by doing to contribute to capacity development and empowerment of people in developing countries, and increased understanding of contextualised issues by outsiders</p>	<p>attitudes/behaviour should precede over and are much more important than the use of methods and techniques</p>	<p>both qualitative and quantitative approaches for collecting data</p>	
<p>14: Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) – (Action-Aid)</p> <p>ActionAid (2006) ‘Accountability, Learning and Planning System’</p>	<p>policy and operations of ActionAid international</p>	<p>strengthen accountability to the poor and excluded, strengthening commitment to women’s rights, emphasising critical reflection and promoting transparency</p>	<p>ensuring that M&E contributes to the implementation of its mission: to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice</p>	<p>various organisational processes</p>	<p>includes ‘open information policy’</p>

A. Systems approaches

1. Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems

Monique Salomons and Paul Engel

1. Short description

RAAKS was designed and tested to help actors collectively gain a better understanding of their performance as innovators, and therefore provides an approach which can improve the generation, exchange, and utilisation of knowledge and information for innovation.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The focus of RAAKS is primarily on ‘knowledge and information systems’ (KIS) – the methods defines this as: *‘a linked set of actors – individuals, organizations, or institutions – that emerges (or is strengthened) as a result of networking for innovation. Such a set of actors (or network) can be expected to work synergistically to effectively support learning for innovation; indeed, a network can be managed – in a sense – to achieve this aim’* (Engel & Salomons 1997: 17). Even though ‘capacity’ is not mentioned, the method is clearly aimed at developing the capacity of actors as innovators.

As the approach is based on Peter Checkland’s ‘Soft System Methodology’, the innovative performance of actors is dependent on the actors’ decision to take action. Therefore, *‘at the core of RAAKS lie the appreciations – the perceptions, preoccupations, judgements and understanding – of the principal stakeholders’* (Engel & Salomons 1997: 23).

Since it is an action-research methodology, its application contributes to the development of capacity by design. This is apparent in the three main objectives for using RAAKS:

- 1: To identify opportunities to improve a knowledge and information system – that is, to better the organization, decision making and exchange of information among actors, with the aim of improving the potential for learning and innovation.
- 2: To create awareness among relevant actors (such as target groups or constituencies, managers, policymakers, producers, traders, researchers and extension workers) with respect to the opportunities and constraints that affect their performance as innovators.
- 3: To identify actors and potential actors who do or could act effectively to remove constraints and take advantage of opportunities to improve innovative performance and to encourage their commitment to such changes.

(Engel & Salomons 1997: 25)

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

As RAAKS is a multi-actor oriented approach, the development of capacities depends on the inclusiveness of the exercise.

Due to the emphasis on the *social organization of innovation*, the way actors organise and learn; how they are networking, cooperating and communicating; how they are stimulated or constrained in how they learn, are all central research questions. Thus, of the three elements of capacity that were identified in the study on Capacity, Performance and Change, the main emphasis of RAAKS is on relationships.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

RAAKS enables people to improve the generation, exchange and utilisation of knowledge and information for innovation. It is thus a useful approach to organisations or institutions who feel pressed to improve their performance with respect to innovation. The purpose of RAAKS depends on WHO applies/uses the method:

As a field worker, you can use this method to chart out the knowledge and information networks in which you operate, and design ways to improve your performance.

As a trainer, you can use RAAKS to encourage trainees to take a comprehensive, critical look at their performance as facilitators of innovation in agriculture.

As a manager, you can encourage teamwork, self-monitoring and the generation of ideas on how to improve collective performance related to innovation, with built-in feedback and follow-up.

As a researcher, you can use this method to develop an understanding of the social organization of innovation, based on input from those who are involved. This can be used as a basis for proposals for action and/or further analysis.

As a consultant, you can use RAAKS to facilitate a shared understanding among stakeholders, to define what can be done and by whom, and to improve the way stakeholders function together.

(Engel & Salomons 1997: 22)

The use of the results of RAAKS is ultimately determined by the actors' willingness to turn them into action.

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

As RAAKS is not used in a blueprint A→Z approach, the methodology must be adapted each time it is used. This requires several decisions to be taken on issues such as clarifying intentions, designing the analysis and agreeing upon the procedure.

Typical for the RAAKS methodology is the use of windows and tools. While windows can be seen as a way of looking at a situation, tools provide practical ways to gather and organise relevant information. As the social organization of innovation can be studied in various ways, the windows are especially crucial in 'opening up' problems by looking at them from different perspectives/directions.

2. Participatory Monitoring and Systems Appraisal (PISA)

Chris Bennett, Evan Bloom, Betsy Kummer, Jeff Kwaterski, Guillermo Rivero (PACT)

1. Short description:

This method was developed over four years in Mongolia, and adapts Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and related tools for today's information-intensive economy. It focuses on explaining concepts and strategies that people can use to make informed, evidence-based decisions - through a process in which key stakeholders are empowered. It seeks to establish a lasting 'information channel' in a community where support for a programme is being provided. These information channels are very similar to what news-agencies refer to as 'stringers' - freelance journalists who report on specific topics/stories, which they send to larger networks:

'Initiate a Web search on CNN weather from around the world and you will discover reports on 43 locations in Mongolia alone, each updated daily by a human network of local "stringers" reporting back to the world. Now imagine the power of this kind of information channel working to support your project objectives in HIV/AIDS prevention and care, natural resource management, economic development, health or education initiatives' (Bennett et al. 2004: 6).

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The approach builds on at least four bodies of literature, including:

1. Cognitive and applied anthropology (how communities organise and process information);
2. Participatory Rural Appraisal (focus on local knowledge, and how local people can do their own appraisal);
3. Action Research (promoting collaboration, integrating reflection and action [praxis]);
4. Organisational Learning (especially systems thinking) (Bennett et al. 2004: 6).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The guide has been designed for donors, trainers/facilitators and NGO's that implement multi-annual programs.

The approach mentions that through practicing the four steps that the approach distinguishes (see the section on HOW?), both communities and development practitioners can take part in and promote community-driven information collection initiatives. Much of the approach focuses on improving the capacities for M&E, as well as information gathering and appraisal of development practitioners and local communities. In addition, it focuses on building capacities for systems thinking, and applying it to practice.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

PISA was designed to offer concepts and strategies needed to make 'well informed, data-based decisions while empowering key stakeholders in the process' (Bennett et al. 2004: 5). It aims to establish '(...) *sustainable, embedded information channels (...) at every level of development work*' (Bennett et al. 2004: 6). The approach also assumes that participating in collecting data contributes to learning and sustainable development of certain groups or communities: '(...) *providing highly valuable information to project constituents, while simultaneously drawing new learning from the bits and pieces of information reported individually and processed collectively*'

(Bennett et al. 2004: 6). The approach thus enables a development organisation to both contribute to capacity development, and to evaluate it.

The approach puts great emphasis on systems thinking: it aims to show that ‘there is no outside’, and to make visible that ‘(...) *both the community and the cause of its problems are part of a single system*’ (Bennett et al. 2004: 5). The authors also argue that through the creation of a ‘lasting information channel’ the sustainability of a capacity development intervention may be improved upon.

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

Part of the approach was inspired by the way in which news agencies use ‘stringers’ – freelance journalists who report on specific topics/stories and feed into larger networks – and engages key stakeholders in data-collection accordingly.

The approach, which is explained in the guide, distinguishes four steps

‘1: Team Preparation helps you get started with PISA and includes tools to clarify team roles and responsibilities, and identify key project constituencies who will eventually become your PISA “navigators”.

2: Participatory Data Collection introduces you to the four-step data collection process and includes thirteen tools for application in your own PISA program.

3: Data Analysis and Action Planning describes how to bring together PISA navigators for in-depth data analysis, priority setting, and action planning.

4: Team Learning and Follow-up suggests ways to capitalize on lessons learned, and to evaluate how the PISA process has increased or improved information flows’ (Bennett et al. 2004: 13).

Central to the implementation of these four steps is the coordinating group, which is formed to articulate the context in which PISA will be implemented and creates the foundation for the quality of the work. Specifically, they are responsible for planning and identifying of navigators (the ‘stringers’) who can gather, analyse, share and act upon data which is important to the various actors/communities involved’ (Bennett et al. 2004: 17).

B. Approaches which focus on changes in behaviour;

3. Outcome Mapping Methodology

Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo (the International Development Research Centre)

1. Short description:

Outcome mapping is a methodology for planning, monitoring and evaluating development initiatives. It helps a project team or program to be specific about which actors it is targeting, which changes it expects to make, and through which strategies it tries to do this. The results of development interventions are measured in terms of changes in the behaviour, actions or relationships. The methodology consists of several tools, which can be adapted to different contexts. Similar to RAAKS, it enhances the understanding of change processes, improves the efficiency of achieving results and promotes realistic and accountable reporting, but with the focus on development practitioners.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The Outcome Mapping methodology was designed to assist development program teams to learn from and report realistically on what they achieved, by focusing on what they do, and what happens. It looks at development results (outcomes) as *'changes in the behaviour and relationships of actors with which the program interacts directly'* (Smutylo 2005: 1).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

It focuses on the boundary partners, which are defined as *'individuals, groups or organizations with which the program interacts directly and which the program hopes to influence'* (Smutylo 2005: 1). However, the primary emphasis is on the project team.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

Development organizations are pressured to demonstrate that their interventions result in significant and sustainable changes, changes that are often the product of a confluence of events for which no single agency or group of agencies can claim credit. Assessing development impacts becomes problematic as a result, yet many organizations continue to try to measure results far beyond the reach of their programs (IDRC 2001). As a result of this realisation, IDRC developed Outcome Mapping as a methodology to enable the development and use of indicators that facilitate comparison and learning (Smutylo 2005: 1).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

The Outcome Mapping Methodology requires that a project or programme team clarify its vision of what anticipated improvements to which the programme will contribute, then focuses M&E on factors and actors within its sphere of influence. Partners are identified, as are strategies for equipping them with tools, techniques and resources to contribute to the development process. Key to the methodology and how it works are three separate stages, which distinguish twelve separate steps:

1. Intentional Design: This phase helps a project team to exchange and decide upon the macro level changes they would like to support, and to plan appropriate strategies for achieving this. It focuses on answering four basic question: Why? (mission statement); How? (mission, strategy maps, practices); Who? (boundary partners) and; What? (Outcome challenges / progress markers);
2. The second phase, 'Outcome and Performance Monitoring' provides a framework for monitoring the actions of those which were identified under 'Who?' towards what was identified as 'What?' It collects the information in outcome, strategy and performance journals.
3. Finally, the 'Evaluation Planning' phase helps the team to prioritise evaluation resources and activities. It is at this stage that the main elements of the evaluations that are to be conducted are defined.

(Smutylo 2005: 2, 3)

4. Springboard Stories

Stephen Denning

1. Short description:

The term ‘springboard story’ refers to an account of an event that enables a *‘leap in understanding by the audience so as to grasp how an organization or community or complex system may change’*. The impact of a springboard story may be at organisational and individual levels. By talking and discussing problems, certain metaphors may be devised that can inspire and motivate change.³

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Springboard stories can transfer large amounts of information by catalysing understanding. The stories can facilitate the grasping of ideas as a whole simply and quickly, but also in a non-threatening way (Asif 2005: 47).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The focus is on individuals who work in the context of an organisation. The intent is that this individual focus translates into change and development at the organisational level.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

There are three main reasons to focus on storytelling to improve the capacity of organisations by stimulating positive changes in areas which affect people and which people can affect:

1. **It builds trust** (exchanges of stories build an enabling environment that is conducive to learning and change);
2. **It unlocks passion** (stories generate feelings which may develop the attributes of an organisation);
3. **It is non-hierarchical** (storytelling requires the ‘teller’ to adjust her/his story to the audience).

(Asif 2005: 49)

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

A Springboard story should have a degree of strangeness or incongruity for the listeners, so to capture attention, but at the same time be plausible and familiar. It was found that the stories have more power when they are used orally, as compared to when they are disseminated in written form. Stories are best told simple and brief. *‘Speed and conciseness of style were keys, because as an instigator of change, the idea is less about conveying the details of what exactly happened in the explicit story than in sparking new stories in the minds of the listeners which they would discover in the context of their own environments’* (Asif 2005: 47). The imagination and spirit for change is best facilitated when the stories have a positive, change-focused ending.

³ <http://www.storytellinginorganisations.org.uk/Springboard.htm> (consulted 23 February 2006)

5. The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique

Rick Davies and Jessica Dart

1. Short description:

'The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole' (Davies and Dart 2005: 8).

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Central in the Most Significant Change technique is – as the name suggests – the collection of significant change (SC) stories that emerge from the field level. After these stories, those who are considered most significant by panels of designated stakeholders or staff are selected. Once changes have been captured, people sit down together, read the stories aloud. During this exercise in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes will occur. *'When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact'* (Davies and Dart 2005: 10).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

MSC is a participatory technique, because programme stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data (Davies and Dart 2005: 8).

Using the technique may enhance the capacities of stakeholders to reflect and make sense of the most significant changes that occurred through a programme, thus having an impact on both organisational and individual capacities. Compared to other M&E techniques, it is much more accessible and therefore more 'democratic':

'It is a participatory form of monitoring that requires no special professional skills. Compared to other monitoring approaches, it is easy to communicate across cultures. There is no need to explain what an indicator is. Everyone can tell stories about events they think were important'

Because of this accessibility and design (see HOW), the technique may stimulate the development of *'(...)staff capacity in analysing data and conceptualising impact'* (Davies and Dart 2005: 12).

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

MSC is particularly suited to monitoring a programme where the focus is on learning rather than just accountability (Exchange 2005: 1). In addition to more conventional, indicator-based evaluation approaches, MSC may help to identify unexpected changes to complete the picture of what a programme is leading to.

While it is not so useful to use MSC in a relatively simple program context with easily defined outcomes, it is especially useful in contexts where conventional monitoring and evaluation tools may not provide sufficient data to make sense of program impacts and foster learning (Davies and Dart 2005: 12).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

Before any data is collected, a group of stakeholders needs to decide on what is going to be monitored – the method refers to this as the ‘domains’. These domains of change are deliberately left wide and inclusive (Exchange 2005: 1).

The very core of any MSC process, then, is a question along the lines of:

‘Looking back over the last month, what do you think was the most significant change in [particular domain of change]?’

A similar question is posed when the answers to the first question are examined by a group of participants:

‘From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?’

The process provides a simple means of making sense of a large amount of information (Davies and Dart 2005: 11)

The stories then go through the various levels within an organisation or programme, from the field level to the level of funders. At each level, the most significant story is selected, for each of the domains. The criteria used are also communicated back to the different stakeholders, so that the selection of the stories becomes transparent. All in all, there are nine phases in MSC (Exchange 2005: 2). The transparency of the process of ‘filtering’ the MSC stories through the various organisational levels and the process of selection of stories which takes place accordingly create understanding of how information is managed and shared within an organisation. Through the exercise, individuals may find out more about how their organisation works, which contributes to the development of its capacity.

C. Performance-based approaches;

6. Results-Oriented Approach to Capacity development and Change' (ROACH)

Nils Boesen, Ole Therkildsen

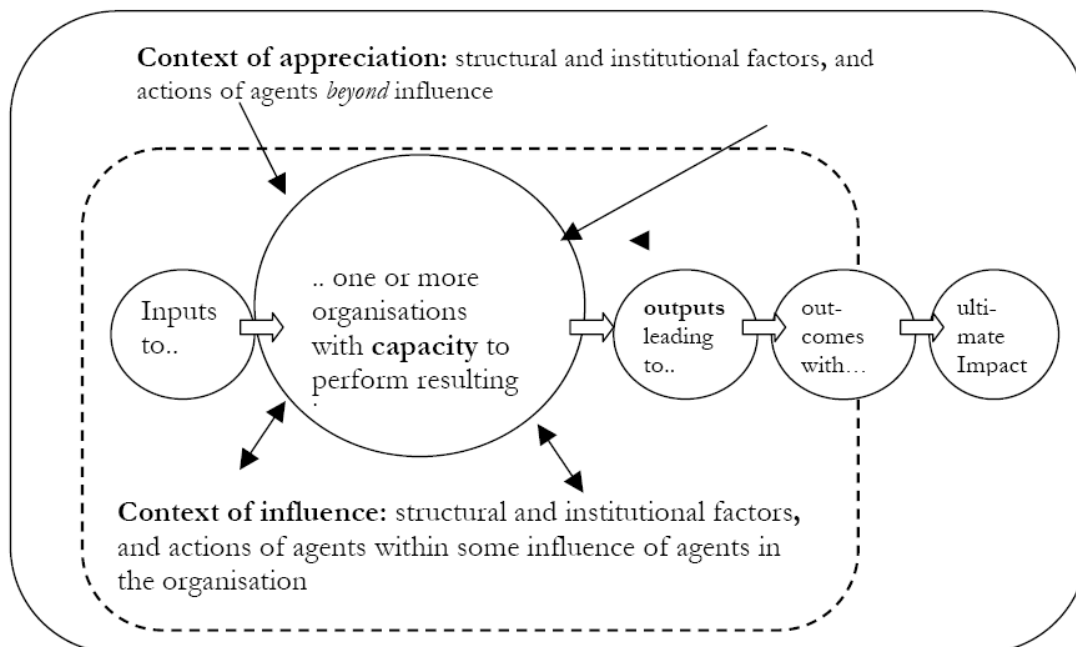
1. Short description:

DANIDA has developed guidelines for a methodology to evaluate assistance to capacity development in the context of sector programme support. According to this methodology, organisational output is seen as the 'analytical starting point' and a standardised structure is proposed to focus on identification of causal linkages between outputs and external/internal factors. It builds on 'empirical facts' as a baseline before it starts evaluating and makes 'no a priori assumptions about the efficiency of capacity development initiatives compared to other factors which may cause capacity changes. It acknowledges that capacity development is extremely difficult to study in isolation (compared to other types of aid), and finally seeks to integrate political realities and constraints for capacity development (Boesen & Therkildsen 2004: 2).

In line with their approach, the authors define capacity as 'the ability of an organisation to produce appropriate outputs (Boesen & Therkildsen 2004: 3).

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The approach focuses specifically on capacity of organisations, in particular on the evaluation of potential constraints and realistic options for changing organisational capacity. The authors have developed a 'results-oriented approach to capacity development and change' (ROACH), of which the basic analytical framework is as follows:



(Source of the figure: Boesen & Therkildsen 2004: 17)

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The approach is targeted at all those involved in the delivery of Danish development assistance, and focuses especially on monitoring and evaluating the capacities of the public sector in developing countries. ROACH emphasises the output constraints within these organisations and in the broader context, which must be analysed and understood before feasible initiatives may be identified. ROACH may also be applied at sector level, but it will then have to be supplemented by other analyses. The central concept of the approach is thus ‘outputs’ (services, products), which should contribute to development outcomes and impact, and need to be ‘appropriate’ for this. What is meant by appropriate is subject to discussion (Boesen & Therkildsen 2005: 3).

The logic that ROACH follows is that, as soon as the appropriate and desirable outputs have been identified, it becomes possible to ‘know’ the organisations that are in charge of producing them (Boesen & Therkildsen 2005: 4).

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

The central purpose for monitoring and evaluation of capacity development is to understand how the performance of the public sector may be increased through interventions. The authors argue that, despite being a key element in development assistance, the knowledge about how best to deliver and assess the outcome of capacity development support is limited or contested. Therefore, the approach and conceptual papers by the authors target at contributing to ‘(...) *a wide consensus of how capacity development works*’ (Boesen & Therkildsen 2005: ii).

The authors argue that when capacity development activities do not contribute to changes in outputs, they should be ‘(...) *reconsidered, changed or stopped*’ (Boesen & Therkildsen 2005: 4).⁴

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

ROACH organises the evaluation process into fifteen separate steps. These fifteen steps are categorised in four different phases:

1. Organising the evaluation process (process and participation aspects, identifying target organisations);
2. Get the facts: what has changed? (changes at the output level, outcomes, external factors, capacity, inputs/resources, effectiveness/efficiency);
3. Begin analysing: how have the changes occurred? (significant factors to explain changes in outputs, identify support activities, identify analytical and strategic basis for support);
4. Reach conclusions: why have changes occurred, what can be learned? (assess attribution, sustainability, extract lessons).

(Boesen & Therkildsen 2003: 4)

⁴ The authors also note that, by contrast, most evaluations of capacity development focus on measuring inputs such as TA and trainings (Boesen 2005: 4)

7. Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Capacity Development

Douglas Horton

1. Short description:

In an ISNAR briefing paper, Douglas Horton analyses the evaluation of capacity development efforts at that time:

'To date very few capacity-development efforts have been systematically evaluated. Anecdotal evidence as well as experiences in other areas highlight the importance of top-level commitment and leadership, a conducive external environment, and the efficient management of organizational change processes. The success of many capacity-development efforts has been limited by the fact that they focus on technical factors, while critical social and political barriers were ignored' (Horton 2002: 1).

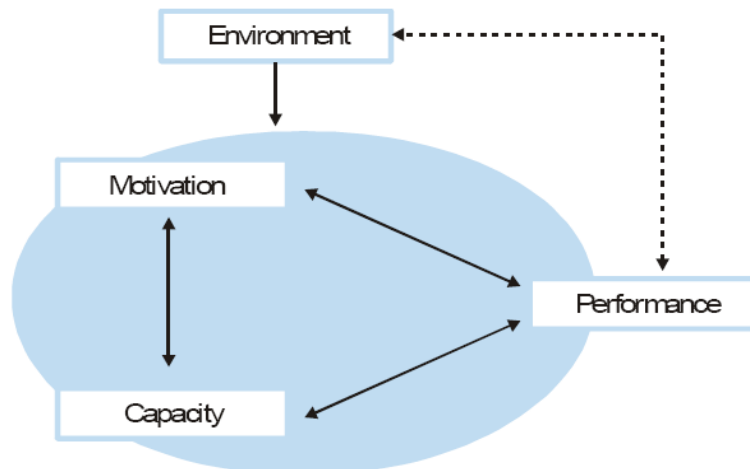
From this analysis, he identifies a window of opportunity for improving future capacity development efforts by making more use of learning through evaluation.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Drawing from a definition of capacity by Peter Morgan (1997), Douglas Horton makes two important assumptions about capacity development:

1. that capacity development is largely an internal process of growth and development, and
2. that capacity-development efforts should be results oriented (Horton 2002: 2).

The author argues that capacity development interventions should be identified from an understanding of the relationship between an organization's environment, motivation, capacity and performance:



(Source of the figure: Boesen & Therkildsen 2005: 3)

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

Six different levels may be identified that ‘make or break’ a capacity development effort:

1. An external environment that is conducive to change;
2. Top managers who provide leadership for institutional change;
3. A critical mass of staff members involved in, and committed to, the change process;
4. Availability or development of appropriate institutional innovations;
5. Adequate resources for developing capacities and implementing changes;
6. Adequate management of the capacity development process.

Consequently, evaluations should pay attention to these different levels. In addition to this, the author explains how capacity development interventions make use of different tools: information dissemination, training, facilitation and mentoring, networking and feedback to promote learning from experience. Evaluations may be used to learn whether the most effective and efficient tool is being used (Horton 2002: 4, 5).

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

The author makes a case for ‘improvement-oriented’ evaluations, that are carried out to identify lessons learned that can be used to improve ongoing or future capacity-development efforts. He notes that evaluations can serve two purposes: accountability and improvement.

‘Accountability refers to the obligation of reporting on or justifying a particular activity. Most evaluations are carried out to meet government or funding agency accountability requirements. These evaluations are generally conducted to determine whether objectives have been achieved and resources have been used appropriately’ (Horton 2005: 6).

The author observes that ‘improvement-oriented evaluations’ – which are more beneficial than accountability-oriented evaluations – are seldom carried out. He makes a case for more of these evaluations as they may contribute to more effective capacity development interventions (Horton 2005: 6).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

While capacity development interventions benefit from a solid diagnosis of what needs to be done and how, they should be monitored and treated as works in progress, rather than finished blueprints. Flexibility of managers is required to be able to modify planning and targets as conditions change and lessons are learned.

The author mentions some Do’s and Don’ts for the evaluation of capacity development:

Do

- Map out the program logic of the capacity development effort (the hierarchy of objectives and the underlying assumptions).
- Monitor activities, outputs, and outcomes.
- Periodically assess results in relation to the initial objectives and expectations.
- Involve stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.
- Think in terms of contributions of external partners, rather than impacts.

Don't

- Don't evaluate capacity development strictly in terms of the original goals.
- Don't gloss over capacity-development processes and look only for long-term development impacts.

D. Approaches which focus on strategic planning;

8. Strategic Planning: An Inquiry Approach

Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)

1. Short description:

The manual 'Strategic Planning: An Inquiry Approach' aims at building the skills of its NGO affiliates to define their work priorities with greater clarity and purpose and to strengthen their capacity to plan for the future. The workbook is a self-directed series of exercises which draws on Appreciative Inquiry and traditional strategic planning approaches.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

This workbook was designed to expand and enhance the management and planning skills of women leaders, and strengthen their capacities as leaders of influential organizations that promote gender equity. It therefore has a strong emphasis on 'forward-looking' monitoring and evaluation (CEDPA 1999: 2).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The method focuses on women's organisations through its leaders, and has been prepared for use by administrators and managers of NGOs conducting programs in developing countries. Through the focus on strategic planning, it gives attention to both the attributes, capabilities and relationships. The focus is on supporting leaders to increase capacity at the organisational level (CEDPA 1999: 2).

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

The book views strategic planning as a tool which enables NGOs to define and develop organizational mission statements, identify priorities and focal areas, make effective use of resources and attract them. Its goal is to make strategic planning a more accessible and enjoyable undertaking where the discovery of possibilities may lead to adjustments in work (CEDPA 1999: 2). The assumption is that knowing leads to better recognition of value, which in its turn leads to better planning (CEDPA 1999: 5).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

The approach is modelled after the 'Appreciative Inquiry' approach, whose main characteristic is the focus on the best practices of an organization. The manual contrasts the inquiry approach and the 'problem solving approach':

PROBLEM SOLVING	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY
Felt need— identification of problem	Appreciating and valuing the best of what is
Analysis of causes	Envisioning what might be
Analysis of possible solutions	Dialoguing what should be
Action planning (treatment)	Innovating what will be
BASIC ASSUMPTION:	BASIC ASSUMPTION:
An organization is a problem to be solved	An organization is a mystery to be revealed

(CEDPA 1999: 4)

The book contains different steps, some of which are similar to the steps which are proposed in the organisational (self)-assessment publication (the fourth approach in this mapping). After finding out what is there and what works best, the approach moves to the identification and formulation of ‘propositions for the future’ (CEDPA 1999: 20). Vision and mission statements are then formulated, which finally leads to an action plan.

9. Organizational Assessment and Self-Assessment

Charles Lusthaus, Marie-Hélène Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden, and George Plinio Montalván (IDRC/IDB)

1. Short description:

This book contains a set of tools that organizations can use to change themselves, so that they can better change the world. The theory of change which is presented is that systematic analysis can be used to support the process of organizational learning and change. The book notes that all organizations engage in some form of organizational assessment, but that there is no agreement on which forms work and which do not. The book therefore contributes to the theory and practice of organizational assessment.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Organizational assessment and self-assessment focuses on four elements of an organisation, which are described below. Capacity is but one of these, all of which contribute to organisational performance.

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

Organizational assessment *'(...) puts forth a framework for analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of an organization in relation to its performance.'* Organizational performance derives from the enabling environment, capacity and organizational motivation. The book uses the following definition of organizational capacity:

'Organizational capacity is the ability of an organization to use its resources to perform. If the organization itself is the unit of analysis, all of the resources, systems and processes that organizations develop to support them in their work can be assessed' (IDRC/IDB 2002).

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

This book is written for organizational leaders and consultants who are interested in *'(...) better understanding the present state of organizations and how to choose areas for investment that can improve organizational performance'* (IDRC/IDB 2002).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

The data needs for an organizational assessment can be met by:

1. Meeting a suitable spectrum of stakeholders
2. Observing relevant facilities
3. Observing the dynamics among people

In addition, evaluation should look at organization's environment, capacity, motivation and performance, as in the chart below:

Environment:	Capacity:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe and assess the formal rules within which the organization operates - Describe the institutional ethos within which the organization operates - Describe the capabilities within which the organization operates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of strategic leadership in the organization - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of financial management - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational structure within the organization - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational infrastructure - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the following systems, processes or dimensions of human resources - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program and service management - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of process management within the organization - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of inter-organizational linkages
Motivation:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the organization's history - Understand the organization's culture - Understand the organization's mission - Understand the organization's incentive/reward system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How effective is the organization in moving toward the fulfilment of its mission? - How effective is the organization in fulfilling its mission? - Has the organization kept its relevance over time? - Is the organization financially viable?

The methodology that is presented in this book is suitable both for external assessment and self-assessment. The following table which is taken from the book summarises the strengths and weaknesses of using internal or external forms of organisational assessment. The table also shows the complementarities between internal and external assessment.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know the organization - Link organizational assessment to organizational change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence may convey political messages - Insight fatigue - Inability to criticize superiors - Organization can't let them go
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can specify expertise requirements - Viewed as independent - Can focus on the organizational assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't know the organization and the available data - May have to limit site presence due to cost

(IDRC/IDB 2002)

10. District Based Poverty Profiling, Mapping and Pro-Poor Planning

Wolfram Fischer

1. Short description:

The ‘District Based Poverty Profiling, Mapping and Pro-Poor Planning’ was developed in the context of the ‘Local Governance – Poverty Reduction Support Programme’ (LG-PRSP) programme in Ghana. It has been designed for local governance actors at the district level, specifically the Planning Units (Fischer 2005: 3)

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Among the outcomes of the approach are the following:

1. Poverty profiles of each district (narrative information on manifestations of poverty among specific target groups);
2. Thematic maps that show the location of selected facilities and accessibility to those services;
3. Poverty Map which depicts spatially the deprived areas in a district;
4. Pro-Poor programmes.

(Fischer 2005: 6)

To collect these outcomes, the approach works with district level teams which consist of technocrats, CSO’s and private sector representatives. The team engages with sample communities, as well as with district level administrations and technical staff to ascertain perceptions of poverty and coping mechanisms. Through this process, thematic maps and a multi-actor understanding of poverty in a region is produced to inform capacity development interventions (Fischer 2005: 6).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The approach centres on monitoring and evaluating the capacities of district local governance actors to plan, implement and learn from poverty reduction programmes.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

The approach has been developed in response to the implementation of the Ghanaian national policy for poverty reduction. It was designed with the objective of strengthening the capacity of district level actors for designing their own poverty reduction programmes through a bottom-up approach. The approach also provides an objective basis to improve targeting of poverty reduction programmes, and generates data at a local level which can serve as baseline data for monitoring and evaluation.

The ‘District Based Poverty Profiling, Mapping and Pro-Poor Planning’ approach was designed for the following actors, each with their own need and purpose for using the approach:

NGO’s	To assist them to target their interventions
District Planning Officers	To assist them to provide advice on resource allocation
Donor Partners	To assist them to target their interventions
Consultants	To provide baseline data on districts

(Fischer 2005: 3)

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

A basic element of the poverty profiling, mapping and programming methodology is the use of participatory methods. The methodology allows for grass-roots involvement, next to the input from civil servants at the local level. Another element is that in the designing of interventions, the symptoms of poverty are not addressed, but their causes and how they cooperate to keeping the poor poor.

The approach uses planning tools and procedures that are both quantitative and qualitative. Another noteworthy aspect is the use of existing institutional structures for the implementation of the exercise.

11. Measuring while you manage: Planning, monitoring and evaluating knowledge networks.

Heather Creech – IISD

1. Short description:

Heather Creech argues that networks need to be evaluated on two fronts:

1. The effectiveness of the network (doing the right thing);
2. The efficiency of the network (doing things right).

She observes that, despite the challenges which specifically relate to the ‘networks modality’, networks rarely put in place means and systems for monitoring, evaluating and reporting concerning their internal functioning (Creech 2001: 7).

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The focus is on formal knowledge networks: *‘groups of expert institutions working together on a common concern, strengthening each other's research and communications capacity, sharing knowledge bases and developing solutions that meet the needs of target decision makers at the national and international level’* (Creech 2001: 5).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The focus is on monitoring and evaluation of people in networks, and networks themselves, especially focusing on the ‘network advantage’: (1) joint value in the aggregation and creation of new knowledge; (2) strengthening capacity for research and communications of all members; (3) possibility to engage more directly with decisions makers, with an extended sphere of influence (Creech 2001: 5). The paper looks at evaluation of networks, especially focusing on the ‘network advantage’.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

Monitoring and Evaluation is done to meet requirements of the funder, but also to enable the network to ‘measure while it is managing’, to learn from what it does and through doing so to maximise performance on the network’s ‘advantages’ (see above).

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

Creech’s paper draws together components from both Outcome Mapping and Results Based Management approaches and distinguishes three phases:

1. For planning, it again distinguishes between doing the right thing (effectiveness) and doing things right (efficiency), and helps the network to establish objectives, projects, process and different steps which need to be taken.
2. For tracking changes (monitoring), it utilises ‘progress journals’ in a similar way to that used in Outcome Mapping.
3. Finally, it proposes two points at which activities are evaluated: (1) formative annual evaluations when adjustments are possible; (2) a summative final evaluation where is reflected again on the initial evaluation framework that was established in the planning phase.

(Creech 2001: 13-28)

E. Rights-based / Empowerment-based approaches.

12. Critical Webs of Power and Change: A resource pack for planning, assessment and learning in people-centred advocacy

ActionAid (diverse authors)

1. Short description:

Critical Webs of Power and Change is based upon the following principles: people centred advocacy, rights-based development and processes of planning, reflection and learning. It argues that *'as organisations move to incorporate more political dimensions of development into their work, they face the challenge of identifying and assessing other less visible measures of success'* (Chapman et al. 2005b: 5).

It is intended to (1) assist groups that want to support and do advocacy in a way that expands the voices and leadership of the marginalised; and (2) strengthen the ability of development practitioners and activists to plan, evaluate and learn from what they do.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

Critical Webs is an action-research approach: a process that combines learning and action to produce more effective changes – helping people to set their own agenda and learn so that they can take those lessons and improve their work and lives (Chapman et al. 2005a: 4). It radically differs from other evaluation approaches as it sees *'reporting and accountability processes as development interventions and therefore political acts in support of the rights and empowerment of people living in poverty and facing injustices. They need to be negotiated with more care and attention paid to relationships and power differentials'* (Ibid.: 5).

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

Critical Webs assumes that the development of planning, assessment and learning systems has to meet the pace of the organisation concerned, and not the pace that suits the donor or international NGO. This means that there should be investments made into the staff time and capacity development of Southern development practitioners – and a more conscious and transparent process in which it is clear who has access to what in evaluation and planning.

As Critical Webs does not treat monitoring, evaluation and reporting as separate or secondary to development work, the development actor that asks for evaluation is responsible for ensuring that the evaluation/monitoring leads to the development of capacities in developing countries. Evaluations can not be extractive.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

Critical Webs assumes evaluation and learning to be inseparable from accountability and planning and that they should be part and parcel of a development intervention. The approach was created in order to develop a *'(...)better understanding of how change and advocacy happens in different places and circumstances and how planning, reflection and learning can better support the changes that we seek - changes that are advancing the rights and leadership of poor and marginalised people and transforming inequitable power relations'* (ActionAid website). It could thus be seen and characterised as *'monitoring and evaluation for rights-based development'*.

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

As a resource pack, supported by one overarching approach, Critical Webs includes a set of ideas, methods, frameworks and tools to support planning, reflection and learning in advocacy. The resource pack includes ideas on how to question and listen, on how to address gender and women's rights, and on required facilitation skills and qualities.

13. The PRA/PLA/RRA school

Robert Chambers

1. Short description if necessary:

Just a quick go through the acronyms: RRA stands for ‘Rapid (or Relaxed) Rural Appraisal’, PRA for ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal’, and PLA is short for ‘Participatory Learning and Action’. The references to ‘rural’ mostly have to do with the origins of the approaches; they were developed in rural situations but are now also used in urban settings. The three approaches could be described together as:

‘a growing family of approaches, methods, attitudes and behaviours to enable and empower people to share, analyse and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect’ (Chambers 2004: 3).

“Good” PRA, which now also can be translated as ‘participatory reflection and action’ and embraces methodological pluralism, is especially linked to the attitudes/behaviours behind the use of approaches. It concerns the transfer from an attitude as teachers/transfers to convenors/catalysts/facilitators. It requires ‘unlearning’ and for the external person to put her/his own knowledge, ideas and categories into second place. Common elements in all PRA/RRA/PLA related approaches are: (1) self-aware responsibility (self-critical awareness); (2) equity and empowerment; and (3) diversity. It can thus be seen as an overarching philosophy which has inspired and guides the use of participatory approaches to data collection, monitoring, evaluation and learning (Chambers 2004: 3-5).

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

This school/approach does not target a certain ‘what’, but have been used within development projects/programs, national development programs, popular education, university training of students to do research, etc. The various approaches are most known for their use in evaluation of development interventions.

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

Being a participatory approach, the PRA/PLA/RRA school assumes a need for a collective and collaborate capacity for both external and local people to monitor, evaluate and learn. The emphasis is clearly on ‘learning by doing’ as an exercise which contribute to capacity development and especially empowerment of people in developing countries, as well as increasing contextualised understanding if development issues for practitioners. In other words:

‘The behaviour and attitudes required of us as "uppers" (outsiders, professionals, people who tend to dominate) include: critical self-awareness and embracing error; sitting down, listening and learning; not lecturing but "handing over the stick" to "lowers" (people who are local, less educated, younger, marginalised, usually dominated) who become the analysts and main teachers; having confidence that "they can do it"; and a relaxed and open-ended inventiveness’ (Chambers 2004: 7).

Examples of capacity development/empowerment through this approach could include local people learning to draw and think from a bird’s eye perspective, and learning how to address and discuss things during public meetings.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

The very core of this approach is that attitudes/behaviour should *precede over and are much more important than the use of methods and techniques*. As Chambers puts it, '(...) the labels "RRA" and "PRA" have been used to justify and legitimate sloppy, biased, rushed and unself-critical work' (Chambers 2004: 6).

Furthermore, the 'why' question for this method is closely linked to the 'whose' capacities, and is related to the underlying philosophy of participatory monitoring and evaluation.

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

The PRA/PLA/RRA school uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches for collecting data. For more information on quantitative approaches, please refer to:

Chambers, R. (2003) 'Participation and Numbers' In: PLA notes 47: 6-12:
http://www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/documents/plan_04701.pdf (Consulted 23-02-06)

As for qualitative approaches, the school has pioneered many influential techniques and methods for monitoring and evaluation, including:

1. 'Transect walks'(systematically walking with key informants through an area, meeting, asking, listening, etc.);
 2. 'chapati'/Venn diagramming: identifying individuals and institutions important in and for a community or group, or within an organisation, and their relationships;
 3. Participatory mapping and modelling;
 4. Matrix scoring and ranking;
 5. Role plays, theatre and participatory video;
 6. Local analysis of secondary sources (for example, aerial photographs, GIS, etc.);
- (Chambers 2004: 11-13).

14. Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS)

Action-Aid

1. Short description if necessary:

This system – it is not so much an approach, but rather a system which was developed by ActionAid to integrate accountability, learning and planning – was designed to contribute to a situation where ActionAid staff takes its own initiatives to achieve the organisation's mission. It also aims to improve the interaction with the poor and other partners; to strengthen reflection, learning and analysis for improving future action; and to bring the concerns and needs of the poor to the centre of decision making.

2. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?

The system was designed to replace a reporting system that emphasised standardised planning and reporting. It was therefore designed for monitoring and evaluation of the policy and operations of ActionAid international, and specifically to deal with the organisation's multiple accountabilities:

3. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?

The different processes of ALPS have been designed so to strengthen accountability to the poor and excluded people, as well as to strengthen commitment to women's rights. It emphasises critical reflection, promotes transparency, and therefore requires a constant analysis of power. The approach explicitly states that *'Poor and excluded people have a right to take part in decisions that affect them'* (ActionAid 2006: 7).

One of its aims is to simplify requirements for reporting and to promote processes which emphasise critical engagement, mutual learning and downward accountability. By stressing that *'(...) staff [is required to] learn with and from poor and excluded people, our partners and others'*, it emphasises the development of capacities for collective planning and decision-making in a 'rights-based' development approach (ActionAid 2006: 8).

This approach to M&E has the secondary goal of fostering social learning among the poor, so that they may start demanding accountability from other institutions. Paul Engel referred to this as 'claim-making capacity' during a discussion on the Pelican initiative.

4. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?

'In ActionAid we have multiple accountabilities – to the poor and excluded people and groups with whom we work, supporters, volunteers, partners, donors, governments, staff and trustees. Alps emphasises accountability to all our stakeholders – but most of all to poor and excluded people, especially women and girls' (ActionAid 2006: 4). Since the organisation's mission is *'to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice'*, the organisation uses this approach to ensure that its monitoring, evaluation and reporting practices contributes to the implementation of its mission.

5. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

ALPS contains a number of organisational processes: Appraisals; Strategies; Strategic plans; Annual plans and budgets; Strategic reviews; Peer reviews; Organisational climate reviews; Annual participatory review and reflection processes; Annual reports; Internal governance annual review; External and internal audits; Open information policy.

Many of these processes are not different from those in other development organisations, but they differ in approach and underlying philosophy (particularly visible in the open information policy). ALPS also differs in the priority it places on learning throughout these different processes:

1. Alps aims to optimise staff and partner time spent on critical reflection and learning.
2. Alps requires that staff learn with and from poor and excluded people, our partners and others so that better decisions about our actions are made and good practices and solutions can be shared.
3. Alps encourages the use of creative media and alternate forms of communication other than lengthy written reports. People's art, oral traditions, theatre and song are some of the ways by which people can engage their full creative talents and develop insights that surprise, inspire and generate new ways of looking at and doing their work.
4. Alps requires us to learn not only from our successes but also from our failures.
5. In most cases, Alps reports and documents are approved by only one level up in the line management, to prevent unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy.

(ActionAid 2006: 8)

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