Evaluating capacity strengthening: Key challenges

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Characteristics of capacity

Dynamic / continual process of improvement

Internal process possibly enhanced by external intervention

Multi-dimensional: often occurs at mutually dependent levels

Influenced by the external environment

Linked to performance
Pathways to capacity strengthening

Parameters

Individual
Organizational
System
“We do not seek to develop capacity for its own sake, but rather to better empower an organization or team to achieve its goals and objectives.”

- USAID, 2016,
Organizational Capacity Development Measurement
Measures

Because capacity is expressed through performance, we measure the effectiveness of capacity development in relation to performance improvement.
Context Matters

Environment → Capacity

Performance
Measurement Challenges

- **Lack of evidence**: which elements of capacity are critical to performance?
- **Performance standards** may be context specific
- Self-assessment **versus** objective measurement
- Internal **versus** external audience (program improvement versus accountability)
Measurement Challenges

- Capturing the **dynamic nature** of capacity
- Capturing capacity **dimensions**
- **Relationships** between levels
### METHODS

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Evolution and innovation in measurement
Driven by performance objectives

Combine qualitative and quantitative

Combine self-assessment and external methods

Repeat measures over time

Are evidence-based and discussion-based

Use multiple sources for triangulation
Useful Resources

Sarah Earl Outcome Mapping: These three videos from Sarah Earl provide an introduction to the concepts of Outcome Mapping. Part 1; Part 2; Part 3

Outcome Mapping FAQs: This website from the Outcome Mapping Learning Community provides answers to 14 frequently asked questions about outcome mapping.

Outcome mapping: A method for tracking behavioral changes in development programs. This ILAC brief provides an overview of the process of outcome mapping including relevant examples.

Outcome mapping: Building learning and reflection into development programs: This book outlines a detailed step by step process for using outcome maps including a variety of worksheets and examples.

10 Years of Outcome Mapping: This webinar from the Outcome Mapping Learning Community (OMLC) presents the key findings from research conducted into the extent of Outcome Mapping use and the support required for its implementation


Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning. Organizational Research Services. 2004


