Credit: Moctar Menta, IFDC

Outcome Harvesting Essentials

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Outcome Harvesting

Participatory method to identify, formulate, verify, analyze and interpret outcomes to answer actionable questions.

Captures outcomes predicted/unpredicted, positive/negative, **AND**

Works backward to describe & verify contribution

FOR

monitoring and evaluation (developmental, formative and summative)

USING

Either internal or external staff, or a mix.

OH is well-suited to projects where

› Activities are likely to contribute to unpredicted and unpredict-able outcomes

› Pathways to achieve desired results are not well understood

› Flexible management continually adapts to new information or changes in the context.

OH is not intended for projects where

× The pathways to achieve desired outcomes are known and agreed upon.

× Little value is placed on capturing outcomes not included in the original design.

Six Iterative Steps

1. ***Design the Outcome Harvest***: Focus on actionable information for primary users

2. ***Gather data and draft outcome descriptions***: Collect data by document review, interview, & surveys

3. ***Engage change agents in formulating outcome descriptions***

4. ***Substantiate***: Knowledgeable, independent individuals validate outcome descriptions

5. ***Analyze and interpret***: Provide evidence-based answers to harvesting questions

6. ***Support use of findings***

Essence of Outcome Harvesting

Principles-driven: Implementation adapts to context & new information

Participatory: Key stakeholders participate with the evaluator in the OH.

Utilization-focused: Each stakeholder has an important role.

Intended Users

Who? Require findings to make decisions or take action.

Role: Make informed decisions about design and implementation throughout the harvest to ensure that the OH will meet their needs

Change Agents

Who? Individuals or organizations that influence outcomes

Role:

› Serve as key informants

› Document outcomes and contribution pathways

Outcome Verifiers

Who?

Third-parties both knowledgeable and objective about outcomes

Role:

› Review descriptions of outcomes and project's contribution

› Comment on significance of outcomes (optional)

› Verify by email or other means

Summary

Strengths	Limitations
Captures outcomes in complex and knowledge scarce situations	Negative outcomes are difficult to capture
Participation offers opportunity for rich learning for stakeholders	Participatory methods are not feasible in all situations
Tailored to each project & context	Findings not necessarily comparable across evaluations or interventions
Ongoing development of Outcome Harvesting through a vibrant community of practice.	

For more information

www.outcomeharvesting.net